

those of Medical men. The position which Midwives now take is undoubtedly a great improvement upon the status which was held by these workers fifteen or twenty years ago. But still it is incontestable that their work lies almost exclusively amongst the poorer classes, and consequently that the rate of their remuneration is so low that there is little inducement for highly skilled labour to devote itself to this branch of work. Of course to this, as to all other rules, there are striking exceptions; one being furnished by the fact that one of the members of the Registration Board for Nurses—a lady whom we are proud to number amongst our most valued contributors—is in active work as a Midwife in a great provincial city. But the very brilliance of the exception only makes the general truth more apparent; and for Midwifery, especially amongst the middle and upper classes of Society, we cannot but believe that Medical men and Medical women will in future as at present chiefly be employed. It is, therefore, for the poor that skilled Midwives are most necessary, and upon this fact hinges the great difficulty which has to be solved, and which we believe has hardly been sufficiently realised by those who most ardently desire reform. It really is a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence. If a woman cannot look forward to receiving a fair remuneration for her work, there is little inducement to her to gain knowledge and skill at the cost of a large outlay of time and money. On the other hand, to become a trustworthy Midwife requires a very considerable expenditure in both directions.

Who then are these first-class workers who obtain the diploma of the Obstetrical Society of London and other important examining bodies? It has been a source of considerable wonder to ourselves, and to many Medical men throughout the country, how the well-known facts we have adduced could be made to agree with the equally significant fact that a considerable number of ladies each year qualify themselves for a Midwifery degree by an expensive course of training. The clue to the mystery, however, is probably to be found in a statement made at a recent meeting of the B.N.A. by Dr. Bedford Fenwick. He called attention to the large number of Registered Nurses, whose papers proved that, after passing through a complete course of Hospital training, they had worked at a Lying-in Hospital, whereat they had acquired the special certificate for Monthly Nursing, and finally the Obstetric experience necessary to enable them to obtain a diploma in Midwifery. We have made some independent inquiries since our notice was called to this point, which confirm us in the belief which we expressed some months ago in these

columns, that in the future Midwifery would be, so to speak, the pinnacle of the Nursing education—the borderland between the Nurse's and the Doctor's work. It is evident how the tide is flowing in the direction of combining Nursing with Midwifery. And the more we reflect upon the matter, the more do we become convinced that this is simply the expression of a professional supply for a public want, and that, therefore, the movement is much more likely to extend than to decrease. In the poorer parts of our cities throughout the country we now find District Nurses at work, and an increasing demand that these workers should be able to give efficient help in cases of child-birth, as well as in sickness or injury. In the rural districts the value of the same system is recognised, and it is only a question of time when it will be carried out. Her Majesty the Queen—with that keen appreciation of the needs of the people which she is known to possess—has emphasized the importance of the work by devoting the Women's Jubilee Gift to supplying Nurses for the sick poor. We have it on good authority that Her Majesty has been advised of the importance of her Nurses being skilled Midwives; and we earnestly hope that the suggestion will in due course be carried into practical effect. In time to come we believe that all District Nurses will be not only Registered Nurses, but skilled Midwives as well. And as far as the poorest class of patients outside the Infirmarys and the Hospitals are concerned, we imagine that this is the manner in which the question of improved Midwifery help will be solved.

But it may be asked whether this is all the sphere of work which will be open to the Midwives of the future; to which we unhesitatingly answer in the negative. Unless we misread the signs of the times, the co-operation of the Nursing and Medical professions, the members of each being drawn so largely from the same social class, must become constantly closer as time goes on. The duty of the Doctor must ever be to direct, that of the Nurse to obey. But Registration, while it organises the latter class more directly under the control of the former, binds both together into one profession, more inseparable in future than it has ever been in the past. So we look forward to the near approach of the time when Nurses and Midwives will not only hold a far higher position than they do now, and not only receive far better remuneration, but will also have a far wider sphere of usefulness opened up to them. We look forward to the time when Doctors will have their regular Nursing assistants, if not their Nursing partners, who will undertake for them a large amount of the work which now overtaxes

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