

which are asked, and I have no doubt quite justly asked, by small nursing homes. All the poorer members of the professional classes, smaller tradesmen, upper clerks, and many skilled artisans, would fall into this group.

At the present moment there are two classes of people in London who receive the very best medical and surgical treatment that money can buy. These are the richest and the poorest, the latter treated in hospitals, the former in their own homes.

When middle-class people fall seriously ill they are every bit as much in need of these advantages as are their superiors and inferiors. To a great many—to solitary bachelors for instance—it is impossible to get proper attendance at their lodgings, even in an ordinary medical disease if severe enough to confine them to bed. A surgical ailment requiring operation needs still more appliances and assistance. These people accordingly either sponge on hospitals, where, since they are not suited to their surroundings, they give a great deal of trouble and are extremely dissatisfied, or they go to a small nursing home, where they have to pay a great deal more than they can properly afford.

The solution to this difficulty is to start some large institution at which they shall be able to obtain treatment at a lower charge. This end could be reached in two ways. In the first place, while providing everything needful, such a hospital could save a good deal by cutting off luxuries; and, in the second place, it ought by its size to be able to manage things at a much cheaper rate. I am convinced that there would be a very good business to be made in this way. Some such hospitals do now exist, but on far too small a scale to really pay their owners.

Since such a hospital would only be meant to provide nursing and accommodation where it could not be obtained at home, the patients ought to be attended by their own doctors. It ought in fact to be conducted on the lines of the present nursing homes.—I am, etc.,

Upper Wimpole Street, W. March 8th. W. P. HERRINGHAM.

THE GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL AND THE OBSTETRICAL SOCIETY.

SIR,—The minutes of the Executive Committee of the General Medical Council of February 25th, 1895, contain a copy of some communications which have passed between the General Medical Council and the Council of the Obstetrical Society. On December 16th, 1892, the General Medical Council forwarded a copy of its rule relating to the granting of certificates in midwifery to the Obstetrical Society and other practitioners; and on January 10th, 1893, the Society replied that the words of their diploma which qualified the holder to attend natural labours were “merely an expression of opinion on the part of the Society.” On June 11th, 1894, the General Medical Council again passed a rule, and sent a copy of it to the Obstetrical Society; and on July 26th, 1894, the Society replied to the General Medical Council to the effect that their diploma “had been subjected to legal criticism on this point.” On January 14th, 1895, the Society asked the General Medical Council “to point out in what respect the certificate of the Obstetrical Society of examination in midwifery is a colourable imitation of diplomas conferring a legal right to admission to the *Register*, and contravenes the spirit of the Medical Acts, and is calculated to deceive the public.” On February 25th, 1895, the Executive Committee of the General Medical Council, after considering communications from the Obstetrical Society, passed the following:

That the Executive Committee are of opinion that the words in the diploma, “a skilled midwife competent to attend natural labour,” are open to legal objection, seeing that under the Medical Act, 1884, midwifery is one of the three branches in which a regular practitioner must pass an examination in order to obtain a registrable qualification.

The above cited words suggest that the holder has a registrable qualification. This both contravenes the spirit of the Medical Act of 1886, and is calculated to deceive the public.

Again, the formal character of the document, which is described on its face as a diploma, is fitted to deceive the more ignorant part of the public, that part which most needs protection.

That the Executive Committee request the President and Council of the Obstetrical Society of London to inform the General Medical Council within one month what steps they have taken to bring their certificate within the terms of the resolution of the Council.

As regards the certificate issued by the City of London Lying-in Hospital, the Executive Committee of the General Medical Council passed the following:

That as this Council has been instituted to regulate the education of practitioners in medicine, surgery, and midwifery, as well as to enable the public to distinguish between qualified and unqualified practitioners, the Executive Committee cannot approve of any document professing to qualify persons for any practice in medicine, surgery, or midwifery issued by any body or institution which is not a medical authority under the Medical Acts.

The Executive Committee further declare that medical practitioners who sign such documents will be liable to the censure of the Council in accordance with the following resolution passed by the Council on May 22nd, 1894.

It will be recollected that the General Medical Council has stated that it will consider the issuing of such diplomas to be “infamous conduct in a professional respect.”

Now, taking the above important facts into consideration, I wish to ask, Do all the “Fellows” of the Obstetrical Society approve of the Council of the Society defying the General Medical Council? Is it right to take up the time of Council when it has so much work to do? Do they think it right that societies and bodies, other than the medical authorities under the Medical Act, should take up this examination and granting of documents which profess to entitle the holder to practise any branch of midwifery, or medicine, or surgery? Surely not, else the Medical Act will be repealed. Again, is the Council of the Obstetrical Society acting in the name and with the full sanction of its Fellows? There are some 700 Fellows, and it will not be pleasant if they are all found guilty of “infamous conduct.” The above quoted words—“on the part of the Society”—show that their Council speaks in their name. Dr. Herman, in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of January 12th, is reported to have said that the action of the Medical Council “might be regarded as a general threat only, which he did not think they would dare to enforce.” Dr. Playfair, in the JOURNAL of January 26th, terms the resolutions of the Medical Council as “insulting,” while Sir J. Williams, in the JOURNAL of January 19th, thinks that the Medical Council “cannot be fully aware of the full significance of its resolution.”

I would again ask—Do these three Fellows of the Obstetrical Society reflect the full and open opinion of the 700 Fellows? Do the 700 Fellows agree to the principle that any body of medical practitioners grouping themselves into a society have a right to establish a system of examining and granting documents to persons who cannot pass the usual medical examining bodies and which profess to entitle the holder to practise either midwifery or medicine or surgery?—I am, etc.,

Liverpool, March 9th.

ROBERT R. RENTOUL.

OBITUARY.

CHARLES H. ROBINSON, F.R.C.S.I.

WE regret to have to announce the death of Mr. C. H. Robinson at his residence in Kingstown, co. Dublin, on March 1st, after two days' illness. Mr. Charles Robinson, who was born in Dublin on January 19th, 1839, was the son of Mr. William S. Robinson, late Comptroller of Her Majesty's Stationery Department, Ireland. He received his professional education in the College and Ledwich Schools and the Adelaide Hospital. He obtained his first qualification before he attained his twentieth year, and soon afterwards went to Egypt. Subsequently he was appointed surgeon in the P. and O. Company's service. He became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland in 1873, and Member of the Royal College of Physicians shortly after that diploma was instituted. He had become a Licentiate in 1862. From 1872 to 1881 he lectured on anatomy at the Ledwich School, and at a later date on botany and zoology. In 1886 he was appointed Examiner in anatomy, physiology, materia medica, botany, and pharmacology in the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. He was Consulting Surgeon to the Carogh Orphanage, and Surgeon to the Ladies' Home. He contributed papers on clinical subjects to the *Dublin Journal of Medical Science*, to our own columns, and to other medical