

tion which remains unintelligible even after Mr. Horsley's explanation.

That any supporter of the Midwives Bill contemplates for a moment the registration of a class of women who shall be "fully qualified obstetrical practitioners" is an invention of the enemy which has been exposed so often that it is surely needless to deny it again.—I am, etc.,  
George Street, W., June 1st. W. S. PLAYFAIR.

SIR,—In the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of May 18th, 1895, you publish a letter under the above heading, signed by Dr. Rentoul. May I, in the first place, point out the great injustice which is being done to the Bill now before Parliament by confusing together the two separate questions (as pointed out by the President of the General Medical Council) of the certificates granted midwives by the Obstetrical Society and other bodies, and that of the education, etc., of midwives included under the term "registration." The two things have only this in common—that some of the certificates, if not all of them, will disappear with the passing of the Act.

I will first comment upon some misquotations with which Dr. Rentoul, according to his custom, fortifies his case.

Dr. Rentoul argues "that it is not really meant to enforce any penalties, because no prosecution shall be instituted by a private person;" and he goes on to prove this by "the Medical Act, the Dentist Act, and the Pharmacy Act (S. 17) provide that 'any person' can institute proceedings, but the criminal midwife is to go free." What these Acts really state about the prosecution of a person registered under one of them is:—Medical Acts, 1858 to 1886: absolutely nothing. Dentist Act, 1878: "A prosecution for any of the offences above in this Act mentioned shall not be instituted by a private person, except with the consent of the General Medical Council or of a Branch Council, but may be instituted by the General Medical Council, by a Branch Council, or by a medical authority, if such Council or authority think fit." This applies to a person falsely using a dental qualification which he does not possess. Otherwise there is nothing said about "any person instituting proceedings." Doubtless the Pharmacy Act would show a similar misstatement of its provisions.

Another remark he makes is: "I cannot discover in this Bill any clause which distinctly empowers the Midwives' Board to remove the name of a midwife from their register;" and he quotes Clause 6 (f) in respect to the framing of its rules. Clause 6 (g) gives the required authority; it must therefore be presumed that Dr. Rentoul has overlooked this.

Dr. Rentoul enumerates a long list of minor operations which he would wish to see a midwife forbidden to perform by provisions in the Bill. Since any person can now perform any operation whatsoever upon any other person who is silly enough to allow him, why does Dr. Rentoul restrict his objection to the few he mentions? Surely he would not allow the midwife to amputate an extremity, or perform abdominal section, or any of the other operations included under the head of surgery? Yet if the ones he mentions were to be put into an Act he would, reasonably enough, argue that she was only forbidden these special ones and that she might do any other she pleased.

He objected in a previous Bill to the mere mention of the word "operation;" now he not only wishes it put in, but to put it in such a manner as to appear to give a right to perform more serious operations than the ones he mentions.

For practical purposes it will be sufficient for most persons that a midwife whose name is on the register of midwives will practise under rules approved by the General Medical Council, and that her name can be removed from the register of midwives for infraction of them.

As to the granting of certificates of stillbirth and of death by midwives, it is evidently highly improper that unqualified persons should give certificates of this nature; but various Acts of Parliament tend to block the way towards absolute prohibition. It is hoped that the difficulties may be overcome and the granting of such certificates by midwives prohibited under the Bill.

As to midwives in Scotland and Ireland who are not at present to be included in the register of midwives, it is evident that an Act of Parliament cannot impose a maximum of knowledge. A minimum of knowledge is imposed under the

present Bill, and there will, undoubtedly, be no difficulty as to the admission of future midwives who shall have passed an examination above the required standard to the midwives register. Clause 6 (b) and (c) allow the Board not only to appoint the examiners and assistant examiners but to say when and where the examinations shall be held. It is not forbidden to hold examinations in either Scotland or Ireland, nor is it intended to interfere in any way with Irish or Scottish midwives.—I am, etc.,  
F. ROWLAND HUMPHREYS,  
Fellows Road, South Hampstead, N.W., May 23rd.

SIR,—May I be permitted to point out that the resolution passed by the Shropshire and Mid-Wales Branch was as follows:

"That in the opinion of the Branch the present system of allowing any woman, even without the slightest training or fitness, to practise as a midwife, and under no control, is unsatisfactory."

This resolution was passed on June 26th, 1894, *nem. con.* By it the Branch wished to express its strong dissatisfaction with the present system (or rather want of system); but it refrained from passing any opinion on the different remedies which had at that time been proposed.

Dr. C. G. Havell is therefore not quite accurate in his statement that a resolution was passed in favour of registration of midwives. This Branch is still free to discuss, and to give an opinion upon, any scheme for ameliorating the present state of things which may be placed before it.—I am, etc.,

H. WILLOUGHBY GARDNER,  
Hon. Secretary Shropshire and Mid-Wales Branch.  
Shrewsbury, June 5th.

## NAVAL AND MILITARY MEDICAL SERVICES.

### SURGEON-CAPTAIN WHITCHURCH.

THE correspondent of the *Times* with the Chitral expedition, in a letter written immediately after a visit to the fort, states that the manner in which Surgeon-Captain Whitchurch carried Captain Baird into the fort was, in the opinion of all the officers of the garrison, one of the most gallant feats ever performed. He gives the following more precise details which he had from the lips of officers who actually witnessed the occurrence. Captain Baird had been sent with a small party to ascend a hill about a mile and a-half from the fort, and attack a body of the enemy stationed on it. In doing this he received the wound from which he died; the attack failed and his men had to retire. The attack which was being made on a village by the main body lower down having also failed, the whole body had to retire, and when they arrived within the walls of the fort they found Captain Baird and Surgeon-Captain Whitchurch missing. But presently the latter was seen staggering along towards the gate bearing Baird on his back, and his story was this: That finding Baird wounded with only two or three men by him, the rest of the party being engaged in the fight, he collected together half a dozen others, and then, supporting Baird, had made his way towards the fort. But now the troops were retreating and the enemy were on every side, firing from behind walls and houses, and madly excited at their success. Fortunately, however, darkness was setting in, and under cover of this Whitchurch made his way by a circuitous route, not under three miles in length, back to the fort. Once he had to set Baird down and lead his little guard to clear a way at the point of the bayonet. How he got through at all is a marvel; and just before reaching the fort poor Baird was hit again in the face. But he escaped himself unscathed and brought his comrade in, only, it is true, to die the following morning; but to die among his brother officers, to hear their praises of his gallantry, and to have the opportunity of sending through them one last message to his far-off home in England. We regret to note that Surgeon-Captain Whitchurch is proceeding to India, *via* Gilgit, on sick leave, having been suffering from repeated attacks of fever.

## UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES.

### UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

#### M. B. PASS EXAMINATION, May, 1895.—PASS LIST.

*First Division.*—J. O. Harvey, St. Bartholomew's Hospital; J. R. Hickinbotham, Mason College, and General Hospital, Birmingham; W. H. Pollard, St. Bartholomew's Hospital; H. M. Rigby, London Hospital; A. Tait, Yorkshire College, and General Infirmary, Leeds; W. Turner, King's College; and J. E. Waite, University College.  
*Second Division.*—G. J. Branson, B.A., Mason College; F. M. Burnett, St. Bartholomew's Hospital; A. W. R. Cochrane, St. Bartholomew's Hospital; W. H. W. Elliott, Guy's Hospital; P. C. Fenwick, St. Thomas's Hospital; G. W. Gostling, University College; W. E. L. Horner, University College; S. P. James, St. Mary's Hospital; R. L. Jones, University College; Harriet Edith Florence Knight, London School of Medicine, and Royal Free Hospital; J. Mace, Yorkshire College, and General Infirmary, Leeds; H. F. Mantell, St. Mary's Hospital; A. A. Martin, St. Mary's Hospital; L. J. Miskin, St. Thomas's Hospital; E. H. Norman, Westminster Hospital; C. Oldfield, Yorkshire College; B. A. Richmond, B.Sc., Guy's