

MIDWIFERY—THE L.O.S. AND THE NURSING
PROFESSION.

SIR,—The recent letters from Mr. Humphreys, Mrs. Colby, "F.R.C.S.," and others have determined me to bring under your notice two advertisements in *Brighton and Hove Society* (issue of June 15th, page 23). They form an instructive commentary upon the statements of those who endeavour to persuade the more credulous that the measures proposed for the organisation of midwives and nurses are solely for the benefit of the public (especially its poorer portion), and will not tend to diminish the practice and status of the general practitioner. Of these two advertisements (published one under the other) the second, under the head of "Accouchement," offers the services of an L.O.S. and M.R.B.W.A. (whatever that may be). She will attend ladies at their own homes, or accommodate them at her own residence. She states that she is "fully qualified"—but adds, "Doctor in attendance, if desired." The other advertiser holds classes for instruction in "Massage, Nauheim Treatment, Anatomy, etc." She does not append any letters to her name, but styles herself "London Certified Masseuse." The classes are held three times a week, and she is "assisted" by a "medical man," who lectures twice a week. I invite the attention of the profession to the careful manner in which the "doctor" and the "medical man" respectively are assigned a secondary and subordinate position in both instances. The "Accouchement" advertisement appears again in *Brighton and Hove Society* issue of 22nd inst.—I am, etc.,
June 22nd. BRIGHTHELMSTONE.

A SCHEME FOR SETTling THE MIDWIVES QUESTION.

SIR,—I shall be glad to be allowed a short explanation in reply to "M.R.C.S.," who, on p. 1588, supposes that I "refer to Dr. McCook Weir's Bill" in my letter in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* of June 8th, whereas the actual fact is that I was not then aware of what the Bill contained. "M.R.C.S." may not have noticed that Dr. McCook Weir's letter which appeared on June 15th is dated June 3rd. Mine appearing on June 8th, Dr. Weir wrote me and forwarded his Bill, and naturally supposed we had drafted the scheme upon it. This was not so, neither am I aware that any of those engaged in the work had any thought of it. It is quite true that I read the Bill some years ago but I had entirely lost sight of the substance of it.

I have no authority to go further into the details of the scheme referred to any more than to say it is very brief and, I trust, lucid; that it is not yet complete; that it will be published shortly, and that we shall be glad for it to be freely and fully discussed in the medical press with a view to formulating a sound measure for the "protection of parturient women" which shall have the cordial support of the profession generally.

After reading Dr. McCook Weir's Bill, I could not help thinking that he had grasped the essentials of the situation long before any of us, and although I made the suggestion of this other scheme through a different line of reasoning, and was backed up by others who had had many years' actual experience of some of those things which we have incorporated into it, yet in fairness to Dr. Weir it ought to be said that although I had forgotten his Bill and its contents, it is just possible that some of his ideas have been embodied in the scheme by some of us through an act of unconscious cerebration.

I have no doubt that, if we have unknowingly framed the essential features of his Bill in a more concise form, added others, and ask for more, in order to make it as complete as possible, Dr. McCook Weir will regard kindly the efforts of those who are perhaps as anxious as he has been and is to settle this "big question," as Dr. Percy Boulton termed it, and then fell suddenly silent.—I am, etc.,
Ardwick, Manchester, June 22nd. G. H. BROADBENT.

GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL ELECTION, 1901.

SIR.—It must be apparent to every medical practitioner that it is absolutely necessary under the existing condition of affairs that some organisation should be brought into life to deal with the forthcoming election of our representa-

tives on the General Medical Council. It is very unfair that any candidate should have to appeal to such a large constituency as the registered practitioners of England and Wales consists of. We, however, cannot by any possible means alter the existing state of things. The question remains, Is there any chance of having the different districts of the country represented at the forthcoming election? The men in the North are, I note, as usual bestirring themselves. Could not we have a meeting in London this autumn of representatives sent from the various Branches of the Association, and arrive at some conclusion as to the division of the country into three parts?

I do not wish in any way to anticipate what the ultimate result would be, but I feel that the Northern and Midland Counties might unite and nominate one candidate, the London district a second candidate, and the Southern and South-Western, including South Wales, a third candidate.—I am, etc.,

Cardiff, June 22nd.

T. GARRETT HORDER.

* * We may state that we have learnt, on application, that Mr. Victor Horsley, who was elected in 1897, intends to resign at the right moment, and to offer himself for re-election. Mr. George Brown also informs us that he will offer himself for re-election. Dr. Glover has not sent us any reply for publication.

THE FINANCES OF THE GENERAL MEDICAL
COUNCIL.

SIR.—It is evident from Mr. Frere's report on the finances of the General Medical Council that the only way to keep the Council from extinction is by imposing an annual tax on every member of the profession. It is not likely that the proposal to reduce fees will be accepted. "*Homines sumus non Dei*," said Petronius Arbitrator long ago.

But what prospect is there that even a small tax will be sufficient? The Council has had an income of several thousands a year for a long time. During the earlier years of its existence it lived within its means, and did not undertake what it could not pay for. Later on it has undertaken all kinds of labour with the vague idea that "the money will come in somehow." But we are all face to face with a high income tax which may any day be higher still if foreign complications become more threatening; with increased local charges, from which on the grounds of public health and State medicine we cannot hope to escape; and only too often with diminished incomes. Is it wise in the face of all these to expect that any cause, however good, will be sure in the long run to find support? The man in the Gospel who began to build a tower without first counting the cost of it has been handed down to us by the Highest Authority as a standing example of commercial folly. Those who do not cut their coats according to their cloth are apt to find that their clothes do not fit.

It is evident that the Council is paying under the name of mortgage interest a rental of £723 a year. Of this, a sum of £358 is returned as rent. But the Council's premises are in one of the finest shop streets in the world. Are they in daily use? No. What should we say of a shopman who kept his shop open for a week four times a year? Should we expect him to make a fortune? Premises anywhere in a quiet street would have served all purposes required by the Council, or, indeed, as they number, all told, only 31, they might easily have hired a room on the second floor of an hotel somewhere in Central London. It cannot be said that the present front to Oxford Street is either graceful or dignified. Nor does it add by its existence anything to the reputation of the profession. However, as a considerable sum was recently spent on improvements to the Council Chamber, we need not expect to see the premises sold unless the words "in liquidation" are added to the present inscription in Oxford Street.

I cannot help thinking that if, like our Association, the Council was a registered company, its shareholders would now vote for the appointment of a Receiver, and the affairs of the Council would be conducted on the common commercial principle of not ordering what you have no money to buy and what you cannot sell except at a loss when you have bought it.—I am, etc.,
June 16th. LECTOR.