

UNLICENSED PRACTITIONERS.

The above heading can be made to cover a great deal of ground, but we intend, at present, to confine our remarks under it to one particular point. A correspondent sends us a note-paper heading coming from a certain village in the West, which reads thus: "Office of—, Notary Public, Conveyancer, etc. Manager at —for —, Barristers, etc.," the offices of this firm being at a different place from that where the "manager" resides, and from which he dates his letters.

We have always thought that the establishment of "branch offices," as they are called, by a professional firm, in other places than that where the so-called head office is situated, is an objectionable proceeding, so long as the branch office is under the sole charge of an uncertificated practitioner. It has been sought to excuse it on the ground that this manager does not give advice, nor actually practise in his own name; that when advice is sought from him, he submits the case to his principals, and obtains from them the advice the client requires; and that this manager is merely a clerk in charge in the absence of the principals. Again, the fact that one of the firm makes periodical visits to the branch office is relied on as sufficient excuse for this practice.

We confess that neither on these nor on any other grounds do we see that there is anything which would warrant the propriety of such a practice. The object of it is, of course, the acquisition of clients. If the mountain won't come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain.

Here we will be met with the plea that such a course saves the would-be client from the expense of a visit to the county town, or wherever the head office may be situated. If the business to be transacted always reached the principals, and if the client would in any case have gone to the head office, if the branch had not been available, this excuse might be allowed to pass. But does the manager of the branch office always act as a mere medium for the procuring and transfer of business to his principals? We have good reason to believe this is not so; but, on the contrary, the manager often considers himself competent to give the advice sought for, or to do the business required, without seeking the intervention of his principals. A would-be client, seeing the name of a well-known firm,