

manage and control their own calling. If they believe—as it seems they do believe—that these women are not able to manage their own affairs, how can they, with any justification, propose to entrust to them the lives and healths of parturient women. These gentlemen clearly, then, either do not believe in their own proposals, or they have not, at any rate, the courage of their convictions.

The Association gravely proposes that midwives shall be under the control of the County Councils. They suggest that this control should be exercised through the medium of the Medical Officer of Health of the Council, and quite casually and cheerfully propose that all the expenses of the said control shall be borne by the Council. We very much doubt whether the already overburdened ratepayers will approve of this addition to their responsibilities, and, indeed, it is more than probable that such a provision in a Bill will very materially assist in its defeat and rejection; for we have little doubt that Parliament will feel considerable hesitation in sanctioning such an addition to local burdens.

In the next place, the machinery of control strikes us as being extremely cumbersome. There is to be a Local Authority over the midwives who is to report—apparently at considerable length, and with considerable frequency—the proceedings of the midwives in his district, to a Central Board; the duties of the County Council being chiefly defined in regard to the production of the necessary financial support. There is to be a Central Board and Local Boards—all of them are to be composed of medical men, and the Central Board is to be composed exclusively of examiners. Half the fees for examinations are to go to the examiners, the other half being used for the expenses of the examination, including the travelling fees of the examiners. These gentlemen are to be “appointed” by the General Medical Council, but as they are to be “nominated” by the Central Board—that is to say, by the examiners themselves—the function of the Medical Council appears to be somewhat of the nature of a formal registration of the decisions of a self-selected body. No light is thrown upon the somewhat important point as to who is to nominate the first examiners, nor of what number they shall consist.

There remains a very practical question. Each midwife is to pay two guineas for examination and five shillings for registration. We have no hesitation in saying that those fees will not be sufficient to cover the expenses, and yet that the class of women who would register could not afford to pay more.

Whether we look at the scheme from the points to which we have alluded, or from that of the suggestion that no one shall be permitted to practice as a midwife for reward unless registered under

the suggested Act—a provision which it is quite certain Parliament will never accept—or from that of the deprivation of registered midwives of any control over their own calling, the conclusion is inevitable that the suggestions of the Midwives' Registration Association will prove to be still-born.

SHAM NURSES.

For some years past, Nurses have been rendered increasingly indignant by the manner in which their uniform has been adopted by persons entirely unfitted to wear it. In these columns, the scandal has been commented upon frequently during the past few months, especially in connection with the assumption of the dress by women evidently of doubtful character, who infest the chief West End streets. We are glad to observe that our remonstrances have aroused the attention of the public and the press, and that the *Lancet*, the *Daily Telegraph*, and other papers have now added the weight of their opinion in condemnation of this practice. We hope, therefore, that measures will soon be taken to protect the uniform of Nurses from such usage and such disgrace.

TOBACCO AND LONG LIFE.

A sad blow has been given to many excellent people who denounce the habit of smoking. A worthy lady recently died at Penycod in her 106th year, and by herself and by her neighbours this longevity was ascribed to the habit of smoking which she had acquired in early youth and which she steadfastly adhered to, to her dying day. She preserved her mental and bodily faculties to her death, and even on the day preceeding that event she appears to have taken her usual constitutional walk—on a pair of crutches and with a pipe in her mouth.

THE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE.

The advance of communication amongst the nations is rendering it every year more necessary that there should be a universal language. It used to be thought that this would, in due course, be French, and, to-day, a considerable section of scientists are attempting to secure Latin as the universal medium of scientific speech. But the figures which have recently been collated upon this matter, render it doubtful whether it is necessary to fall back upon a dead language to supply living workers with a common means of intercommunication. From these statistics it would appear that in 1801, French was spoken by 19 per cent. of the entire population of the world; but that in 1890 the proportion had fallen to 12·7 per cent. In 1801, the German language was used by 18·7 per cent. of the population of the world; and in 1890, the figures remained practically the same. But in 1801, English was spoken by 12·7 per cent.; and in 1890, by 27·7 per cent. of the inhabitants of the globe. When one reflects upon the constantly increasing population of America and Australasia, to say nothing of the increasing number of persons in Africa and Asia who are almost compelled to learn the language of the dominant race, there seems every reason to believe that in the near future the solution of the problem will have been found, and that English will have become the universal language.

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