

It is objected by those who hold the opposite view, that the process of child-bearing is a natural and not a pathological condition, and that therefore a general nursing education is not necessary. But this argument might have been brought forward in the case of medical registration with equal justice, and yet it has been considered necessary by the medical faculty to insist upon a triple qualification in medicine, surgery, and obstetrics, as essential to registration.

As a matter of fact, in these days of civilization and artificial conditions, it is of the utmost importance that any one attending a woman in labour should understand something of the symptoms of disease, as well as of the difference between natural and complicated labour, in order that any symptom of departure from the normal may at once be detected, and reported to a medical practitioner. Such symptoms, plain to an experienced nurse, may, and often do, altogether escape the notice of the three months' midwife.

Another reason why we are glad to know that the Midwives' Bill, in the form proposed, is defunct, is that it provided for the government of Midwives by the medical profession—a profession with which, from the nature of their calling, they are bound to come into financial competition—instead of making self-government, and just representation of the interests of midwives, an essential feature. No profession can be regulated or developed in a healthy way which is merely parasitic. It is far better to delay, than to promote legislation on so unwise and unjust a basis.

When the next Bill is introduced into the House of Commons, we hope it will deal not only with midwives (or obstetric nurses), but that it will provide for the registration of medical and surgical nurses as well. What amount of special education should be required of an obstetric nurse is a matter which may well engage the attention of Superintendents of Training Schools; but we should like to point out to them that they cannot logically object to women with no general training practising obstetric nursing, without feeling it incumbent upon them to include education in obstetric nursing in the curriculum of general training.

#### THE MUNICIPALIZATION OF HOSPITALS.

THE question of obtaining adequate support for hospitals is daily becoming a more and more difficult one. Sovereigns are now extracted

with difficulty where formerly £10 was ungrudgingly given, and, year by year, hospital secretaries tell a tale of increased expenditure—necessary if the institution is to keep pace with the demand upon it—and of a shrinking income. This is the problem which has to be faced. In London the Prince of Wales' Hospital Fund has been formed to grapple with the difficulty, but the experiment has not proved altogether a success, and only recently the Duke of Fife has sounded an ominous note of warning of the near approach of municipalization. There are many causes which contribute to bring about this condition. The calls upon the purse of the charitable public increase daily, and it is evident that this purse has a bottom. Then the thinking members of the community hesitate to give their money to institutions which they have no voice in controlling; furthermore, the knowledge that vivisection is practised in some institutions, undoubtedly causes a certain amount of distrust to be felt in the management of others where no such practice exists, for, whatever arguments may be advanced by vivisectioners as to their beneficent motives, it is difficult to convince those who open their purses to charitable appeals that the practice is not both revolting and unscientific. And lastly, we are living in an age which is fast succumbing to the greed of gold; and the man to whom money bags represent the *summum bonum*, does not readily unloose their strings at the call of charity, and so it comes to pass that the necessity of placing the hospitals upon the rates is beginning to be seriously discussed. This question has been recently raised with regard to the Cardiff Infirmary. Year by year the Committee of that institution find that they are sinking deeper into debt, while the demands upon its resources are constantly increasing. The town of Barry, near by, already rates itself to the extent of £400 a year to support its Infirmary, and in Cardiff itself the Mayor contributes annually the sum of £52 10s. out of the rates towards the funds of the Infirmary. There are indications that in Cardiff at least the support of the rates is—within measurable distance—the only solution of the efficient maintenance of the Infirmary, and, if the principle is once established, the same plan will probably be adopted by other towns. We confess that we ourselves shall be sorry if the management of our voluntary hospitals is taken over by the municipalities.

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