

graduate from a smaller school showed general capability and marked ability in her studies, arrangements might be made to offer her additional advantages for work in any branches of practical nursing in which she might still be lacking.

Again, we have discussed the problem of a uniform curriculum. A careful perusal of the able paper presented last year by Miss McKechnie on "What has been accomplished in the direction of a uniform curriculum," will show how far our efforts in this direction still fall short. Would not uniformity in the matter of training teachers make this a natural result in the future work of training schools? It would undoubtedly also be the means of bringing us into closer touch with the smaller hospitals and training schools, and put our work as a society on broader and more uniform lines.

These suggestions have been advanced this year with the hope that the members would give them their careful consideration, and perhaps see their way to appointing a committee to look into the matter more thoroughly, and present a plan in detail for the carrying out of some such scheme at no great distant day.

I am aware that to place our members upon an equal footing would necessitate a complete revision of the constitution, but this is a mere detail in comparison with the improvements that would result from the establishment of the tests in deciding upon the suitability of candidates for membership. Can we find any better standard than the educational qualification?

### The Midwives' Question.

In obedience to a request from the Privy Council for the opinion of the General Medical Council upon the proposed Bill for the Registration of Midwives, a special meeting was held on April 5th, when the following considerations and recommendations were passed:—

#### GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

In considering the Bill referred to them, your Committee have held in view the previous conclusions of the Council, to the effect that it is most desirable that measures should be adopted to protect parturient women of the poorer classes from the grave risk which they now incur owing to the practices of midwives, many of whom are most ignorant, and nearly all of whom carry on their work without any medical supervision. In this view they thoroughly concur; and having regard both to the provisions of the Bill as submitted to Parliament and to the serious omissions from it, they submit that no measure should be considered as satisfactorily meeting the requirements of the case unless it contains provisions to the following effect:—

(1) That the title of the Bill shall be: A Bill to Promote the better Training of Midwives and Midwifery Nurses, and for the Compulsory Registration of them as such. (See Minutes, Vol. XXXII., p. 82.)

(2) That the term "midwife" shall be defined as meaning a woman who undertakes to attend cases of natural labour (see Minutes of Council, Vol. XXXII., 1895, p. 84), and to tend as a nurse the mother and newly-born infant during the lying-in period.

The term "Midwives' Board" should be defined in the same words as in the Bill of 1895.

(3) That it shall be the duty of the local sanitary authority of every district to appoint such registered medical practitioners as are willing to be so appointed, to whom midwives shall be required to apply for assistance and advice in all cases other than cases of natural labour, and under all circumstances which may be laid down by the Midwives' Board as calling for medical intervention. The Local Authority shall pay to every registered medical practitioner so consulted a sum of not less than one guinea, and not more than two guineas; provided always that when the patient is able to pay for such medical services the Local Sanitary Authority shall recover the fees for the same from the patient or other responsible person by ordinary process of law.

(4) That no woman, or any association of persons formed for the purpose, shall either habitually or for gain attend, or undertake to attend, on a lying-in woman, unless the person attending, and all the members of any association providing such attendance, be registered according to the provisions of the Act.

(5) That the certificate of registration shall not confer on any woman the right to sign a certificate of stillbirth, or any medical certificate, and that a penalty be imposed under Clause 3 for the granting of certificates referred to in that clause.

(6) That every woman registered under the Act shall annually register her name and address on the payment of a nominal fee on or before a day to be named by the Midwives' Board, and that provision for re-registration shall be made.

(7) That no registered midwife shall employ as assistant or substitute any person who is not also herself registered.

(8) That the privilege accorded to existing midwives to register under Clause 4 of the Bill be limited to one year from the passing of the Act; that by the same clause no evidence of *bona fide* practice or certificate in midwifery be accepted for the purposes of registration except as approved by the Midwifery Board; and that no woman be allowed to register without evidence being furnished to the Board that her character is satisfactory.

(9) That the term "constituted," as applied to the Midwives Board in Clause 5, be defined in the Bill.

(10) That the Midwives' Board should consist of registered medical practitioners, four to be elected by the Royal College of Physicians of London, four by the Royal College of Surgeons of England, and four by the Apothecaries' Society of London, and of one Chairman to be appointed by the Lord President of the Council; that a quorum be defined (see Minutes of Council, Vol. XXXII., 1895, p. 82); and that all regulations framed by such Board shall be subject to the approval of the General Medical Council.

(11) That since the duties proposed to be cast under the Bill on the General Medical Council could not be carried out unless a considerable portion of each sitting of the Council were devoted to that purpose, which would involve a large increase of expense, and since the funds of the Council consist solely of fees paid by medical practitioners for admission to the *Medical Register* in Scotland and

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)