

Lord Beaconsfield's administration, the other under Mr. Gladstone's. Both gentlemen received us most courteously, expressing the greatest possible sympathy with our objects, and acknowledging fully the importance of the proposal we laid before them. But both gentlemen assured us that, until the eternal Irish question was out of the way, there would be no chance of getting a Bill passed for poor women, and consequently that we must wait until times were better. One sympathetic vice-president assured us that, however good an object might be, and however humane it might be, when any measure was introduced into Parliament there would be some demoniacal opponent who would be sure to find fault with it, and so it could not pass unopposed. He added that, until more pressing matters of a State character were cleared away, there would not be the least chance of passing such a Bill as we proposed. Great Britain, with the exception of America, is the only country that has not adopted Registration for Midwives. In my hand I have a bulky document which I will not trouble you with, except to give you a few particulars. It gives the regulations observed in reference to Midwives in other countries, issued by order of Parliament. I may tell you that, though we have no regulations for the education of Midwives, in Austria five months' education is required, in Belgium two years. In France there are two sorts of Midwives—an upper and a lower; one requires one year's education, and the other nine months' education. In the Netherlands two years' education is needed, in Prussia five months, in Russia one year, and in some cases two years, in Spain nine months, and as I have said before, in the United States no education is needed. To show the importance of having well educated and Trained Midwives, I may mention a fact which, when it was published a few years since, struck me very forcibly. It is that mortality among poor mothers who do not employ skilled Midwives, has been computed at one in every two hundred, whereas, at the Royal Maternity Charity, where they only engage duly qualified women, the mortality is only one in four hundred, a diminution of not less than one half. The Obstetrical Society has done what it could in reference to this matter. Although it did not succeed in passing its Bill for Registering Midwives, it has instituted examinations for which a great many women have entered, and which they have passed successfully. Now we have a nucleus of Midwives who are competent to meet any emergency that may arise in the course of their practice. I may say, in reference to this subject, that I believe if they were educated in one single particular, it would be a great means of

saving the lives of not a few women. You have heard, no doubt, of the new system in Surgery, which has come to be regarded as a very important matter. I refer to what is termed the antiseptic treatment. If all Midwives were instructed in the way of preventing the spread of infectious diseases, the mortality would be immensely reduced, and we should notice it immediately. It seems to me that now, when Nurses are to be registered, it is a proper time to attempt to get Midwives registered. If we cannot get a Bill through Parliament, we may obtain a Royal Charter; and, supported as we are by a Princess, who, besides being instructed in matters pertaining to health and disease, is also ready to do good in every possible way, I cannot help thinking that we shall eventually succeed. The restrictions which we propose to place upon Midwives are in no way more stringent than those that are applied to Medical men themselves. Mr. Brudenell-Carter has said that any one who desires to do so can employ a Nurse who is not registered. It is proposed, in reference to Midwives, that we shall not prevent women practising in that capacity who may not be registered. Such a course would be to interfere sometimes with the aid that one woman can afford to another woman who is not provided with a Midwife. But what we propose is, that there should be a Register kept so that the poor may judge who are competent and who are incompetent, so that they shall not be prevented from obtaining a person who ought to know what she is about in attending them in their confinements. I will say, lastly, that most women in good positions of life take care to secure good attendants in their confinements even at large fees, and do their best to obtain skilled Midwives. We pray in church that poor women may be delivered from the great pains and perils of confinement, and yet, up to the present time, nothing has been done by which we can assure that poor women shall be able to obtain proper attendance in the time of their trial. I trust that this meeting will be the beginning of a movement in the right direction, and that the great blot in our social economy may be from this day wiped out.

Dr. MATTHEWS DUNCAN said: If anything were required to show the progress of this Nurses' Association beyond the great meeting that is here and the documents that the Association now publishes, it would be supplied by the gratifying knowledge that we have now arrived at the inevitable stage of opposition. That is a stage that is reached by every movement. The opposition, I think, is of very great value. I would not deprecate opposition in any degree. I would only deprecate the infusion of bitterness or bad feeling

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