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## EDITORIAL.

### THE REGISTRATION OF MIDWIVES.—V.

WE have pointed out that the Registration of Midwives Bill, in the form in which the Midwives' Institute drafted it, provided for the formation practically of an entirely new class of Obstetric Practitioners—women of "good character and fair elementary education," whom the law would recognise in consequence of their legal Registration as persons qualified to perform any or every Midwifery operation, however dangerous and difficult. Let us now turn from the education and experience which this Bill considered sufficient to enable women to undertake and safely perform these serious procedures, and contrast it with the amount of theoretical and practical experience demanded from an ordinary Medical Student before the law permits him to be given a like responsibility. The latter then is obliged for three sessions—that is to say, for about eighteen months—to study minutely the anatomy of the body frame-work and the physiological processes of its internal organs. He is then called upon to devote at least another period

of equal length to the study of medicine and surgery generally, and to attend personally and treat at least twenty cases of labour, while he receives a course of theoretical instruction on the art of Obstetrics. Finally, for at least one more year he is called upon to improve in knowledge in the more practical part of his profession. Four years, then, has until now been the minimum length of the Medical Student's curriculum, and it is probably only a question of time when this will be increased to five years; in fact, the General Medical Council—the controlling power in medical education—has already accepted the principle that five years' pupilage is necessary, and, therefore, that time must, sooner rather than later, become a recognised element in the medical scheme of education.

With medical science ever advancing, therefore, it is no time now to attempt to lower the standard of knowledge amongst Obstetric Practitioners. And we desire to point out as seriously as possible that this would have been the inevitable result of the passage into law of the Midwives Bill, because this measure in the first place places the standard of general education and special experience of Midwifery at as low a level as it could well have chosen. Section IV. is therefore one of the most important in the whole Bill, and we give it, therefore, verbatim.

"Qualifications for Registration. — Every woman applying to be registered as a Midwife shall bring proof of being not less than twenty-one years of age, and of being of good moral character, as certified by a magistrate or clergyman, or some other minister of religion in the town, parish, or hamlet in which she lives.

"She must satisfy a Board of Registration that she possesses a fair elementary education.

"She must also bring written proof of having been a Midwifery Pupil for not less than three

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