in many directions. The National Association for Promoting the Welfare of the Feeble-minded has been formed to establish homes for this afflicted class. The British Child Study Association was founded in 1894 as a psychological society to investigate child nature: we look with interest for the results of their work. In several towns, as well as in London, separate classes for children receiving special instruction have been established, and in many other directions there are indications of a desire to obtain knowledge as to the exceptional conditions of childhood to be provided for and the best means of making such provision.

The experience gained by your Committee, and the fact that this work has been found useful in various directions, lead us to ask for reappointment in order that we may be in a position to give continued assistance in shaping the practical outcome of investigations conducted under your auspices. The Committee therefore ask to be reappointed.

FRANCIS WARNER, Hon. Sec.

REPORT OF THE ANÆSTHETICS COMMITTEE.

SINCE the reappointment of the Committee at the last annual meeting, the work, being for the most part clerical, has been largely accomplished by clerks, under the supervision of the assistant honorary secretary. The "complicated cases," 733 in number, were first submitted to the same thorough scheme of analysis that had been employed in dealing with the "uncomplicated cases." Owing to the many facts chronicled, often supplemented by considerable correspondence with the observers, the devotion of much time to this work became necessary. The different data collected from the entire analysis were then tabulated, and averages worked out where necessary; so that the Committee is now in possession of tables which show the result of the whole analysis of the record books. Upon these tables as a basis a full report of the investigation is now in process of construction.

The Committee beg that the Council will again reappoint it, and are applying for a further grant.

JONATHAN HUTCHINSON, Chairman.

CHRISTOPHER CHILDS, Hon. Sec.

GEORGE ROWELL, Assistant Hon. Sec.

REPORT OF THE THERAPEUTIC COMMITTEE.

DURING the past year the Therapeutic Committee have continued their inquiry relating to the frequency of employment of certain drugs at present included in the *British Pharmacopœia*. The interest taken in the inquiry conducted in 1895, and further evinced in the inquiry in 1896 concerning extract of aconite, has encouraged the Committee to endeavour to ascertain the views of members of the Association concerning ammonium phosphate. Circular letters have been addressed to those members of the Association who in 1895 stated that they employed this drug, and they have been requested to supply information as to the doses they employ and the objects for which they have given ammonium phosphate. The answers have been tabulated, and they show much agreement concerning the dose; the answers relating to the conditions for which it has been prescribed show greater difference of opinion; some use it for gouty conditions, but even of these a large number state that they have found it of little service and have now discontinued using it. Very many answers indicate that in their original statement of employing it often or rarely they have made an error. As answers to this inquiry are still being received it is inexpedient at present to give full details of this inquiry.

At the request of the Committee Dr. C. D. F. Phillips has continued his investigations concerning the physiological and therapeutic actions of hydrastis. Some of the results of the work of Dr. Phillips and Dr. Pembrey were embodied in a paper recently read by them before the Physiological Society. In a recent communication to the Therapeutic Committee Dr. C. D. F. Phillips gave a summary of the constituents of *hydrastis canadensis*, and referred to the physiological action of the various constituents. In his more recent experiments he has mainly employed the hydrochlorate of hydrastine, and he notes the readiness with

which it produces salivation in cats. He is convinced that it does not act upon the muscles of the uterus, and that it causes abortion by producing contraction of the blood vessels. As he proposes reading his paper at the Montreal meeting of the Association, it would be unfair to give his conclusions in greater detail.

Other subjects which have engaged the attention of the Committee during the past year are the actions of preparations of quillaia upon the heart, and the uses of senecio; upon both of these subjects preliminary reports have been made to the Committee.

NESTOR TIRARD, Hon. Sec.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE CONTROL OF RAILWAY SERVANTS' AND MARINERS' EYESIGHT.

THE Committee regrets to have to report that its recommendations endorsed by the influential deputation of ophthalmic surgeons which waited upon the President of the Board of Trade in 1895 have not yet been adopted by the Government.

So far as the eyesight of railway men is concerned, the Board of Trade asserts that it has not as yet any legal authority to interfere. Fortunately much stricter precautions are now taken by the majority of the railway companies, and although further reforms are desirable, the case is not so urgent as that of the mercantile marine.

The Committee is of opinion that the time has come when Parliamentary powers must be obtained to enforce at least the eyesight examination on every seaman at the outset of his apprenticeship, and steps are now being taken to inform Members of Parliament of the facts of the case.

The Committee desires again to draw attention to the international character which the movement for reform has now assumed. Seeing the importance of international agreement in the conduct of marine traffic, and in the visual requirements of mariners, the Committee hopes that the Council will delegate one or more of the Committee to attend the Second International Conference on Railway and Marine Hygiene proposed to be held at Brussels this autumn.

N. C. MACNAMARA, Chairman.

GEORGE MACKAY, Hon. Sec.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL PRACTITIONERS AND ETHICAL COMMITTEE.

THE General Practitioners and Ethical Committee have held four meetings during the past year. The question as to the desirability of medical education including instruction in medical ethics was again considered, and the following resolution unanimously adopted:

That the examining bodies be asked to send a copy of any ethical rules or declarations to which their diplomates have to subscribe on obtaining their diplomas.

Your Committee have to report that this communication has elicited replies and valuable help from the following Universities and Corporations:—

Royal College of Physicians, London.
Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh.
Royal College of Physicians, Ireland.
Royal College of Surgeons, London.
Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh.
Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland.
Royal University of Ireland.
University of London.
University of Oxford.
University of Cambridge.
University of Durham.
University of Edinburgh.
University of St. Andrews.
University of Aberdeen.
University of Glasgow.
Trinity College, Dublin.
Victoria University.
Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons, Glasgow.
Society of Apothecaries.

The Committee are specially indebted to Dr. Liveing, the Registrar of the Royal College of Physicians, London, for his full and courteous response to their communication. A copy of the replies has been recently forwarded to all the Branches, with the request that they be laid before the Ethical

Committee or Council of the Branch. A second time your Committee also memorialised several universities and corporations, as their replies were considered indefinite and unsatisfactory, "suggesting the desirability of requiring from their graduates or diplomates, on admission, a subscription to an ethical declaration and submission to the authority of the corporation in matters concerning professional conduct." Satisfactory replies have been received to these communications.

MEDICAL AID ASSOCIATIONS.

The matter of the dispute of the Coventry Provident Dispensary and the profession residing in the neighbourhood was referred to the Ethical Committee of the Birmingham and Midland Counties Branch for investigation and report. The Branch has sent in a very full report, giving the whole constitution and management of the dispensary, together with certain abstracts from the report which your Committee authorised the secretary to send to each of the medical officers of the Coventry Provident Dispensary.

BIRMINGHAM AND MIDLAND COUNTIES BRANCH.—*Report of the Ethical Section on the Coventry Medical Dispute.*—The origin of the dispute dates from December, 1892, when at a meeting of the medical profession in Coventry, a paper was read denouncing the management of the Coventry Provident Dispensary.

This institution was founded in 1831, "on principles of self-help and philanthropic patronage," the rules in operation as late as 1886 say, "The object of this institution is to enable the working-classes to ensure to themselves and their families efficient medical advice and medicine during illness, by their own small periodical payments during health, and by the contributions of the more opulent to assist them in attaining this object."—*Coventry Herald and Free Press*, December 14th, 1894.

"In 1868 the report of the Committee contains the following significant passage: 'The honorary fund has again lost, by death or otherwise, some subscriptions, but no effort has been made to replace them, as it is the great wish of the Committee to make the institution as self-supporting as possible.'"—*Coventry Herald and Free Press*, December 21st, 1894.

A meeting of the whole profession was called in July, 1893, to consider and take action for the reform of some acknowledged abuses existing in the management of the Dispensary; and in consequence of the report of this meeting being published in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL*, with a statement that the medical men on the Dispensary staff were opposed to remedying these abuses, the whole of the members of the Dispensary staff withdrew from their colleagues and refused to attend any more meetings or take further united action with them till a public apology was inserted in the *JOURNAL* by the author of the letter.

It may be noted that the minutes of the meeting show that the Dispensary staff expressed themselves as quite willing to attempt to rectify some abuses in connection with the Dispensary, and were voted on a Committee with that object in view.

Also, that after the rupture at the meeting held by the other side, called hereafter the Coventry Public Medical Service, a resolution was passed denying all knowledge of the author of the letter, stating that it had been written and published without their knowledge or sanction, and asking the Dispensary doctors to rejoin the Committee; this they refused to do; and from that day onwards the medical profession in Coventry have been divided into two nearly equal camps—those connected with the Dispensary staff and those in Coventry Medical Service; and such feelings existed that the latter have passed a resolution that no one on the Dispensary staff is eligible for election into the ranks of the Coventry Medical Service.

Attempts on the part of the Coventry Medical Service to submit the points in dispute to arbitration were not successful, as the other side would not consent to arbitration.

The following points have been inquired into by the Ethical Committee of the Birmingham and Midland Counties Branch:—

1. That the Dispensary Medical Staff hold appointments in an institution which has been condemned by the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL*.

This seems proved from the circumstance that, when the *JOURNAL* had its attention called to the fact that in its issue of July, 1896, it had published an advertisement for a surgeon to fill a vacant post at the Coventry Dispensary, the issue of August 15th, 1896, stated that the said advertisement was inserted in error and out of accordance with its usages; also, in editorial footnotes to letters in the issues of November 3rd and November 24th, 1894, the management of the institution in respect to admission without wage limit is expressly condemned.

"At any rate, as we said in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* of October 13th, the Dispensary (Coventry) is not an undertaking the advertisement of which would knowingly be admitted in our *JOURNAL*."—*BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL*, November 1st, 1894.

"As far as we can see at present the Dispensary authorities have put themselves wholly in the wrong."—*BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL*, November 24th, 1894.

2. The low scale of remuneration they accept seriously interferes with all medical fees in the town; this seems proved. Population of Coventry is 52,000, 26,000 are members of the Dispensary, and the staff receive a varying sum in remuneration equal to 1s. 1d. to 1s. 4d. per head per annum.—*Coventry Herald*, December 19th, 1894.

3. There is no proper attempt at enforcing what is known as a wage limit; this seems proved. The Dispensary passed, at its Annual Meeting in 1893, a resolution that the pecuniary circumstances of an applicant should be no bar to membership. The Medical Staff of the Dispensary opposed this, but it was carried, no member of the Staff resigning; this rule was repealed at the Annual Meeting of 1895, but in 1896, on December 4th, the *Coventry Herald* in large type editorial says: "There is no wage limit in the Coventry Provident Dispensary, and the Public

Medical Service has been established expressly to uphold the principle." Neither statement has been controverted, and instances can be given if required of people joining who could well afford to pay doctors' bills.

4. The Dispensary Staff refuse to meet in consultation with other doctors in the town on Dispensary cases. There still exists on the books of the Dispensary a rule that the Medical Officers should not hold consultation with anyone outside their Staff. The Dispensary Staff on their side offer to make the rule a dead letter according to their statement.

5. That the Dispensary Staff are in the hands of a Lay Committee. Rule 4 states that the government is in the hands of all the members from the President to the ordinary members; no surgeon is included.

Rule 8 states that the Committee shall consist of 24 members, and Rule 17 that the Medical Staff shall send 2 members to the general meeting.

6. That the Dispensary touts for members. Active canvassing used to exist, but since the Dispensary has absorbed half the population of Coventry, it is no longer required, but anyone can join, even when ill (according to the rules), if he or she can procure two healthy persons above the age of 12 to enter at the same time and pay one year's subscription in advance.

7. That they exploit the medical profession for pecuniary gain. This seems proved from the fact that surplus funds are not all divided up amongst the profession. In 1893 £500 was invested on mortgage and property in addition purchased, and the Medical Staff do not receive quite two-thirds of the members' subscriptions according to rule.

It would appear from the above that there are grave flaws in the management of this institution from a professional point of view.

Signed on behalf of the Committee,

M. ARDEN MESSITER,

Chairman.

February 18th, 1897.

The staff held a meeting, and have forwarded the following reply:—

1. It is true that the management of our institution in respect of admission without wage limit is expressly condemned by the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL*, and on this account they refused to admit an advertisement sent by the Committee last year, though they had accepted these advertisements on previous occasions. For a considerable time we have been and are still endeavouring to induce our Committee to introduce a wage limit as well as other reforms.

2. These statements are incorrect. In consequence of so many mis-statements which were mere guesses as to the number of members in the Dispensary, having been made in public speeches on different occasions, at the beginning of last year (1896), in order to arrive at an accurate knowledge of the number a careful estimate of both ordinary and club members was made, which showed that the total number did not exceed 18,000, and this number had never been exceeded in previous years. The census of the population of this city taken in March 1897 by the municipal authorities showed 62,000, so that the Dispensary included very much less than one-third of the population. Last year there were eighteen medical men in Coventry, which included the six members of the staff of the Dispensary, so that the share of the population under the care of the staff does not appear to us at all disproportionate. Respecting our remuneration, the total receipts for 1896 from members' payments (including both ordinary and club members) amounted to £2,864 18s. 10d. Of this £1,713 18s. 6d. was divided amongst the staff, and the rest was spent in the working expenses of the institution, namely, dispensers' salaries, drug bills, etc., etc., that is, the staff received two-thirds of the receipts from members' payments after the collector's salary had been deducted.

3. There is no wage limit, the Committee believing that they can better restrict the institution to the proper classes by individual consideration of the list of applicants at each monthly meeting. We do not agree with this, and have long been, and still are, fighting for a wage limit. The resolution that the pecuniary circumstances of an applicant should be no bar to membership was passed in a spirit of pique on account of the attacks which had been made on the institution and individual members of the Dispensary by some of the medical men of the town. We opposed it, and on our urgent representations of the position in which we were placed by it, it was rescinded shortly afterwards. With regard to admission of people who could pay a doctor's bill, every month the list of applicants is examined by the staff as well as the Committee, and improper cases objected to and inquired into, and in our opinion it is rare for anyone to be admitted who is able to pay a doctor's bill. The deputation of medical men in the town which waited on the Committee some time ago gave a list of about thirty names, almost all, if not everyone of whom were members of clubs similar to those held by the medical men themselves. These men joined their clubs as working-men, and in course of years had improved their pecuniary position, and many though still remaining members of their clubs, come to us and pay us as private patients. There are no clubs in Coventry in or out of the Dispensary which have a retrospective rule regarding the pecuniary position of their members, and there are not more members in the clubs in the Dispensary than there are in those outside who are able to pay doctor's bills in proportion to their total numbers.

4. This statement is incorrect. The only rule referring to consultations is Rule 16, which says:—"The Medical Officers, in cases of danger or difficulty shall, if they think it necessary, or if the patient so desires, call in for consultation any or all of the medical staff, or any specialist, the specialist's fee only to be paid by the member." The Committee have no power to say we shall call in any other medical man except the staff, unless they undertook to pay their fees, but they do not say we should not hold consultation with them; on the contrary, we have often done so, and we have also offered, as far as this rule gives us any power to refuse such consultations, to make it a dead letter and to meet in consultation over dispensary patients as we do over our private ones.

5. The management consists of a General and Medical Committee, both of which meet monthly. Two members of the staff represent the Medical Committee on the General Committee.

6. This is incorrect. The Committee have always boasted that they have never allowed canvassing, and the collector of more than twenty years' standing states that he has never entered a house unless asked, or

in any way solicited a single member. The rule for admission is as follows: If ill a person may join by paying 10s., and be entitled to the benefits at once, otherwise an applicant must be in good health, must pay three months' subscription, and must wait three months before becoming entitled to benefits. There is an old rule, that if a person is ill and can procure two healthy persons above twelve to enter at the same time, and pay one year's subscription in advance, he may be entitled to benefits at once, but this rule is so little known that it is rarely taken advantage of; certainly there is not an average of one applicant a year under this rule.

7. Of the total sum received from members' payments, the amount which is not divided amongst the medical men is expended in the working of the institution, drugs, salaries, etc. No moneys received from members' payments are used in any other way than the above. There is another source of income in the institution derived from annual subscriptions, interest on bequests, interest and rents of properties bought by legacies. This income is expended in improving the buildings, and also helps to pay the working expenses. The medical staff do receive two-thirds of the members' subscriptions after the collector's salary has been deducted according to Rule 3.

In conclusion, we think that this is a question that requires much more knowledge than can be gained by *ex parte* statements from either side, and we shall be glad to send a deputation from our staff to meet any of your representatives, or to receive any representative you may send to us, and show him the working of the institution. At the present time we have before our Committee a memorial from the staff asking for various reforms, such as a wage limit, etc., as suggested by the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL and other authorities. This is still *sub judice*, and though we may not get all we ask for, we fail to see how our resignation, as suggested in Paragraph 3, would remove the abuses or improve the position of the rest of the profession in the town. Only two months ago a vacancy on the staff, caused by death, was filled up; there was no dearth of applicants, and an M.B. Camb. was elected, recommended for the appointment by some of the leading men on the staff of the London hospitals. And we have been told by some of the leading men in our profession in Birmingham that they could send us fifty qualified men to take our places, and that we should be foolish to think of resigning as a remedy for the abuses which exist in the institution. These we are doing our best to get remedied, as it is as much in our own interests as those of the rest of the medical men in the town.

We are, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

D. McVEAGH, M.K.Q.C.P., etc.

CHARLES DAVIDSON, MD.

W. J. PICKUP, M.D.

T. A. HIRD, M.B.

JOHN A. LOUDON, M.B.

WILLIAM FLETCHER, M.B.

The Staff of the
Coventry Provident
Dispensary.

To FRANCIS FOWKE, Esq.

Your Committee have also considered the following resolution which was passed in the Ethical Section at the last annual meeting, and referred to them by the Council:

That it is unprofessional for any medical man to hold office in any club or similar organisation, such as insurance companies or medical aid associations, in which advertising or canvassing is resorted to; that it is unprofessional for any registered medical man to farm his skill and labour to any person or persons not possessing a medical licence—by "farming" being understood a condition of service whereby such unqualified persons may make money either by direct profit or by obtaining in a co-operative way medical attendance for less than the fees ordinarily paid and accepted by the profession generally.

The resolution was duly received and entered on the minutes, but no definite decision has been arrived at, as the Committee feel that as the constitution and management of these organisations are very dissimilar, each case ought to be dealt with on its merits.

The attention of this Committee having been drawn to the operations of the London and Manchester Industrial Assurance Company, Limited, as to the amount paid to its medical officers, it was decided to communicate with the Company, and ask them to "state whether the medical advantages offered for a payment of 1s. d. a week were restricted to the weekly wage-earning class, and whether they are used by canvassers as an inducement to join the Company, and what is the rate of remuneration of the medical officers." The Company replied very fully to the Committee's communication, stating (1) that it was their desire to act in unison with, and not antagonistically to the interests of the doctors; (2) that it is their desire to secure life assurances, medical aid in combination with same being a secondary matter; and (3) their general rate to medical officers is 1s. per quarter per member; they pay the medical officer for each name that appears on the list at the commencement of each quarter whether the Company receives the premium or not: thus in many instances the payment is in reality considerably more than it appears.

Your Committee have also forwarded requests to the Branches asking for specific information regarding the operations of the Company within their areas. Up to the present time no definite replies have been received.

A large number of communications from members of the

Association has also been considered, referring to various ethical and personal questions, to all of which your Committee have given their attention.

J. WARD COUSINS, Chairman.

OBSTETRIC NURSES REGISTRATION BILL.

THE following is the Bill prepared by the Subcommittee of the Parliamentary Bills Committee, after consideration and amendment by the Branches:

ARRANGEMENT OF CLAUSES.

Clause.

1. Short title.
2. Definitions.
3. Registration.
4. Privileges of registration.
5. Provision for existing midwives.
6. Constitution and duties of Obstetric Nurses Board.
7. Training and examination of candidates.
8. Confirmation of rules.
9. Fees and expenses.
10. Register of obstetric nurses.
11. Publication of register.
12. Notice of death of obstetric nurses.
13. Penalty for obtaining registration by false representation.
14. Penalty for wilful falsification of register.
15. Prosecution of offences.
16. Civil and legal liabilities of midwifery nurses.
17. Exemption for registered medical practitioners.
18. Extent of Act.

A BILL FOR THE PROTECTION OF PREGNANT AND LYING-IN WOMEN AND NEWLY-BORN CHILDREN, BY PROMOTING THE BETTER TRAINING OF WOMEN AS OBSTETRIC NURSES, AND THEIR COMPULSORY REGISTRATION AS SUCH.

WHEREAS it is expedient that lying-in women and newly-born infants be protected against the evils arising from the practice of midwifery or midwifery nursing by ignorant and untrained persons:

Be it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1. *Short Title.*—This Act may for all purposes be cited as "The Obstetric Nurses Act, 1896."

2. *Definitions.*—In this Act

The term "obstetric nurse" means a woman who attends in cases of natural labour, and during the lying-in period, under the rules, regulations, and medical control or supervision set forth in this Act.

"Obstetric Nurses Register" means a register of obstetric nurses kept in pursuance of this Act.

"Obstetric Nurses Board" hereinafter called the Board means the Board constituted under this Act for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the Act under the authority, control, and direction of the Privy Council.

3. *Registration.*—(1) From and after the first day of January, one thousand eight hundred and ninety—, no woman shall be entitled to take or use the name or title of obstetric nurse, midwifery nurse, or midwife (either alone or in combination with any other word or words) or any name, title, addition, or description implying that she is registered under this Act, or is in fact possessed of the skill necessary to act as an obstetric nurse or midwife unless she be registered under this Act.

(2) Any person who, after the first day of January, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-six, and whose name is not upon the Register provided under this Act, shall take or use the name of obstetric nurse, midwifery nurse, or midwife, or any such other name, title, addition, or description as aforesaid, or who habitually and for gain shall attend or undertake to attend lying-in women, shall be liable upon summary conviction to a fine not exceeding five pounds.

(3) No woman shall be placed on the Register until she shall have complied with the rules and regulations for admission to registration, to be laid down in pursuance of the terms of this Act by the Board acting under the direction of the General Medical Council.

(4) Any person or persons in *bona-fide* practice as a midwife or midwifery nurse at the date of the passing of this Act, failing to register as an obstetric nurse within a period of one year after such date, who shall, habitually and for gain, attend or undertake to attend women during labour, unless registered under this Act, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding £5 for each offence, or indictment for a misdemeanour: provided always, that nothing in this Act shall apply to any person or persons attending a woman during labour in a case of emergency, where the services of a person registered under this Act, or of a duly-qualified medical practitioner, are not available.

4. *Privileges of Registration.*—A woman registered under this Act shall be entitled to act as obstetric nurse in England and Wales. From and after the first day of January, one thousand eight hundred and ninety—, no woman shall be entitled to recover any fee or charge in any court for attendance or service rendered as an obstetric nurse unless such woman be registered under this Act, and the certificate of registration under this Act shall be a certificate entitling a woman to act as an obstetric nurse in cases of natural labour only in accordance with the terms of this Act, and under the rules, regulations, and medical control or supervision set forth in this Act, and any amendments of, or additions to, such regulations which may be laid down by the Board in pursuance of the terms of this Act. A certificate under this Act shall not confer upon any