

tioner was present at the birth, that no practitioner has examined the body, and that the child was not born alive. This is signed by the informant and retained by the sexton. (See form.)

These regulations for the burial of children supposed to be stillborn are very imperfect. The burial—if burial there be—takes place without the intervention of the registrar of births and deaths, and frequently without a medical certificate. Who controls the burial? The Act refers to the person "who has control over, or ordinarily buries bodies." When this person is the superintendent of the burial board cemetery, a certain supervision is provided. But when the grave digger or parish sexton is the official—how can there be any feeling of security? Supposing this person is shown a certificate said to be signed by a registered practitioner, does he know whether it is, or is not, a proper certificate? The person legally permitted to sign the Declaration is "any person present at the birth, or the person in charge of the child." Suppose it is signed by some old woman, or unqualified assistant—I ask what protection such a Declaration gives to the public that many children born living are not interred as stillborn, and that they have not been subjected to some malpractice during or soon after birth? Thus, any person can prevent a child, which is being born, from breathing,—put it in a soap box, take it to the parish sexton, make a declaration that the child has not lived, give the sexton a few coppers, and the *murder* is completed. At present very few prosecutions take place. In 1890 only 19 prosecutions under the Births and Deaths Acts were instituted by the Registrar General, and only one for permitting a child to be buried as stillborn without a certificate that such was the case. One prosecution!

I shall next try to answer the question: How many stillborn children are interred

each year in England? When in 1890 a midwives' registration bill was introduced into the Commons, to enable women to practise midwifery without their having either a medical or surgical qualification, and therefore placing them on a different footing to other midwifery practitioners, it occurred to me that this strange proposal should be opposed until at least provision had been made for the efficient registration of stillborn children. In order to arrive at some finding as to the number interred, I wrote to some 100 Burial Boards, asking each what number of stillborn children had been interred. I found that at 71 Burial Board cemeteries, 6,321 stillborn children had been interred in Burial Board cemeteries in England and Wales in 1890. Dr. Cameron called attention to this statement in the House of Commons, and moved for a return showing the number interred in Burial Board cemeteries in England. This return was issued in July, 1891, and we must thank Dr. Cameron and the Hon. C. T. Ritchie, President of the Local Govt. Board, for it. From it we learn that in 1133 Burial Board Cemeteries, 17,335 children, *supposed* to be stillborn, were interred during 12 months, and that 4,569 of these were buried without a medical certificate. This Return is very incomplete, as it does not include Ireland or Scotland, neither does it give us any account of those interred in the parish or other burial grounds. And in connection with this I have been told that the parish church-yards are the commonest receptacles for stillborn children. According to the Official Year-book of the Church of England, there are 13,988 benefices in England; and if only half of those benefices, not to mention those in Scotland and Ireland, have church-yards attached, we see what an enormous quantity of stillborn children must be interred in them. It is impossible to give any idea of the number thrown