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## Original Communications.

*Read before the Manchester Medico-Ethical Association, May 6, 1892.*

### PROPOSED REGISTRATION OF STILLBORN CHILDREN.

BY ROBERT READ RENTOUL, M.D.

Mr. President.

Before speaking of the evils arising from the absence of a law providing for the registration of stillborn children, I shall first refer to those Acts which regulate the present system of registration of Births and Deaths.

I do so because the Act refers to the burial of stillborn children; because registration should be carried out by the present registrars; and because a study of the Act may prevent us from perpetuating some of its recognized flaws.

As regards the registration of births and deaths, we see that the legislation regulating it has been built up piece by piece, no effort having been made to deal comprehensively with it. Previous to 1836 registration was carried out by the clergy,

who kept Parish registers. After this the 6th and 7th William IV was passed, and by it the office of Registrar General and District Registrars was formed. By this Act registration was voluntary. To rectify this the Act of 1874 was passed, and by it registration was made compulsory, penalties for neglecting to register being provided. Referring to the registration of births, the law enacts that notice must be given to the Registrar within 14 days, by any of the following persons:—A. the father and mother; B. the occupier of the house in which to their knowledge the birth occurred; C. the person present at the birth; D. or the person having charge of the infant. The informant signs the register and pays a fee of three pence for a copy of the certificate. The penalty for neglecting to register is £2. Attention is called to this because I shall, later on, show that a declaration made by any of the above is all that is required when a supposed still-born child is to be interred.

Regarding the registration of deaths, any one of the following must notify the fact of death: A. the relative of the deceased present at the death, or in attendance