Nevertheless suppressed from the published report of it, an error in supposing them not to have been appended surely cannot be chargeable on those who had no other sources of information but such as the public report supplied, for I do not suppose that I would enter into the mind of any man to conceive that the two names which alone could give the petition validity under the title assumed for it would be the only two names which the Committee would be careful not to publish. But for that unique act of modesty on the part of a public body there would, of course, have been somewhat differently worded.

Much as I regret controversy, I am, however, glad that this circumstance has occurred, as it has afforded me the opportunity of expressing my very strong dissent—and I know that a great number of the members of the Branch agree with me—from the terms of a petition which desired the General Medical Council to stigmatise as guilty of infamous conduct gentlemen of the highest personal and professional character and qualifications, simply because, at great sacrifice of time and labour, they have for years done what they could to mitigate some of those "horrors" which the distinguished President of the Council spoke of as being perpetrated by "ignorant and uneeducated women" who act as midwives. I am, etc.,

LIVERPOOL, June 22nd.

WILLIAM CARTER.

MIDWIVES REGISTRATION AND THE MIDWIVES BILL.

Sr.-Dr. Havell accuses me of misrepresenting and misquoting his letter, and therein he misrepresents me. I think dentistry was, is, and always will be, a "special branch of surgical practice," and I feel sure that it would have been much better if, instead of forming a Register to which great numbers of utterly uneducated persons were admitted, the practice of dentistry had been restricted to qualified surgeons, with a special training in dentistry. This would have relieved the overcrowding of the medical profession, and made the dental profession far above what it is. There would have been no lack of dentists, and they would have been worthy of the title of "dental surgeons."

Dr. Holden's letter touches what I am certain would be an incalculably disastrous result of the Midwives Bill if it became law. I mean the employment of midwives by medical men as their assistants. Of late years the epidemic severity of a weak-kneed General Medical Council has done something to diminish the employment of unqualified assistants; but no objection could be made to the employment of registered midwives, and there would be no possibility of preventing their dispensing and assisting in medical and surgical work. Again; there can be no doubt that, should the Midwives Bill become law, large charitable institutions would be established in various districts of large towns, which registered midwives would be employed, at a few shillings, to anyone who wished it. These institutions would be provided with a staff of obstetric consultants, who could be called in to cases of great emergency. The medical staff would, of course, give their services gratuitously, and would be recouped by the practice which their position would bring them among the rich people in the district. There are thus two classes in the medical profession who may benefit by the proposed law, obstetric consultants and cheap dispensary doctors. The respectable general practitioners will, as usual, go to the wall. That the above is a fair statement of what would certainly result is only too manifest, and, as far as the public are concerned, this change will mean, as usual, a paltry saving of money to the loss of the medical profession, and at the cost of health and lives to the public. I am, etc.,

HIGHGATE, June 23rd.

HUGH WOODS.

PROPOSED REGISTRATION OF STILLBIRTHS.

Sr.-In the British Medical Journal of April 6th, 1895, in the course of a paper on the proposed registration of stillbirths, Dr. Rentoul stated that Dr. R. Rentoul stated that "infamous infants of six months' intrauterine life and upwards, when stillborn, must be inspected and registered." Dr. Rentoul is mistaken in this, as stillbirths are not registered in New South Wales infants of six months' intrauterine life and upwards, when stillborn, must be inspected and registered. Not long ago a Bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly in Sydney which for the registration of stillbirths but it was promptly thrown out. On that occasion a Minister of the Crown made use of the following words: "I for one would consider very seriously before I gave my consent to a proposal which apparently is intended to blast the life of any young girl who, perhaps, under the promise of marriage or great temptation, has been in a position which would render her liable to such a provision as that. The hon. member proposes that although no harm is done to anybody, and there is no insinuation that the child has been got "en force" yet if it is "wiped out," the unfortunate single woman shall be permitted to be interred, for the rest of her life by having that episode in her life registered in the public records of the colony." I fear there is very little hope of such a measure becoming law in New South Wales. I am, etc.,

GEORGE LANE MULLINS, M.A., M.D.Dubl., etc.

Waverley, N. S. Wales, May 15th.

CLUBS AND THE PROVIDENT PRINCIPLE.

Sr.-Had the subject of discussion between Dr. Forsyth and myself been one of less professional importance—namely, the right of our profession to manage its own affairs without the interference of commercial swearers and speculators, whether well-intentioned or otherwise, I should certainly have treated his communication in the British Medical Journal of May 25th with that silence which is sometimes more eloquent than words.

The admitted loss, and a very heavy one I am sure, inflicted by the Manchester and Salford Provident Dispensary system upon the practitioners of the district cannot be made a matter of accurate computation. In stating it, directly or indirectly, at £11,000 per annum, I merely exercised the right of private judgment, and it certainly was not an ill-founded judgment.

My perfectly polite, and, so far as Dr. Forsyth is now concerned, completely justified criticism of our local provident dispensary system, Dr. Forsyth has construed into a personal attack upon himself. Having, however, no personal interest in the question, and never having had anything to do with Dr. Forsyth, I may be permitted to protest against so gratuitous an assumption. As for the rôle which I am supposed to have played, I am glad to be able to state that, at the Pendleton