

The Central Midwives' Board.

DISCIPLINARY CASES.

A special meeting of the Central Midwives' Board to consider charges brought against certain registered midwives was held at the offices, 6, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, S.W., on Tuesday, January 30th. There were present Dr. Champneys, in the chair, Miss Paget, Miss Wilson, Mrs. Latter, Dr. Dakin, Mr. Parker Young, and Mr. Fordham.

Case 1.—The first case taken was that of Hannah Howe, No. 2,990 on the Roll. The charges preferred against her were of personal uncleanness, failure to wear a washing dress, neglect to carry the appliances and antiseptics required by the rules, and to keep a register of cases.

Decision.—It was decided to severely censure her, to inform her that non-compliance with the rules rendered her liable to be struck off the Roll, and to caution her as to her future conduct.

Case 2.—Eliza Pugh, No. 1,756. This midwife was charged with negligence and misconduct in attendance on a patient in the following respects:—Not declining to attend alone in case of a ruptured perineum, or advising that a registered practitioner should be sent for either then or when a rigor afterwards occurred; that she stated to Dr. Scott that the patient was not torn, well knowing her to be so, and that an attempt had been made by an unqualified person to stitch up the perineum; of habitual uncleanness, and of neglecting to carry the necessary appliances.

Dr. Scott, who appeared as a witness, said he was called in on the Saturday; the perineum was ruptured right through the spincter into the anus, so that the patient had no control. The parts were unhealthy and bathed in pus, and there was a foul discharge. The temperature was over 103 deg. He was informed that a man midwife named Dudley had put in three superficial stitches which had broken down. The case was a *primipara*. He sent for the midwife, who informed him on arrival that there was no rupture, and that the case went on very nicely.

Dr. Gregg said she called on Mrs. Pugh in her capacity as inspector on November 17th. Mrs. Pugh told her that a case of puerperal fever had occurred in her practice, she had not previously reported it to her. The midwife's account was that she said to the patient, "Get on your feet, have a good pain, and it will soon be over." The child was born in this way. She did not send for a doctor to attend to the ruptured perineum, because she thought the patient too tender to admit of its being stitched. The doctor was sent for at the instigation of the man Dudley.

Dr. Reid, the County Medical Officer, said the midwife informed him she did not send for a doctor, because the injury was not very bad. She discouraged sending for the man midwife. She said she did not tell Dr. Scott of the rupture because the relatives did not want him to know the man midwife had been sent for.

Decision.—Name to be removed and certificate cancelled.

Case 3.—Jane Tween, No. 16,353. Charged with negligence and misconduct. Amongst other charges

preferred were declining to administer a vaginal douche ordered by a medical practitioner, Dr. Pershouse, and eventually injecting the lotion per rectum. Of feeding the infant on oatmeal and gin, thereby conducing to its death, of habitual uncleanness, of not carrying the appliances or keeping the register required by the Board. Dr. Pershouse, who appeared, said he was called in by the patient's mother-in-law. The midwife objected to his being sent for.

On arrival he found that the patient had all the symptoms of puerperal infection. He left instructions that the midwife was to give a vaginal douche of perchloride of mercury. He received a message that the midwife refused to go, and "said it was nonsense." He sent round the lotion and lent a syringe for the administration of the douche. His partner, who visited the case next day, sent for the midwife and repeated the order. The following day Dr. Pershouse was informed by the patient that the douche had been administered by rectum. His practice in these cases was to order a douche of two quarts of perchloride of mercury, strength 1 in 2,000, usually as an intro-uterine injection.

He was asked to see the infant on the occasion of his second visit, and found it in a condition of collapse, which he attributed to improper feeding. He was informed that the midwife was of opinion that the mother's milk did not satisfy the child, and that she had fed it on oatmeal gruel and gin. It died a few hours later from enteritis, due to improper feeding.

Dr. Thresh, Medical Officer of Health, said that Mrs. Tween's objection to having a doctor called in was owing to her belonging to the Peculiar People. She was an ignorant woman, who knew nothing of the administration of douches. She stated in regard to the syringe supplied that she had once used the same in the presence of a doctor, and she used it on this occasion in the same way. She admitted that she had given the infant oatmeal and gin. Dr. Thresh remarked that it was a very common practice in Essex, and speaking on the subject to a medical man, that gentleman had remarked, "and a very excellent thing too." Mrs. Tween was not an intelligent woman, and had no idea what a thermometer was.

Mrs. Tween did not appear, but wrote to say she was "very sorry this had happened, but was thankful to say it was not true. The Lord knew it was right."

The Board decided to remove Mrs. Tween's name from the Roll and to cancel her certificate.

(To be concluded.)

The Royal British Nurses' Association has re-appointed Mrs. Josephine Latter as its representative on the Central Midwives' Board. It is greatly to be regretted that the Council of this Association—concerning which the only reason for its representation on the Midwives' Board is that amongst its nurse members there are a few hundreds who are also midwives, should not have appointed a lady who is a certified midwife. But we are used to the vagaries of this Association.

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