

THE TRAINING AND SUPPLY OF MIDWIVES.

A Public Meeting is to be held in December under the auspices of the Association for Promoting the Training and Supply of Midwives, at which her Royal Highness Princess Henry of Battenberg will be present, and when it is hoped that the Archbishop of Canterbury, who is President of the Association, will preside. Prior to this meeting the Association has summoned a small informal conference of persons familiar with the subject to assist in formulating a scheme as a basis of work for meeting the approaching crisis in 1910, when no woman whose name does not appear on the Roll of the Central Midwives' Board will be able habitually and for gain to practise as a midwife, and when the penalty for so doing will be a fine of ten pounds upon summary conviction.

In a letter addressed to the press, the Vice-Presidents and Officers of the above Association state that they are ready and willing to carry out the work of training as soon as the necessary funds are forthcoming. The scheme formulated by the above-mentioned Conference will be announced to the public meeting, and will be received with interest. The problem of the supply of competent midwives is a twofold one. It is not only necessary to increase their number, but also, and unfortunately even more difficult, to find posts in which they can obtain a living wage when trained.

"MAMMA D'UNE NOMBREUSE FAMILLE."

Amongst the many interesting letters which have been placed on record by Mr. John Murray, in the "Letters of Queen Victoria," just issued, is one written in 1841 to her uncle, the King of the Belgians, in which Her Majesty wrote:—

"I think, dearest Uncle, you cannot really wish me to be the 'Mamma d'une nombreuse famille,' for I think you will see with me, the great inconvenience a large family would be to us all, and particularly to the country, independent of the hardship and inconvenience to myself; men never think, at least seldom think, what a hard task it is for us women to go through this very often. God's will be done, and if He decrees that we are to have a great number of children, why, we must try to bring them up as useful and exemplary members of society."

Queen Victoria's summing up on this point is a very true one. Men are very apt to regard childbirth as a "natural" condition, and so do not realise that, with advanced civilisation, the act of childbearing has become increasingly difficult. Midwives, on the contrary, who spend much time in the lying-in room, know the amount of suffering which is borne by women at this time, and how cheerfully and uncomplainingly they bear it—indeed, their acceptance of pain often amounts to heroism. One has nothing but admiration for the mother who willingly suffers that she may later "remember no more the anguish for joy that a man is born into the world."

THE ROYAL MATERNITY CHARITY OF LONDON.

The administration of simple drugs to patients by midwives, though it may be strictly beyond their province, is a thing which necessity from time to time demands. This is recognised by Lying-in institutions, and apparently by the Central Midwives' Board also, for the regulations provide that "a midwife must note in her register of cases each occasion on which she is under the necessity of administering any drug other than a simple aperient, the dose, and the time of its administration."

The Royal Maternity Charity of London, the work of which is extremely well systematised, has issued a sheet of prescriptions for the use of its midwives, and beyond these no other drugs or goods are to be ordered from the chemist by the midwives without a prescription written by a doctor, or an order signed by the secretary.

The prescriptions are six in number, and include an anodyne mixture, which is not to be made up more than once for the same patient, a fever mixture, a cough mixture, an aperient rhubarb pill, calomel powders, and a tonic mixture. The vouchers for these are attached to the chemist's account, and rendered quarterly to the Charity.

EMPLOYMENT AND CHILD BIRTH IN SPAIN

A recent Spanish law prohibits women from working four weeks after childbirth, and prolongs this period from one to two weeks if the attending physician advises such a delay. The law provides that employers must keep positions for mothers absent on account of childbirth. The nursing mother is to be given time in the morning and in the afternoon to nurse her infant.

INFANT MORTALITY IN GERMANY.

Although the infant mortality in Germany has decreased considerably from 1891-1903, it is still the highest in European countries. The decrease is due to systematic activity along the lines of investigation of milk depôts, of infants' boarding homes, and of hospitals. Prizes have been offered and encouragement has been given to nursing of infants by mothers. Efforts have been made to raise the standards of the midwife. The medical profession believes that the infant hospital home is the place from which a crusade in infant hygiene should proceed. There are at present five such hospitals in Berlin. Two more are in process of erection. A movement is on foot to establish an institute for the study of infant mortality, to consist of a school for nurses and midwives, a maternity hospital and home, a department for outdoor treatment for infants, bacteriological laboratories, and a milk depôt.

Miss Alice Sophia Gregory, the daughter of the Dean of St. Paul's, has been appointed by the London County Council on the Midwives Act (Special) Committee, to fill a vacancy that has occurred.

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