

The Midwife.

The Central Midwives' Board.

Special meetings of the Central Midwives' Board were held on Thursday, March 26th and Friday, March 27th, to consider the application of Helena Zwirn for the restoration of her name to the roll and to hear the charges alleged against thirty certified midwives. The Chairman of the Board, Dr. F. H. Champneys, presided on both days.

APPLICATION FOR RESTORATION OF NAME TO ROLL.

Mrs. Zwirn applied for the restoration of her name to the Roll on the ground that she did not receive notice of the charges against her, and was consequently unable to defend herself on December 12th when her name was removed. The Secretary said that the rules had been complied with by sending to Mrs. Zwirn's last-known address a statement of the charges against her by registered letter; meanwhile she had moved to Wales without notifying the local supervising authority, and subsequently returned to London, where she was practising without authority.

Mrs. Zwirn did not appear before the Board on Thursday, but was legally represented. The Board, after having heard her solicitor, decided that they could not entertain her application.

CHARGES AGAINST CERTIFIED MIDWIVES.

The hearing of charges against the following Certified Midwives was then proceeded with:—Mrs. Martha Short, 9503, who was represented by her solicitor, was severely censured for giving a false certificate of birth in the case of a child which was born alive and lived for an hour, and whom she certified as stillborn. The midwife had been convicted at the Bangor Petty Sessions of the offence, and fined 20s. and costs.

Mrs. Sarah Bates, 2144, was severely censured and a report asked for from the local authority in three months' time, for not notifying the fact that a medical practitioner had been sent for, and other misconduct. Dr. Drabble, of Rotherham, wrote in support of Mrs. Bates, and said further that he wished the Board would cause the Local Inspector of Midwives to be instructed to visit only those cases attended by midwives, and not to interfere with those attended by medical men.

Mrs. Alice Filmer, 16444, who appeared in her own defence, and who was admitted to the Roll as a *bond fide* midwife, was charged with negligence and misconduct in not wearing a dress of washable material when in attendance on a case; of not observing the rules of the Midwives' Board on various points in regard to disinfection, and of not taking a patient's temperature till the fifth day, when it was found to be 104 F. and the pulse 130. Dr. Shields, the Inspector of Midwives, said that she visited Mrs. Filmer in reference to a case of puerperal fever on August 26th. She was then wearing a dirty serge skirt, and in view of the fact that she had attended a confinement case four days previously, the inspector stated she particularly

noticed the length of her nails, which were also dirty. On August 30th and September 2nd she also called and spoke to Mrs. Filmer on the necessity for the disinfection of her nails.

Mrs. Filmer's defence was that she was cleaning her house when the inspector visited her, which was the reason why her hands were dirty. She stated that in 1872 she began to attend cases for the Middlesex Hospital; she ceased doing so for a time, but went back about five years ago. She was paid by the hospital 5s. a case. She had 209 cases last year, a large number of them being sent her by Middlesex Hospital. A letter was read from the Secretary-Superintendent of the hospital to Mrs. Filmer, stating that her record of service was perfectly satisfactory.

The Chairman, in cautioning Mrs. Filmer, told her that she had not obeyed the rules of the Board, all of which were important, and emphasised the danger of unclean hands and instruments. Also she should be anxious to take the patient's temperature. He informed her that a report on her work would be asked for from the local supervising authority in three months' time.

Mr. Bertram, Solicitor to the Board, reported the death of one midwife against whom charges had been preferred.

Mrs. Jane Gray, who appeared in person, was charged with negligence in respect to not explaining to the husband or nearest relative that medical help was required. The case was one of placenta praevia, and the patient, who was the midwife's own daughter, died shortly after delivery had been effected by a medical man. Her defence was that the husband and a midwife in temporary attendance left the house immediately on her arrival, and she had no one to send for assistance, but got help as speedily as possible. She was cautioned on various points, and a report is to be asked for from the local supervising authority in three months' time.

Miss Mary Alice Leese (2250), was censured for offences against the rules, and a report asked for from the local supervising authority in three months' time.

The following midwives were struck off the roll, and their certificates cancelled:—Mrs. Ellen Cashmore, 18419; Mary Devey, 17313; Myriah S. Jones, 11833; Ann Kimberley, 2137; Charlotte Lane, 1887; Ann Laseby, 2183; Rebecca Matthews, 1920; Catherine Mist, 15934; Sarah Payne, 20404; Ellen Pratt, 5110; and Rosina Scott, 3547.

One of the midwives struck off the Roll wrote stating that she erred not wilfully but thoughtlessly, and that her "feelings are most acute that she has disobeyed the rules in every particular." Another wrote that she "did not intend to wear print dresses in cold weather, being an old woman." She added: "I shall go on wearing washable dresses in summer as usual. . . . It is only spite which has caused you to write to me."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)