

of the relations. They kept watch in batches. One very stout loud-voiced begum seemed master of the ceremonies. She never left the door, ordered the others about, and when the patient cried out, would beat her breast and cry "Hussain, Hussain." No progress was being made. The patient was getting exhausted. We again suggested forceps, but they would not hear of it. Her mother suggested that she be allowed to sit up, adding that she was delivered of her other children in this position. It was now a question of our going away and leaving the woman entirely in their hands, or letting them have their way to a certain extent. We decided on the latter course. A brick was brought in over which I managed to throw a sterilised towel before the old Dai had seated the patient on it.

She had scored now, and was determined not to give up her place in front of the patient.

In a few minutes the head was born. I now took hold of the old woman, lifted her up, and, in spite of her kicks, scratches, and curses, set her outside the door. The doctor had quickly taken her place, and, in a few minutes a fine boy was born. Orders were now given that the stones were to be removed. The third stage was quickly over, and we got our patient back to bed. I went to cut the cord, but was told the mother's permission must first be obtained. This was easily got.

The old Dai had now returned to the room. The baby was handed to her, and bought back from her for five farthings.

Then a large piece of stout paper with a hole in the centre large enough to pass the baby through was brought in. Written round this were texts from the Koran. The baby was passed through several times.

We ventured to suggest a bath and clothes, but were told that no clothing had been prepared. Rich clothing and jewellery had been made for her other babies, and they had died. They would simply wrap it up in something for the night, and in the morning a garment would be bought from a prostitute. This would ensure good luck. There was one thing more to be done. A needle was brought, and its grandmother pierced its ears.

When I called next morning, I found the baby wearing tiny gold earrings and a dirty muslin waistcoat which had been bought from a prostitute.

I noticed a padlock hanging from the bottom of the patient's bed, and was told that this was to lock all diseases away.

On my last visit both mother and baby were doing well.

The Value of Public Conferences.

Miss Florence M. Bernard-Boyce, Inspector and Superintendent of Midwives under the Norfolk County Council, has, as the representative of the Sanitary Committee of the Council at the National Conference on Infantile Mortality, presented an interesting report of the proceedings of the Conference to that body.

She showed in her report how clearly the Conference realised the importance of the better education of girls and women in the duties and functions of womanhood (which easily comes within the sphere of educational authorities) as a factor in reducing the infantile mortality rate, in common with the better training of midwives. She pointed out that a paper on "The Education of Girls and Women in the Functions and Duties of Womanhood" urged the importance of giving to girls in every grade of school a satisfactory training in general hygiene and the duties of womanhood, suggesting that it should be undertaken by the Higher Educational Department in the last year of a girl's school life; while Mr. Alderman Broadbent, of Huddersfield, advocated the teaching of this subject at an even earlier stage, and that the education of mothers should be undertaken by health visitors who are competent teachers. Also that midwives should be utilised as teachers, as they are the best means of introducing into the homes of the people with whom they are brought in contact simple rules of cleanliness and hygiene, and useful hints on care during the ante-natal and post-natal period. Alderman Broadbent also commented on the appalling ignorance of a large number of women of the duties of motherhood owing to a ridiculous but most mischievous prudery which seems to have almost abolished the subject from our girls' schools.

Miss Bernard-Boyce also referred to a paper on "The Best Means of Helping the Mother Below the Poverty Line," which dealt with three essential requirements of pregnant and nursing women:—(1) Adequate nourishment; (2) freedom from overwork; (3) skilled attention; and another on "The Care of Children Neglected by Drunken Parents," which advocated that medical men and midwives must be ready to preach "abstinence" in child-bearing and child-rearing women, and must insist that this virtue shall be rigidly practised in every lying-in chamber under their supervision.

The great value of national conferences is that through the delegates which attend them the subjects discussed are communicated to public bodies and societies throughout the country. We congratulate Miss Boyce on her able report and the Norfolk County Council on its delegate.

As we go to press a Social Reunion and Conference is being held at the Women's Institute, 92, Victoria Street, S.W., at which an Address will be given on "The Effect of the Midwives' Act." We hope to refer again to this in our next issue at greater length.

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