

as long as nine months afterwards, provided that she herself is nourishing the child, so that two persons are fed at the expense of one. The dinners are utilised as object lessons in the economic provision and preparation of nourishing food. The cost of these dinners per head is now under 2½d., of which the mother herself contributes 1½d. Many of the mothers are almost starving when they first come to the Welcome, and no part of the work has been more cheering than this, for results in the majority of cases are so soon and so clearly seen.

Simple but definite teaching is given on Wednesdays in each week, in which the mothers take the greatest interest. They are slowly but surely learning the value of open windows, the evil of the "dummy," the importance of breast feeding, and the benefit of the daily bath, and, passed on by them from room to room and house to house, public opinion in the neighbourhood is slowly being raised by this teaching.

The programme at the fathers' evening conferences, which are held on Tuesdays from Michaelmas to Easter, is as follows:—Coffee at 8.30 (smoking allowed). Informal address, 9 to 9.30. Discussion, 9.30 to 10.

### Bailey's Bags for Midwives.

Those midwives who ten and fifteen years ago toiled to their district cases carrying cumbersome, heavy, and it must be added expensive bags, have reason to envy the present generation, who can procure a compact bag, fitted with every convenience for their work at a most reasonable price.

Midwives in need of bags should pay a visit to the establishment of Messrs. W. H. Bailey and Sons, Ltd., 38, Oxford Street, W., and ask to see their No. 10 black cowhide bag. It has a 12-inch frame, is made of solid leather, and has a washable lining, which is readily detached, and as the buttons are attached to the bag, not the lining, the latter is easily laundered. An elastic which is passed through the pockets, and easily adjustable, keeps the bottles in place. The price of the bag in cowhide, and unfitted, is 9s. 9d., or fitted complete with all the requirements of a midwife 30s.

Very up-to-date is "Bailey's Midwife Equipment Case," in which a tinned steriliser with folding feet takes the place of the bag. The steriliser is 14½ inches in length, and is enclosed in a washable case with straps and handles. The whole, fitted complete, costs 30s. It has only to be seen to be appreciated.

### The Effect of the Midwives' Act.

At a Social Re-Union and Conference at the Women's Institute, Victoria Street, S.W., on Wednesday, June 3rd, when Mrs. Samuel Bruce presided, Miss Lucy Robinson gave an interesting address on "The Effect of the Midwives' Act." In opening the proceedings, Mrs. S. Bruce gave a brief history of the movement, which has resulted in legislation, and said in 1892 a Select Committee of the House of Commons reported that they were of opinion that a large number of maternal deaths were caused by the inefficiency, and want of skill, of women practising as midwives. This finding of the Committee certainly pointed to the necessity for legislation.

It was further made known that over 4,000 women die in childbed in England and Wales, and that this does not represent the total amount of injury caused, for Mrs. Scharlieb, M.D., has stated that half the beds in women's hospitals are filled with women who are suffering from complaints due to improper treatment by ignorant women during and after labour. A large amount of infantile ophthalmia was traceable also to the same source.

Miss Lucy Robinson explained that at one time midwifery was entirely in the hands of midwives, who were licensed to practise by the Bishops. In the time of Charles II. they had fallen into great disrepute, and the House of Commons was petitioned by Peter Cluny to remedy matters, but nothing was then done.

Miss Robinson showed that a midwife in good practice might easily attend from 100 to 200 cases a year, and that she left in her trail good traditions or bad superstitions. Thus village midwives have been known to prescribe powdered spiders both externally and internally, and recently, when she was speaking to a gathering of *bona-fide* midwives, Miss Robinson said that one of these midwives produced a more than doubtful nailbrush from her pocket, and with much complacency stated that she had used it for thirteen years.

Miss Robinson described the constitution of the Central Midwives' Board, and the procedure of the Penal Cases Board. She showed how necessary it was that some authority should possess disciplinary powers, in regard to midwives, and told of a midwife in whose practice 14 women died practically in one street within a few days. Before the passing of the Midwives' Act, such a midwife might incur the Coroner's censure, and get into trouble in his court, but there was no other authority which could touch her.

Some of those whose work brings them into close contact with the midwife question are apt to think there is nothing left to be said on the subject, but, from the questions asked in the debate which followed Miss Robinson's address, and the keen interest shown in what was evidently a new subject to many of the audience, it is plain that there are still many liberally minded and enlightened people who do not even now understand the importance of the "Midwife Question."

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