

Hospital, in his introduction, says:—"Dr. Wrench could not have produced this book had he not been a close observer of the difficulties which beset the path of the woman possessed of no technical knowledge, who suddenly finds herself placed as a probationer in a large hospital. Her surroundings are unfamiliar, and she must of necessity be in a state of considerable confusion at first. From this bewilderment of mind she is expected within a few months to emerge with her full qualifications, and a knowledge that embraces much of the important procedure of the fully-trained nurse, and in addition the difficult specialised work necessary for the midwife.

"I have said that the difficulties are great even in the case of a woman who comes for her six months to a maternity hospital; but how much more difficult must it be for those who elect to satisfy the requirements of the Central Midwives' Board by a course of study outside a hospital.

"To all those who find it a confusing task to master the essentials of midwifery, I strongly recommend the book."

There are few who have had experience in the teaching of midwives who will not endorse Dr. Tweedy's statement as to the confusion of mind of the pupils, and the practical difficulties besetting the path of those who must cover so much ground in instructing them, in this country, very frequently in a three months' course; though we are glad to observe the recent tendency of lying-in hospitals to lengthen their period of training.

Dr. Wrench explains that the term midwife is derived from "two Anglo-Saxon words, *mid* (together with), and *wif* (woman). A midwife is a person, either male or female, who is with the woman when she has a baby. The term midwife is nowadays restricted to trained nurses who attend women when they have their babies." We wish we could think that midwives were always trained nurses. Unfortunately, however, it by no means follows that a midwife is a trained nurse, any more than that a trained nurse is a midwife. The two branches of work, which are so intimately connected that they should always be associated, are at present greatly divorced in practice. When it is remembered, as Dr. Wrench points out, that from one-half to three-fourths of the babies born in England and Wales are delivered by midwives, it will be seen that midwives are of great public importance, for upon them depends the good health of the greater proportion of the mothers of England.

An interesting and instructive chapter on a subject which is often altogether neglected in midwifery text-books is one on "The Kit." In introducing this, the author reminds the reader that normal labour is not an unnatural thing, and the less it is interfered with the better. The principal object of the Rotunda teaching is to train its pupils to help at, or conduct, a normal delivery, and also to discover if any dangerous condition is present with as little interference as possible. When it is necessary to interfere by making a vaginal examination it is of supreme importance to be as clean as possible. The principal disinfectants by which microbes are killed are then described: (1) Boiling,

(2) soap and water, (3) chemical disinfectants.

The midwife's bag, if of leather, should have a removable lining, which can be washed and boiled, or a small Samway's dressing tin can be used, painted inside with aluminium paint. This is light and convenient, and can be cleansed by sponging with corrosive sublimate solution, 1 in 500.

We think that in describing the administration of a vaginal douche in cases of hæmorrhage, it would be well in future editions to give the exact temperature. If it is not hot enough, it will be useless for the purpose intended. If too hot, it may scald the patient.

It is interesting to note the Rotunda practice when babies have to be hand-fed. For the first month modified milk from a prescription as nearly resembling human milk as possible is given. When a healthy baby is a month old the Rotunda belief is there is no artificial food so good or easy to give as undiluted cow's milk. The digestion by that time is much more stable, and the Rotunda authorities do not believe it is as dainty as it is supposed when the child is a month old. Water is given between meals to allay thirst. If added to the milk not only is the milk diluted, but so are the gastric juices, and at the Rotunda it is found that better results are obtained with whole milk than with diluted milk.

We cordially commend the book to which we can only give this brief notice, to the attention of our readers.

### A Maternity Hospital for York.

Wherever an outdoor maternity exists, sooner or later the need for a Home or Hospital in which the more critical or needy cases can be received becomes insistent; and at York, where maternity work has been undertaken in connection with the Dispensary since 1895, it has now been decided to open a house at 15, Ogleforth, for the reception of five or six maternity patients. The value of this will be twofold. Not only will it benefit the patients who are received into the Home directly, but indirectly its influence will extend to a far larger circle, for in the Home midwifery pupils can be taught their work more thoroughly, and its necessities can be insisted on, to an extent which is impossible in district work.

The Directors of the Dispensary have undertaken the necessary alterations of the house, and will provide the necessary furniture, but they are appealing for help to meet the increased cost of maintenance. In a city like York there should be no difficulty in securing the necessary help, and we hope that at the public meeting which is to be held shortly to enlist support there will be a ready and generous response.

It is interesting to learn that midwifery work was carried on in connection with the dispensary from 1788-1801, when it was discontinued, and that the latter part of the time a Mr. Drake acted as surgeon and "man midwife."

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