

The Midwife.

THE TRAINING OF MIDWIVES IN UGANDA.

Writing in the Special Welfare issue of "The Mission Hospital," a Record of Medical Missions of the C.M.S., Dr. A. R. Cook, C.M.G., O.B.E., M.D., of Uganda, relates:

It is just ten years since Mrs. A. R. Cook first took up the work of training native Baganda young women to become certified midwives in Maternity and Child Welfare centres scattered throughout the Protectorate. To-day, on the official Midwives Roll of the Government there are well over one hundred names of fully qualified and certified native midwives, who are steadily revolutionizing the conditions of maternity and infancy in Uganda, and doing a very important part in changing what was a diminishing population into an increasing one. The exceedingly interesting and detailed vital statistics of the last Annual Medical and Sanitary Report of the Government show how serious the problem is even now, and how much ground requires to be covered. This shows that the infantile mortality, *i.e.*, the rate per thousand births of deaths under one year, had sunk to 130 in Buganda Province, where the most intensive work has been done and the most intelligent people are met. The conditions in Toro, Ankole, and Bunyoro can only be described as terrible, the rate in these districts being respectively 342, 299, and 433.

The Church Missionary Society is responsible for the maintenance and development of the Lady Coryndon Maternity Training School and some twenty-five or twenty-six Maternity and Child Welfare centres. Aided by generous Government grants, which meet about twenty-five per cent. of the total cost of carrying on the work, the whole expense is met by local receipts, and is thus not a burden on the Parent Society. This has been due to careful organization by Mrs. Cook and her helpers from the very start.

Mrs. Cook, M.B.E., acts as General Superintendent of Midwives, and Inspector of Country Centres, and other members of the staff are:—

Miss Maud Budd, Assistant Inspector.

Dr. Joan Kent, Medical Officer in charge of Training School.

Miss Caroline Renshaw, Resident Nursing Sister.

Miss Kent, Sister, Preliminary Training School.

There has been an average of twenty-four students in

the Training School, of whom seven passed the qualifying examination in May, 1928, and eight in December, after two years' training, raising the total of certified midwives who had passed through the school at that date to 79. The chairman of the Government Board of Examiners, Dr. H. B. Owen, D.S.O., reported most favourably on the high standard attained by the pupils in the last December examination.

An important new development was initiated during the year under review, namely the commencement of training native girls as hospital nurses. A double qualification was sought, that of a sound knowledge of nursing technique, and the Uganda Midwives Board's Certificate. A minimum course of three years was envisaged, and the underlying idea was to turn out a succession of well-trained girls who should work in hospitals under qualified medical men or women in government or missionary hospitals.

The first centre chosen as a tentative home proved unsuitable, but a site proved to be thoroughly healthy has now been selected, and meanwhile the school is being run as a Preliminary School at the capital (Mengo), so that but little time will have been lost.

The influence of this efficient Training School in the centre of Africa must have far-reaching results.

By the courtesy of the Church Missionary Society we are able to publish the picture on this page of Agiri Uja, the Head Midwife at the large practising school at Naki-fuma, in Kyagwe. The opening of this School, in 1925, we learn from the Uganda Jubilee Report of the Mengo Medical Mission, was a real milestone in the educational uplift of the women of the country. Here the newly qualified midwives are sent for post-graduate practice before being drafted off to independent centres. The Nursing Sister-in-Charge,

Agiri Uja, is herself a remarkable product of the Training School. She holds the Government Diploma in Midwifery, has two certified midwives under her, and is in entire charge of the centre. Few, if any, of the Baganda women of the Protectorate surpass her dignity of manner, clearness of judgment, or professional skill.

We may add that few midwives, white or black, surpass her, or could surpass her, in the immaculate neatness of her uniform.



AGIRI UJA.
Diplomate of Midwifery.

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