

Professional Responsibility of the Midwife in Finland.

By Miss Margareta Aukio.
Population and Country.

FINLAND IS INHABITED BY about four million people and the two northernmost provinces (half the entire country) are sparsely inhabited; the southern parts are more prosperous and in these regions the bigger cities are located.

The Midwives of Finland.

The midwife is an important member of the team doing Maternal Health Work. She cares for the mother during pregnancy and at the time of labour, and she has to help and advise her on social and economic matters.

There are 1,500 midwives in Finland; of these about 1,000 work in cities and rural communes and 500 in hospitals. The Midwives Act of 1944, laid down that each commune must employ at least one midwife to 5,000 inhabitants. In every commune there is a Maternity Health Centre with secondary centres where the population is dense, a total of 2,600 centres in the whole country. Every mother is thus able to profit by this free health service and more than 98 per cent of expectant mothers visit these centres. The rest will be seen by private specialists. This excellent attendance is partly due to the Maternity Benefits Act, by the terms of which the expectant mother must, before the end of the fourth month of pregnancy, be examined by the midwife or physician in order to obtain the State Maternity Benefit.

The midwife gives individual and group teaching in Mothercraft and relaxing exercises.

In 1953, 65 per cent. of the deliveries took place in an Institution, but in Northern and Eastern Regions 50 per

cent are delivered at home.

Owing to the shortage of beds, patients are only kept in hospital for five or six days after the delivery.

Aftercare of Such Patients.

The hospital notifies the midwife of the mother's home commune of the discharge of mother and baby, giving details of the events during confinement and the lying-in period, the feeding of the baby, etc., and the communal midwife duly takes the baby and mother under her care and, after the second week, passes the infant over to the Public Health Nurse.

Letter to the Editor.

The Lamp is Flickering Out.

WHERE ARE THE gentlewomen of today with Christian virtues of loving kindness, gentleness and sympathy who used to train to nurse the sick?

Our hospitals are turning away the sick and any Tom, Dick or Harry is being used to fill in the gap of the shortage of Nurses.

Only the *best* is good enough for the nursing of the sick of our land. Florence Nightingale and Mrs. Bedford Fenwick handed on the torch to us. What have we done with it?

Our Blessed Lord is waiting for helpers to train for the "Healing of the Sick." Who will volunteer to train for three years to help us? No *less* time is required to make one able to nurse properly. The hospitals need you. Who will volunteer?

MABEL C. BARBER,
S.R.N., R.M.N., R.M.P.A., D.N.(Lond.), F.B.C.N.,
President.



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[next page](#)