

The Midwife.

Our Competition Prize.

We have pleasure in announcing that the Prize of £1 10s. for an Article of Practical Value to Midwives has been awarded to Miss A. Nina Morson, District Nurse and Midwife at Cleobury Mortimer, Salop, for her Paper on "A Sketch of the Midwife's Duties to her Patients." We shall publish the article next week.

The papers by the following ladies have received honourable mention:

1. "Antiseptic Midwifery for the District Nurse." By Miss S. C. McCall Knipe.
2. "Demonstrations for Pupil Midwives." By Miss M. O. Haydon.
3. "On the Importance of Being Prepared in a Midwife's Practice." By Mrs. Alice West.
4. "Care of the Breasts Before and After Confinement." By Miss Elizabeth Douglas.
5. "The Care of the Umbilical Cord." By Miss Ethel H. Trafford.
6. "The Accouchement." By Miss Edith E. Morgan.

An Irreducible Minimum.

The full text of the letter addressed by the Central Midwives' Board to the Privy Council as a reply to one from the Council to which we referred in our last issue is now before us. The chief point of interest contained in the letter is that it shows it is already alleged that the Central Midwives' Board has (a) raised the standard of examination, (b) lengthened the syllabus, and (c) refused to recognise several old-established training schools. Efforts to depreciate educational standards must always be expected from those who do not wish to attain them, but it is the duty of those charged with protecting the safety of the public to safeguard them. We are glad that the Midwives' Board takes this view and regards the three months' course of training and attendance on 20 cases as the irreducible minimum for training purposes. The Board informs the Privy Council as regards the Examination, that (a) "the standard aimed at by the Board has always been strictly limited to such knowledge as it would be dangerous for a midwife to lack"; (b) as regards the lengthening of the syllabus "the Board does not quite understand the meaning of the phrase as there

has been no 'syllabus' in existence to lengthen," and "as regards the third (c) 'refusing to recognise several old-established training schools,' the Board has, of course, to exercise its discrimination in this matter, and to refuse to recognise institutions which are in its opinion unsuited for this purpose."

The Board states in support of this attitude that "it must be remembered that nothing but the three months' course of training with the attendance on 20 labours and puerperia stands between what may be absolute ignorance, and responsibility of the very gravest and most vital character. Only those who have had on the one hand to deal with the raw material, and on the other hand with the same material after training, and in face of one of the grave complications of child-birth, can fully appreciate the extreme importance of making such training, though strictly limited in scope, as thorough and practical as it can possibly be made. To place upon the Roll women whose training had in any way been scamped would be to produce a state of things far worse than that which the Act was framed to abolish; for, whereas before the passing of the Act, the name of midwife carried no official weight, since the passing of the Act the name 'Certified Midwife' carries with it the authority of Parliament, and implies that its holder has either been adequately trained, or (in the case of a 'bonâ-fide' midwife) has at least avoided conviction for malpraxis and removal from the Roll.

"The Board, therefore, feels that its present requirements cannot be safely reduced."

We believe that in no other country where midwives are organised, is so short a period of training as three months recognised. One or two years' training with honourable recognition at the end is the rule in most countries. We give our midwives a minimum three-months' training, and keep them up to the mark through an army of inspectors. It is not surprising that at the present time midwifery is an unpopular, badly paid, and little-esteemed branch of work. The hope for its higher standing in the future lies in raising rather than lowering standards.

THE EXAMINATION OF THE CENTRAL MIDWIVES' BOARD.

The result of the examination of the Central Midwives' Board on February 11th, for ad-

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