

Rolls at once, as I cannot travel 400 miles to answer the charges against me."

Another Staffordshire midwife wrote that she could not afford the fare, but that she would be defended by her husband, who was riding up on his bicycle. The husband appeared, and conducted his wife's defence. One midwife wrote that it was not her intention to act as a midwife any longer; "it paid her better to lay out the dead."

Mrs. Stevenson, who appeared in person, denied the suggestion that she took a red carpet-bag to her cases. She explained that when she went into town she usually had a good deal of marketing to do, so she took the red carpet-bag for her purchases, and carried her black bag inside it.

Questioned as to a piece of retained placenta in a case attended by her, subsequently removed by a doctor, she replied that "it wouldn't be for that time," as she was certain the whole placenta had come away.

One midwife, who was struck off the Roll, was charged, amongst other matters, with having laid out the body of a child who had died from erysipelas, and having subsequently attended at the confinement of a patient, who afterwards died of puerperal fever, without adequate disinfection. In her defence the midwife stated that the doctor in attendance on the child had "told her to wash her hands, as it was a case of erysipelas." The statement was referred to the Local Supervising Authority to investigate.

Mrs. Froggett, who appeared before the Board in her own defence, was charged with having failed to notify to the Local Supervising Authority the death of a child which lived for three or four hours, and which she subsequently notified to the above authority and falsely entered in her register as a still-birth. The midwife's defence was that the child was premature and weakly when born. She had to attend another case, but came back in the evening and took the child to the doctor, but it died on the way. She told the doctor that the child had breathed, but he put still-born on the certificate. She sent in her notification, and filled in her register, according to the medical certificate. The medical man in question wrote that he signed the certificate, and if he said the child was still-born then, in his opinion, it was. Mrs. Froggett said that she told him the child had breathed, and if so he was not prepared to dispute her statement. He had been ill, and did not recollect the case.

The Chairman informed the midwife that she must speak the truth. That Board had nothing to do with the doctor's certificate. He was not under its jurisdiction. She knew that the child had been born alive, and she had given a certificate of still-born.

In connection with Princess Christian's Home at 23, Trinity Place, Windsor, charges of drunkenness were preferred against two midwives until recently connected with the Home.

Miss Boycott, Secretary of the Home, who attended before the Board, and gave evidence, said that in connection with the first case taken the midwife who was charged with being drunk when on

duty, on October 24th, at 23, Trinity Place, Windsor, and unfit to attend to her duties as a midwife, came to the Home on September 30th. On the date mentioned, when she was on duty on the rota, and would have had to attend any patient admitted into the Home, or to go out into the district if a call came, she was obviously unfit for duty.

The facts were reported to the local authority. Miss Olphert, Inspector of Midwives, attended at the Home and charged the midwife with being drunk on duty. She admitted it was true, and that within the last three years she had occasionally been intoxicated, but denied habitual intemperance. She was now in an Inebriate Home for a year. Miss Robin, the Superintendent, did not think she would be suitable for midwifery work again, but that it would be easy later on to find her another post, as she was of good general character.

The Chairman, in announcing the decision of the Board to strike the midwife off the Roll, said that the case was a very sad one, and the Board were very grieved about it. If the midwife applied later for re-instatement, and proved that she had got rid of her unfortunate tendency, the Board would consider the application sympathetically.

In the next case the charges were that the midwife (who was connected with Princess Christian's Home, Windsor, from October 20th, 1907, to September 30th, 1908) was drunk when on duty at 23, Trinity Place, Windsor, on August 30th, 1908, drunk when on duty proceeding to attend a patient at Bracknell, and habitually given to drinking to excess.

The evidence was partly heard, but Messrs. Russell, solicitors, acting for the midwife, pressed for an adjournment on the grounds that their client denied the charges but was at present in hospital. Eventually the Board adjourned for luncheon, and afterwards the Chairman announced that a medical certificate of ill health had been received and the case would therefore be adjourned, and meanwhile the return of the certificate which the midwife still retained would be pressed for. The Chairman asked the Secretary of the Home whether the authorities considered that more stringent inquiries should be made in the future as to the records of the midwives employed? The Home had been recognised at the request of Princess Christian, and would not have been so otherwise on account of its size, but here were two cases before the Board at one meeting of midwives from the Home charged with drunkenness.

THE MIDWIVES ACT.

The Lord President of the Council has appointed a departmental committee to consider the working of the Midwives' Act. The Chairman is Mr. Almeric W. FitzRoy, Clerk of the Council, and the members are:—Mrs. Charles Hobhouse, Mr. J. S. Davy, C.B., assistant secretary, Local Government Board, Dr. A. H. Downes, medical inspector for Poor Law purposes, Local Government Board, Dr. F. H. Champneys, chairman of the Central Midwives' Board, and Mr. John Pedder, a principal clerk in the Home Office.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)