

—if he has one—and any other odd garment that can be found. Now comes the question of nourishment. There is, of course, no milk. Dad could go out and get some at five o'clock, only unfortunately there is no money. He has been out of work for several months, and they have "parted with" everything they possibly can. There may be a little tin in the cupboard, or perhaps the remains of a tin of condensed milk (skimmed) which, with some stale crusts, will make a nice warm cup of bread and milk. Nurse sees this done, writes a note for the husband to take to the relieving officer in the morning, and departs.

The next morning things are better, by the time the midwife gets there the children are off to school, and the room has been scrubbed and tidied. Some more prosperous neighbour, who keeps fowls—yes, fowls are kept in the London slums—has sent in a new laid egg, and, if the patient has been lucky enough to secure a maternity bag there is an ample supply of clean linen. These bags are a great boon, many charities supplying a milk ticket or a bag of oatmeal, as well as the change of clothes for mother and baby. They nearly all also contain a Bible, which when mother is made tidy and comfortable in the clean sheets, is placed as a finishing touch upon the bed, and kept there until after the visiting lady has made her call.

I have often heard the good ladies who supply these bags complain of the unclean state in which they are returned, but I think that if they really understood the difficulties under which the washing is done—want of space, utensils, and even physical strength—they would not only cease complaining, but would add to their other charities that of having the bags properly washed for the poor patients. Much indeed is already done to help them. In many districts they are being patiently and thoroughly educated in the proper and hygienic way of rearing their children, and caring for their homes. But the real difficulty, the great stumbling block, which no amount of lectures, schools, and visits will touch, is not the ignorance or obstinacy of the mothers, but their dire poverty. Can a poor woman whose husband brings her at the very most 10s. a week spare 1s. 6d. for milk for one child? And if some kind body does make her a cunning little cradle out of a banana box, can she spare the bits of blanket to keep the baby warm in it when the other children have no covering—or prevent the husband breaking it up for firewood when the others are shivering for want of a fire? No, they are not obstinate or sulkily when they make so little response to the visitor's suggestions. They are only thinking

how little the kind lady really understands, and wishing that instead of talking so much she would put their "young man" in the way of earning a bit.

Poor mothers, they do their best, and as long as they can manage to feed their little ones at the breast they get on fairly well, but when from want of nourishment, or perhaps the necessity of going out to work, the natural food fails, it is a bad look out for the poor mites, and it will probably not be long before the doctor has to sign a certificate of death from "consumption of the bowels," or as it might more truly read, from "tops and bottoms for want of means to obtain proper nourishment."

N. F.

The Central Midwives' Board.

EXAMINATION PAPER.

FEBRUARY 9TH, 1909. From 2—5 p.m.

1. What do you mean by the terms threatened abortion, inevitable abortion, incomplete abortion? Having advised that medical assistance be sent for, how would you treat these conditions until the doctor arrives?

2. How would you ascertain the presentation and position of the child at the end of the first stage of labour? On what points would you rely in distinguishing between a first vertex and a first face presentation?

3. What are the important diameters of the foetal skull at full term? Between what points are they measured?

4. Describe carefully your treatment of the cord and the umbilicus from the moment of the birth of the child until the tenth day. What complications may arise if proper precautions are not taken?

5. What do you understand by puerperal fever? Give a short description of its principal varieties and the precautions you would take to prevent them.

6. What are the rules of the Central Midwives' Board with reference to laying out the dead?

The Marylebone Board of Guardians, at a meeting on Monday, decided that the Marylebone Workhouse should in future be utilised as a training school for midwifery. The Clerk announced the receipt of a letter from the Local Government Board stating that that authority offered no objection to the proposal of the Guardians.

In the Annual Report of the Newcastle Maternity Hospital presented at the recent Annual Meeting by the Hon. Secretary, Mr. Herbert Shaw, the Committee call attention to the increased work which every year is falling upon the hospital. They say that the year 1908 has been an exceedingly heavy one for the medical officers, the Matron, and her staff of nurses, and the good work they are doing deserves very substantial recognition from the public of this district.

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