

by the proprietors. Another abuse was the employment of unskilled nurses, often failures from the London hospitals, while the patients were paying for skilled nursing.

Miss Berlon said that nurses were under-paid and over-worked, so it was no wonder if they "toadied" to rich patients. On the Superintendent of a Nursing Home stating that she gave her nurses a night off once a month, Miss Berlon inquired what a domestic servant would say to one night a month off.

FRESH AIR.

Dr. Foster Owen, who gave a lecture on "Fresh Air," showed an interesting model of a fresh-air chalet, made for him by a patient, and advocated treatment in the fresh air in many diseases besides consumption.

INFANT FEEDING.

A very interesting lecture on "Infant Feeding" was given by Dr. Flora Murray, who said that the medical profession were learning more and more to depend on nurses and midwives as one of the greatest forces in fighting infantile mortality. They had daily opportunities of teaching hygiene and proper feeding. Dr. Murray then described the process of infant digestion, and, in cases where breast feeding is impossible, advocated what has been termed "the gospel of top milk feeding" for the infant, and a diet of milk, meat, oatmeal, and cocoa, instead of tea and bread, for nursing mothers three or four months before confinement and six months after.

BABY INCUBATORS.

Subsequently a lecture on "Baby Incubators, Past and Present," was given by Mr. Batchelor.

ALCOHOL AND ITS EFFECTS ON INFANTS.

In the evening Dr. Claude Taylor spoke on "Alcohol and its Effects on Infants," illustrating his lecture by lantern slides.

SATURDAY, APRIL 17th.

PUERPERAL INFECTION.

On Saturday afternoon, Dr. Mabel Paine read a brief but interesting paper by Dr. G. Drummond Robinson, who was unable to be present, on "Some Important but Often Overlooked Consequences of Septic Puerperal Infection," and spoke of the tendency to carelessness of those who did midwifery work, as to the introduction of germs into the vagina. As bad men were not all equally bad, so poisonous germs were not all equally poisonous. In a true case of blood poisoning after labour, if the germs were conveyed direct from one woman to another they would probably kill her quickly, but if exposed to the air for some time their effect might be to cause a milder but still grave disease, rendering the woman incapable of bearing more children, and permanently invaliding her. Those who conducted the labour might never know these remoter effects; it was those in charge of the out-patient departments of hospitals who saw the untold misery caused by the lack of necessary precautions.

MIDWIVES, THEIR PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

The same afternoon, at half-past five, Mrs. Robinson, who organised the Conference, read a paper on "Midwives, Their Past, Present, and Future." She showed how the practice of mid-

wifery until the reign of Charles II. was entirely in the hands of midwives, no man being admitted to the lying-in room.

At the latter part of the 17th century the law was altered, and men admitted to lying-in rooms. Then the doctors read the midwifery books, and the midwives left them alone, and so fell into disrepute. Mrs. Robinson referred to the short term of training necessary for midwives, and said she agreed with Florence Nightingale that two years was nearer the mark. Referring to the small earnings of midwives, Mrs. Robinson said that from the way they started off immediately at the call of duty, she always associated them in her mind with fire-engine horses. The horses were cared for and tenderly treated. Government saw to the horses, but what about the midwives? She urged that the first essential in any improvement of the conditions of midwives' work and training was their direct representation on the Central Midwives' Board.

A NATIONAL COUNCIL OF MIDWIVES.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick said she had been extremely interested in Mrs. Robinson's paper, as the suggestion for the direct representation of midwives on their governing body, the Central Midwives' Board, had first been printed in the *BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING*. Further, trained nurses had been fighting for twenty years for direct representation on the governing body of their profession. If they had conceded that vital principle they might have got a Registration Bill through Parliament long ago. She urged midwives to organise themselves into a strong body, and become a National Council, composed of groups of professional societies, such as those already formed in Liverpool, Manchester, and elsewhere. There were now thousands of certified midwives, and if the majority co-operated they would be able to influence legislation, especially when they obtained the lever of the Parliamentary franchise. No Board on which midwives had not direct representation could understand the professional feelings and aspirations of midwives, and the Central Midwives' Board was primarily constituted with the object of ensuring the proper care of lying-in mothers—a very essential duty—not of looking after the just interests of midwives, this could only be done by the workers themselves. Their great need was a much more extended and thorough educational course. The present three months' standard was dangerously insufficient, and was far behind the standards abroad. They must agitate for more thorough professional training. They had got the legal title of "certified midwife," let them determine that it should be held in honourable estimation by the public.

Mrs. Fenwick was thanked for her suggestion by Mrs. Robinson, who invited midwives interested in the matter to communicate with her at 8, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C.

Mrs. M. Boulard also supported it, and Miss L. Maule drew attention to the good work already done by the Midwives' Institute.

PAYING HOSPITALS FOR THE MIDDLE CLASSES.

The closing lecture of the Conference was that by Dr. David Walsh, on "Paying Hospitals for the Middle Classes."

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