

Russell, asked for an adjournment, on the ground that Mrs. Walls, who was at the Parkwood Convalescent Home, Henley-on-Thames, was unfit to travel. A telegram had been received from the Matron of the Home: "Walls not fit to travel to-day."

Mr. Julius Bertram, M.P., solicitor to the Board, pointed out that the case had already been adjourned twice; that Mrs. Walls had left the New Hospital for Women on December 28th; she had not sent in her certificate, which had been repeatedly asked for, and she had been distinctly informed that unless her certificate was sent in, no further adjournment could be granted. A special meeting of the Board had been summoned at great inconvenience to consider this case, and he respectfully submitted that the excuse offered was far too belated to listen to.

Mr. Hoare said that the very fact that the application was made at the last moment proved that Mrs. Walls had done her best to come. If the case was proceeded with it would be undefended, as he was uninstructed, having only come to ask for an adjournment.

The Chairman said that he could not take it for granted that the Board would grant an adjournment, and the Board decided to proceed with the case.

The Chairman then asked Mr. Hoare if he proposed to defend Mrs. Walls, and he elected to do so.

Mr. Bertram then read a statutory declaration from Miss Blyth, a certified midwife (27274), on the staff of the Home, in support of the first charge; and one from Miss Ada Burlington, maternity pupil, in support of the second.

In regard to the third charge, Mr. Bertram said that, had the case been proceeded with on November 26th, the Secretary of the Home, who was in attendance, would have been able to testify to it; as it was, he thought the Board could draw an inference from the fact that a nurse and a pupil, who had every reason to screen a fellow-worker, came forward in a most clear way to give evidence of drunkenness twice within sixteen days.

For the defence, Mr. Hoare read a letter, in which Mrs. Walls absolutely denied the charges, and various testimonials as to her capacity and kindness, covering the period from 1898-1907.

The Chairman pointed out that no charges were preferred against the midwife on these counts.

The Board having deliberated, the Chairman announced that they were satisfied that the charges were proved, and directed that Mrs. Walls name should be removed from the Roll.

THE ROYAL MATERNITY CHARITY.

Her Serene Highness, the Duchess of Teck, has very kindly consented to become the Vice-President of this most ancient Charity, of which Her Majesty the Queen is Patron, and H.R.H. the Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein the President.

Nurse Ada E. Whitmee has taken up the post of District Midwife to the Charity at Stoke Newington, vice Nurse Victoria B. Macdonald.

The Exhumation of an Infant.

A case of importance recently came before the Coroner for Lincoln, when an inquest was held on the body of a child which had been buried as still born, but was subsequently exhumed by order of the Home Office, as reported by the *British Medical Journal*. Medical evidence was given at the inquest that the child was born at full term, that the upper part of both lungs was dilated, and the lower partially dilated. It could not be definitely asserted that the child had had an independent existence, but it had evidently breathed, though not for long. There was nothing in the *post-mortem* phenomena inconsistent with the statement made by another witness, not present at the birth but in the same house, to the effect that she had heard the child scream. There was no reason why it should not have lived if it had received proper attention. It probably died for lack of attention during birth or immediately afterwards, being suffocated by being allowed to lie face downwards.

The burial authorities accepted the body for interment on the strength of two certificates. One was to the effect that it was a certificate given by a person who was a registered midwife, that she had delivered the mother of the child herself, that the child was stillborn, and that no medical man was in attendance. The other certificate stated that the person signing it declared that the body brought for burial was the child of certain persons mentioned, that it was born on a given day, but born dead, and that the signer of the certificate was present at the birth. The midwife in question, it was shown, had applied to a medical man for a death certificate, but had been refused. She admitted, when examined in court, that she had not been present at the birth, and did not know whether the child was stillborn, and did not now think it was. She did not know why it had died. She did not write the certificate herself, but admitted that it was written to her dictation and signed for her with her authority. As regards the second certificate, the woman signing it admitted that she had signed it under a name which was not her own, and that she had not really been present at the birth. She did not look at the child when she arrived, as she had been told by the mother to go downstairs and make a fire, and did not know really whether it was alive or dead.

The jury brought in a verdict to the effect that the child failed to live owing to want of attention at birth, and stated that the midwife should be warned as to her future conduct, and that the other woman deserved censure for not attending to the child immediately she arrived at the house.

The Coroner, during the course of the inquiry, drew attention to the importance of the issues raised. In conclusion, he warned both the women involved in the case that they might have to answer for their conduct in another court.

At a meeting held at 12, Buckingham Street, Strand, on Monday last, it was decided that the Midwives' Defence Association should be merged in the Midwives' Institute.

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