

brief Treatise, and other English Writers, in the Art of Midwifery, have hitherto wilfully passed by, kept close to themselves, and wholly omitted; now at last made publick for the General good: By T. Chamberlain, M.P."; and "Rare Secrets Brought to Light, Which for many years were Locked up in the Brest of that most famous and Learned Physitian Sir *Theodore Mayern*, Physitian to His Late Majesty, King Charles the First, of ever blessed memory. In which are contained the sufficient Testimonies of the Warranted, and Happy Successes of his Mature judgment in his general Practice, on the greatest Ladies of the Court and Country, in the Faculty of so publick a Benefit, as of the excellent Skill of Midwifery."

A FAMOUS MIDWIFE.

In conclusion, we must quote the following most interesting account of Mme. Louise Bourgoies:

" Louise Bourgoies (Bourgeois, or Boursier), who was born in 1563, was a Paris midwife held in great repute towards the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. Her husband—an army surgeon named Martin Boursier—and she were educated under Ambroise Paré, and from them both she received instruction in the more difficult parts of the art of midwifery. She was one of the first graduates of the famous school for midwives established at the Hôtel-Dieu in Paris. Her reputation became so high that she was appointed *sage femme jurée* to the Queen of France, whom she attended, as well as the great ladies of her Court. She was the writer of several works, such as: (a) *Various Observations on Sterility, Fertility, and Diseases of Women*. (b) *The Collection of Secrets*. (c) *The True Nature of Births of Men and Women of France*. (d) *Directory to my Daughter, The Compleat Midwife, her practice enlarged*. Her fees for an obstetric attendance varied according to the sex of the royal child; 500 crowns if it was a boy, 300 if a girl. What she charged if the child was stillborn or in case of twins is not related. In her old age she enjoyed a pension of 300 crowns per annum. In Dr. J. Munro Kerr's *Operative Midwifery*, p. 139, 2nd edition, 1911, it is stated, on the authority of Fashbender, that she recommended reposition of the prolapsed cord, and the maintaining of it in position by means of a tampon. This would be about 1609. In 1627 she lost popularity owing to the death—from septicaemia—of a royal princess, the Duchesse d'Orleans, whom she had attended."

Midwives are indebted to Sir John Byers for bringing to light, and the *British Medical Journal* for publishing, the history of this most famous midwife and her "choice secrets."

The following officials have been appointed by the new Board of Directors of the Aberdeen Maternity Hospital: hon. superintendent, Professor Stephenson; hon. physician, Dr. M'Kerron; matron, Miss M'Dougall. A number of subordinate appointments have also been approved.

THE CENTRAL MIDWIVES' BOARD.

A meeting of the Central Midwives' Board was held at the Board Room, Caxton House, Westminster, on Thursday in last week. Sir Francis Champneys presided.

REPORT OF PENAL CASES COMMITTEE.

On the report of the Penal Cases Committee, the Secretary reported that he had now obtained and cancelled the certificate of Ada Clews, a midwife whose name was removed from the Roll on March 12th.

A letter was received from the Hon. Secretary of the Association of Inspectors of Midwives, forwarding copies of three resolutions passed at a meeting of the Association, held on April 25th, with regard to the Penal procedure of the Board.

It was agreed that the Association of Inspectors of Midwives be informed

- (a) That a copy of a midwife's defence is sent to the Local Supervising Authority wherever practicable, in accordance with Rule D. 2.
- (b) That notice is given to the Local Supervising Authority where a midwife has notified her intention of being present or of being represented at the hearing, and that the Board always desires to see representatives of the Local Supervising Authority present, as witnesses at the hearing.
- (c) That there is no objection to a representative of the Local Supervising Authority suggesting a question to the Board's solicitor, at the hearing of a case for the purpose of eliciting information from any of the witnesses; and that it would be an assistance to the solicitor if a representative of the Local Supervising Authority would confer with him on the day previous to the hearing of the case between 9.30 and 5, or on the day of the hearing between 9.30 and 1.

A letter was received from the Medical Officer of Health for Sunderland, with regard to the case of Sarah Jane Hunter, No. 4,542, against whom the Local Supervising Authority had found a *prima facie* case of negligence to be established.

The Board decided that Sarah Jane Hunter, No. 4,542, be censured on her admissions made at the inquest held at Sunderland, on February 22nd, 1912, on the infant child of Ethel Hannan.

Reports requested by the Board were received in relation to five midwives; of these four were satisfactory and it was decided to take no further action. In the fifth case the Secretary reported the death of the midwife. Interim reports were also received in the case of seven midwives.

It was decided on the recommendation of the Penal Cases Committee to cite twenty-two midwives to appear before the Board on Tuesday,

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)