

possible. Associations which supply midwives to the poor tell the same story: "it is impossible for a district midwife to earn a living wage unless she combines midwifery with general nursing," and there being no standard of training for general nursing, that adopted in connection with midwifery is frequently most inadequate.

If the midwife of the future is to command both public confidence and adequate remuneration, it is probable that she must seek recognition as a public official.

It is unquestionable that a sphere in which midwives would be of great use is as officials employed by Boards of Guardians, to attend Poor Law outdoor maternity cases; in connection with the National Insurance Act there is certainly work before them; they might do useful service in connection with the Infant Life Protection Act, Schools for Mothers, and, with other qualifications in addition, as Health Visitors. But if they are to be valued and indispensable members of the community as social service workers, they must be well educated, well trained, competent to write intelligent reports for public authorities, or to present them personally. It should be the aim of all midwives to endeavour to raise the standard of their profession, to impress upon the public its onerous and honourable character, and to secure for their work remuneration which bears some proportion to its value.

#### THE ADMINISTRATION OF MATERNITY BENEFIT.

In a circular issued by the Women's Co-operative Guild the administration of maternity benefit under the Insurance Act is discussed from many points of view.

The circular recalls the fact that the maternity benefit shall be given in "cash or otherwise," and proceeds:—

It seems to us very important that these alternatives should not be used to differentiate between individuals and classes of persons, nor to lead to inquiries into character.

Any person receiving the benefit in kind under these circumstances would be publicly exposed as unfit to handle a sum of 30s.

For the same reason we earnestly trust that no differentiation be made between married and unmarried mothers in the administration of the benefit.

The circular also sets out that the giving of the benefit in vouchers or tickets for goods is in every way undesirable. This method is connected with the idea of charity or relief, and is out of place in connection with a fund that is largely provided by the persons concerned.

The circular does not, however, bar out any universal form of allocation such as the direct

payment of doctor or midwife out of the grant. Such allocation should always leave a substantial sum to be given in cash. "We hope," say the signatories, "that any other form of allocation would only be made at the request of the woman herself."

#### "PASSING RICH ON £40 A YEAR."

The Education Committee of the Staffordshire County Council have decided to grant £300 to the County Nursing Association for the purpose of providing scholarships for the training of village midwives and nurses, the training to consist of six months in midwifery, and six months in general nursing, the latter term being, of course, insufficient to gain more than a smattering of knowledge of nursing. The cost of training each candidate is estimated at £50 per annum, and when trained the midwife will receive a salary of 16s. per week. We could wish that County Councils would turn their attention to granting scholarships in midwifery to nurses who are already trained, rather than expending money on increasing a class of workers who earn such infinitesimal salaries that their work must be included in that of sweated labour.

#### NURSES AND MIDWIVES IN EAST SOMERSET.

On the invitation of Mrs. Hobhouse a well-attended meeting of those interested in the Somerset County Nursing Association, at which the Right Hon. Henry Hobhouse presided, was held at Hadspen House, Castle Carey, last week. The object of the meeting was to consider the nursing and midwifery needs of East Somerset, with special reference to the Insurance Act and the Midwives Act.

The chairman explained the many directions in which the responsibilities of the Somerset County Council brought it into contact with the work of nurses and midwives, and Miss Norah Fry spoke on the work of the County Nursing Association. In regard to midwives, she said that it was of the utmost importance that the patients should be attended by thoroughly trained persons who could not only look after the infants, but also educate the young mothers. Dr. Savage, County Medical Officer of Health, spoke on the relationship of public bodies to nurses and nurses' associations, and Miss du Sautoy, County Superintendent and Inspector of Midwives, spoke ably on the work of midwives.

Miss Chadwick, who on her resignation of the post of Assistant Matron of the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, has been presented with a very handsome silver tea-service from the present nursing staff of the hospital and also many former nurses of the institution, desires, through the medium of this paper, to thank most cordially all those who have contributed to the same, as it is impossible for her to write to each one separately.

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