

MIDWIFE v. MONTHLY NURSE.

Fräulein Elizabeth Schmidt, of Bremen, in a paper prepared for the Cologne Congress, on the "Training of the Maternity Nurse and her Duties," said that in no branch of nursing can more harm be done by incompetence than in maternity cases; and yet it is not possible, in the large hospitals, to give this special branch its due importance. Maternity nursing should be learnt in a maternity home where the cases are principally normal. The fact that nurses are anxious to take complicated cases in clinics or hospitals proves how little they understand this department. It is a great mistake to think that because a nurse is experienced and capable in sick nursing she is also competent to undertake a confinement case. Fräulein Schmidt further directed attention to the dangers attendant on an ordinary sick nurse who takes confinement cases "in between" other work.

Nowhere, she holds, are educated women more needed than in this branch, where so much superstition and old traditions must be combated. It would be well if nurses recognised this, made maternity nursing the object of their careful study, and then embraced it as their special form of nursing.

There are still (Fräulein Schmidt alleges) a number of untrained nurses who are known by the name of "monthly nurses," as well as the so-called "certificated monthly nurse," whose training depends on the means she can spend on it. The cost of four weeks' training is 180-200 mks.; for six weeks, 150 mks.; for three months, 100 mks. This short time of training is productive of certificates which delude the public; but, instead of a well-trained maternity nurse, there goes forth one who, with her smattering of knowledge, pushes aside the midwife. The following figures speak for themselves. In the Rhine district, in 4,000 cases undertaken by doctors and monthly nurses, 8.22 per cent. of the children died; whereas, in 29,000 cases, undertaken by midwives alone, only 1.38 per cent. of such deaths occurred.

In order that such abuses may be reformed, Fräulein Schmidt suggests:—

1. That all who wish to undertake maternity cases should submit to a board examination.
2. That they be subject to inspection by the medical board, and to the same rules as the midwives regarding disinfection.
3. That only such houses be qualified as training establishments which can provide courses of at least six months' duration for probationers, three months for sick nurses, and a sufficient number of maternity cases, from 500-600 a year.
4. That regular theoretic instruction be given, with practical demonstration under superintendence of a salaried head-sister, who shall also be required to furnish proofs of her efficiency.

5. That anatomy and bacteriology, as far as it pertains to maternity nursing, be taught by the house-doctor.

6. Domestic training, comprising cooking, &c., should be included.

The insufficiently trained monthly nurse is mostly to be met with in the lower middle classes. Ignorant of such things as puerperal fever, sepsis, and infection, she cannot be made answerable for the results of her incompetency. In the most earnest language, Fräulein Schmidt appealed to the State to help in regulating these abuses, and to all cultured women to follow the bright example of their Empress, who shows such sympathy with the welfare of women and children.

THE CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

The next examination of the Central Midwives Board will be held on October 22nd in London, Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, and Newcastle-on-Tyne. The oral examination follows a few days later.

THE YORK MATERNITY HOSPITAL.

Mr. W. W. Hargrove, J.P., writing in a contemporary on the York Maternity Hospital, describes the system of baby consultations held weekly at the dispensary.

"By this means," he points out, "not only is the feeding and general management of the infants carefully supervised during the first year of their lives, but the mothers receive a training in the management of their babies which is of inestimable advantage to them. This system of 'baby consultations,' which deals with infants born in the outside maternity practice of the Dispensary as well as in the Hospital, has been in existence for nearly eighteen months. It is steadily growing, and many mothers gladly avail themselves of it. Its value and its effects on the health of the community can hardly be over-estimated.

"During the time the Maternity Hospital has been in existence the demands on its help have fully justified its establishment, and it has been of considerable value to the medical men of the city and district, who have gladly availed themselves of it for the treatment of their more serious cases which required the constant skilled care and attention they could not receive in their own homes."

LUPUS OF THE FACE IN AN INFANT.

Baumet, as mentioned in the *British Medical Journal*, describes a case of a child of 11 months suffering from what was first considered to be eczema. Removal of the crusts by warm fomentations revealed deep ulceration with a purulent discharge. The submaxillary glands were much enlarged. The treatment consisted of daily applications of iodoform ointment (2 in 30), inunctions of mercurial ointment every two days to the glands, and syrup of Vacheron (0.15 gram of carbonate of guaiacol in 20 grams of syrup), a teaspoonful morning and evening. The local condition gradually healed, but before the healing was complete the child died of convulsions.

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