

# The Midwife.

## CENTRAL MIDWIVES' BOARD.

### THE PENAL BOARD.

A special meeting of the Central Midwives Board was held at the Board Room, Caxton House, Westminster, on Thursday, February 27th, Sir Francis Champneys presiding, for hearing the charges alleged against twelve midwives—three having passed the examination of the Central Midwives Board and one holding the certificate of the London Obstetrical Society; the rest were "bona-fides."

The results were as follows:—

*Struck off the Roll.*—Mary Ann Harman (No. 20536), Catherine Hickman (No. 2913), Clara Jane Lander (No. 2125), Louisa Lower (No. 6002), Ruth Skelton (No. 2766), Florence Ann Smith (No. 35519), Amy Stacey (No. 17224), Christina Helen Sutherland (No. 34008), Sarah Ann Ward (No. 206).

*Severely Censured.*—Sarah Harris (No. 1749).

*Censured.*—Flora Wright (No. 30003).

*Not under the jurisdiction of the Board* (as she was acting as a monthly nurse).—Emily Maud Self (No. 2085).

In the case of Mrs. Lander, who attended before the Board, a declaration was read by Miss Hardy (the Inspector of Midwives for Staffordshire)—who was also present—that she met Mrs. Lander going to a case in a stuff dress, and carrying a pot of dirty lard. When spoken to about wearing a stuff dress, she said she would continue to do so. This Mrs. Lander denied, saying that she "never said such a straightforward thing as that"; what she did say was that she would have to go on wearing it till she got another made. She was having some washable dresses made at the time. In reply to Mr. Parker Young, she gave the normal temperature of the body as 87 deg. and 88 deg. "According to what Miss Hardy said it was." She was most emphatic that this was the temperature of the patients she attended.

The case of Emily Maud Self was a curious one. She was charged with negligence and misconduct in that being engaged as the substitute for another midwife at a confinement, she (1) failed to visit the patient until five hours later; (2) advised the husband of the patient to call in as her substitute an uncertified person, in contravention of Section 1 (4) of the Midwives Act; (3) administered drugs other than a simple aperient to the patient, and neglected to enter the particulars in her Register of Cases; (4) did not keep a Register of Cases, as required by the rules. It was emphatically a case of *Audi alteram partem*, for, although Miss Self did not deny the facts, she had as an answer to them all that she was not acting as a midwife but as a monthly nurse, and she was supported in this by

Dr. Magrane, who attended before the Board. The circumstances alleged were that Miss Self a certified midwife, resides in the house of Dr. Magrane, acts as his book-keeper, and does monthly nursing under his direction. The Local Supervising Authority, relying on the statement that Miss Self acted only in this capacity, did not inspect her, and it was stated that on November 12th she acted as a midwife, and the above breaches of the rules were alleged.

It appears that the midwife for whom Miss Self acted was Miss Attwood, who, with her widowed sister, lives with Dr. O'Connor, Dr. Magrane's assistant in the capacity of housekeeper, and also practised as a midwife. Miss Attwood went to nurse Dr. Magrane's daughter; and it was arranged that Dr. O'Connor would attend any of her cases which came off while she was away; and Miss Self would look after them as monthly nurse. In connection with the case in question, Miss Self, who was not well, had been told by Dr. Magrane she was not to go out. When the call came in the early morning, she did not doubt that Dr. O'Connor had already been summoned, and therefore told the husband to go for Mrs. Bailey. When she visited the patient about 8.45 a.m., she found Dr. O'Connor had not been, and the baby had been born before Mrs. Bailey arrived. It was Dr. Magrane who prescribed and dispensed the tonic administered. Mr. Bertram (Solicitor to the Board), did his utmost to get Miss Self to admit that she acted as a midwife—but all wiles, insinuating and peremptory, failed in their effect.

The majority of the Board endorsed Miss Self's plea.

The charge against Florence Ann Smith (C.M.B. examination) was that "you fraudulently and with intent to deceive, made use of a fictitious document purporting to be the copy of a testimonial signed by Mary Jane Barrett, the Matron of the Monmouthshire Training Centre, favourable to your application for appointment to the staff of King Edward the Seventh's Hospital, Windsor, well knowing the same to be false," &c.

The "testimonial" stated that Miss Smith was "an industrious and reliable nurse." On Miss Wedgwood, Matron of the Hospital, referring to Miss Barrett, the forgery was discovered.

The midwife wrote saying she was guilty of the charge. She was in absolute ignorance that she had committed forgery, but was worried to death after she had sent the letter. The profession was nothing but starvation as the Gamps had such a hold. She was disheartened, as this was her only means of livelihood; she had no cases and had to do something. As a probationer she would have had board and lodging. She was now beginning to make a connection, and begged the Board not to remove her name. She was, however, struck off the roll.

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