

Where there is vaginal discharge present at the time of birth, 1 per cent. solution of silver nitrate, or 20 per cent. argyrol, should be dropped into the eyes as soon as possible. They should be bathed again with boracic lotion after instilling the drops.

Careful and prompt attention to these details at birth may save the child from much suffering and impairment or total loss of sight.

Miss E. Douglas writes :—

Ophthalmos—Greek, eye; neos—Greek, new; natus—Latin, born. Ophthalmia neonatorum is the name given to infectious inflammation of a baby's eyes after birth.

Some unfortunate people are said to be born blind, but it is just a consequence of this form of ophthalmia which has been neglected or not properly looked after.

The infant contracts the infection during the passage of the head through the vagina, and even if every precaution has been taken, the vagina douched and the discharge washed away, if the child's hands are not washed it may, while waiting to be bathed, rub its fists into its own eyes and so infect them.

Usually the first sign of ophthalmia comes on about the second or third day; the eyelids get inflamed and swollen, and purulent discharge is secreted. A doctor should be called in at once.

Miss Gladys Tatham points out that a purulent discharge from the vagina is almost invariably caused by a micro-organism called the gonococcus. The disease so caused is known as gonorrhœa.

The presence of gonorrhœa is a serious complication to labour. The gonococci may penetrate into the newly abraded surfaces of the uterus and vagina, and cause septic symptoms. These may vary from an offensive lochial discharge to severe (gonorrhœal) septicæmia.

The midwife attending a case complicated by gonorrhœa must be scrupulously careful to be as aseptic as she possibly can. Unless counter-ordered by the doctor, a douche of cyllin (1 drachm to 2 pints of boiled water) should be given morning and evening; the vulva, &c., should be frequently sponged with biniodide of mercury (1—2,000); the bowels kept regular; and the general health as good as possible, for by increasing the patient's resistance to sepsis one can somewhat minimise the danger present from the vaginal discharge.

The baby should not be allowed to sleep in the same sheets as the mother, nor should anything belonging to the latter, such as towels, handkerchiefs, &c., be used for the child.

THE CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

A meeting of the Central Midwives Board was held at the Board, Caxton House, Westminster, on Thursday, April 17th. The first business was the election of a chairman, and on the proposition of Mr. Parker Young, seconded by Miss Paget, the two members now on the Board who have been associated with Sir Francis Champneys in its work since its formation, he was unanimously re-elected, and Mr. Parker Young paid a high tribute to his services as its chairman in the past.

The present Finance Committee were then re-elected with the addition of Professor Briggs and of Sir Shirley Murphy.

The Penal Cases Committee was reappointed and Sir Shirley Murphy appointed in the place of Dr. Herman, resigned.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE.

On the report of the Standing Committee a letter was considered from the Town Clerk of Birmingham with regard to the effect of the National Insurance Act on the work and future training of midwives. It was agreed (a) That the Town Clerk of Birmingham be informed that the question does not come within the scope of the duties of the Board. (b) That the correspondence be forwarded to the Privy Council.

A letter was considered from the Clerk of the Flintshire County Council suggesting that the Board should adopt "a simpler form of case book . . . for the use of Nurses."

It was agreed that the Clerk of the Flintshire County Council be informed that the Board sympathises with the difficulty of the Flintshire County Council, but the register has been carefully thought out and it is hoped that the education of the midwives may so greatly improve as to render any alteration of it unnecessary.

APPLICATIONS FOR REMOVAL OF NAME FROM THE ROLL.

The applications of ten women for the removal of their names from the Roll were granted.

A letter was read from the Clerk of the Middlesex County Council enquiring as to the extent to which "approved" midwives should themselves attend with their pupils: (a) at the time of the confinement; (b) during the lying-in period.

It was agreed that the Clerk of the Middlesex County Council be informed that the Board holds each "approved" midwife directly responsible for the cases attended and for any neglect in supervising the training of pupils, but it does not specify the number of visits which must be paid, as this must vary greatly in different cases.

In connection with the List of Approved Midwives, one name was removed and thirteen added.

APPLICATIONS.

The application of Dr. Samuel Lewis Graham for recognition as a teacher was granted, and that of

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)