

# 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 Wednesday, July 23rd, Sir Francis Champneys presiding. Twelve certified midwives were cited to appear before the Board. The result of the investigation was as follows:—

#### STRUCK OFF THE ROLL AND CERTIFICATE CANCELLED.

Hannah Easter (No. 16493), Eliza Keighley (No. 16892), Mary Pearson (No. 14898), Mary Elizabeth Smith (No. 1015), Louisa Georgiana Stephens (No. 9782, L.O.S. certificate; it was stated that this midwife had gone to New Zealand), Jane Taylor (No. 14477, age 76), Mary Ann Whitfield (No. 10770), Ann Wood (No. 13664).

#### SEVERELY CENSURED.

Edith Emily Augusta Johnson (No. 2645, certified St. Mary's Hospital, Manchester), Matilda Robinson (No. 4717).

#### SENTENCE DEFERRED.

Annie Harrison (No. 15862). Report from the Local Supervising Authority asked for in three months' time.

One case was adjourned.

That all midwives on the Roll do not yet understand the symptoms as well as the infectious character of puerperal fever is shown by the fact that in several cases when rigor and rise of temperature should have caused the midwife to suspect septic infection, and advise that medical assistance should be summoned, not only did she fail to do this, but attended other lying-in cases, after being informed of the nature of the case, without undergoing disinfection to the satisfaction of the Local Supervising Authority.

In one case in which a doctor was summoned, when so urgently needed that the patient died a few minutes after he arrived, we sympathise with the midwife's defence in one particular. The charge was, "nor did you hand to the husband, or the nearest relative or friend, the form of sending for medical help, properly filled up and signed by you." The midwife's defence was that there was no pen or ink or pencil in the house, and the patient said that her husband could be half-way to the doctor's while he was running about for pen and ink. The essential thing was to get the doctor there.

Another charge in the indictment in this case was "That you do not keep your Register of Cases as required by Rule E 23." Miss Paget enquired the reason of this charge, as "the Register seemed to be beautifully kept," and the reply of the Board's solicitor, Mr. Bertram, was

that it was "always put in, in order to get the register in evidence." By the direction of the chairman the charge was erased.

In this case the death of the patient occurred from hæmorrhage due to retained placenta, yet the midwife asserted to the doctor called in that the afterbirth had come away, whereas it was proved that the cord and a fragment of the membranes was all that had come away. Such ignorance, or most culpable carelessness, fully justified the Board's decision to remove the midwife from the Roll. The confinement up to the birth of the child seems to have been normal and the husband's evidence was that the midwife informed him "he had got a boy, and his wife was well suited."

Mrs. Ann Wood, who appeared before the Board in reply to a charge of omitting to take and record the temperature of a patient, stated that she had "put the mothers to bed, and was now putting their daughters and sons' wives to bed. They said they had never had it done and were not going to have it done now for anybody." Mrs. Wood further remarked, "the birth-rate gets lower every week, which I could explain why some of it is."

In one case the inspector who gave evidence said that on visiting a case attended by the midwife she found swabs, which had been used, lying about the fireplace, and soiled linen left about; when spoken to, the midwife said it was "a pity a trained woman could not be left to do her work in the way she had been trained."

### THE MONTHLY MEETING.

A meeting of the Central Midwives Board was held at the Board Room, Caxton House, Westminster, on Thursday, July 24th, Sir Francis Champneys presiding.

#### REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE.

The Standing Committee presented its Report.

A letter was received from the Local Government Board transmitting for the information of the Central Midwives Board a copy of a letter addressed to the President by Messrs. R. Turner & Son, solicitors, Manchester, on behalf of Mrs. Mary Underwood, of Abbey Road, Llandudno, complaining of the conduct of a certified midwife, together with a copy of the Local Government Board's reply.

It was agreed that the Local Government Board be thanked for their letter and that they be informed that the Board has received no communication on the subject from the County Council of Carnarvon.

A letter was received from the Medical Officer of Health for the City of Manchester asking the Board to regard all breach presentations as abnormal cases requiring medical aid.

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