

THE DEFENDANT'S PLEA.

Mrs. Sherwood stated that she had been acting as a midwife for over twenty-six years. All she desired to do was to go to the poor women where the Parish Nurse was not allowed to go. When Nurse Rattray came to the town she gave up midwifery work, but took it up again on her leaving. In regard to her applying for a certificate, she had a letter back the day the King was crowned. [N.B.—The period of grace during which midwives in practice for a year previous to the passing of the Act were enrolled, expired in 1905. The Coronation took place in 1911.]

COULD TELL TRAINED NURSES A LITTLE.

Mrs. Sherwood admitted that she had "brought thirty-three babies into the world" since last February. Those present were only four out of the thirty-three, and she had never had a bad case pass through her hands. All she wanted to do was to continue her work and do what she could for poor women who could not afford to pay for trained nurses. Her experience of trained nurses was not very much, for she thought she could tell them a little.

THE LAW A GREAT HARDSHIP.

The Chairman said they quite appreciated the work the defendant was doing, but there was the law, and no doubt it was a great hardship.

Mrs. Sherwood was quick to say that it was their duty to save these poor women from paying £100s., which would be of much more benefit to themselves.

A petition was handed up signed by nearly seventy persons, who testified to the value of the services rendered to them by Mrs. Sherwood.

BENCH GLAD THE DEFENDANT IS DOING A GOOD WORK.

The Chairman said there was no doubt a strong feeling in Mrs. Sherwood's favour; the Bench were glad to know she was doing good work.

Mrs. Sherwood quickly interposed that she wanted to go on doing good work for these poor people.

OBLIGED TO CARRY OUT THE LAW.

The Chairman, after the Bench had consulted, told Mrs. Sherwood that it was with the very greatest regret that they were bound to record a conviction. There was the law, and they were obliged to carry it out. They had decided however, to reduce all the expenses and would only impose a fine of 1s. In future Mrs. Sherwood would only be allowed to take emergency cases, and cases in which a medical man was in attendance.

PLENTY OF EMERGENCY CASES.

Mrs. Sherwood remarked, "There will be plenty of emergency cases then, sir." and the Chairman replied that they knew she was doing a good work.

On Mr. Meredith informing Mrs. Sherwood that

he was going to pay the fine for her, his placing of the shilling on the table was the sign for loud cheers from the women in the body of the Court.

Mrs. Sherwood having inquired of the Bench whether she left the Court without a stain on her character, and having received a satisfactory answer, left the Court amid great jubilation.

The whole proceedings are most extraordinary and appear also to have been irregular, as, when the accused person pleads guilty, as in this instance, to a charge, there is no need to call witnesses; all that remains is to pass sentence. If, when a woman not only breaks the law, but exults in her defiance, she is to have the active sympathy of the magistrates who try the case, it will be useless for Local Stipendiary Authorities to proceed against delinquents under the Midwives Act, which is framed solely in the interests of the lying-in women.

**THE ROYAL MATERNITY CHARITY
OF LONDON.**

The Annual General Meeting of the Governors of the Royal Maternity Charity of London will be held at the Charity's House on Friday, February 13th, at 3.30 p.m. The Agenda announces that the matters to be brought before the meeting are of far reaching importance, both as to the policy and possibly the future existence of this ancient Charity. One piece of business before the meeting will be "to hear and discuss the reports received from various representative Maternity institutions in England, Scotland, and Ireland, as to the course being pursued by them in connection with grant of 'letters' to insured persons." In this connection Dr. Septimus Sunderland will move that "This meeting shall consider whether it is advisable to formulate a scheme for the attendance upon assured women by the midwives and doctors of the Charity, in order to bring it into line with similar institutions throughout the United Kingdom."

It will be remembered that at the annual meeting last year Mrs. Lee, both a Governor and midwife of the Charity, moved a resolution, seconded by Miss Rosalind Paget, "That the Royal Maternity Charity 'letters' may be used for assured persons who are the wives of casual labourers or are themselves casually employed, and in needy circumstances, either as free cases or for the 'letter' to be used in part payment."

The resolution was ruled out of order by the Chairman, and the meeting adjourned for a week when it was again discussed, when the Chairman of the General Committee considered it a vote of censure on the Committee, and the Chairman of the Meeting considered it *ultra vires* and unbecoming to the Charity. At that meeting Dr. Sunderland proposed as an amendment to Mrs. Lee's resolution that the Committee should, as soon as expedient, consider the suggestion of Mrs. Lee and Miss Paget, and the resolution which

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