

"Only too often the American midwife assures her patients that it is natural for babies to have sore eyes, and she prescribes such remedies as milk; lemon juice, lard, new potatoes, scraped beef, saliva, &c., and when the babies go blind she piously declares that it is the will of God.

"Unhappily this is not the worst aspect of the problem as a whole, for, in some of our isolated rural districts the absence of any provision for the care of mothers and babies gives rise to very distressing conditions. From one such locality one learns that when a woman goes into labour, the first passing teamster is hailed, or perhaps a member of the family hurries down the road for the nearest tanner or blacksmith, or anyone else who through total ignorance will fearlessly rush in to meet the great emergency. The results of this practice—dismembered infants lying on the floor, and badly injured mothers—are too dreadful to describe, but they can be imagined by those who know the value of trained work.

"The midwife is an economic necessity to many of those whom she attends, acting, as she does, in a dual capacity for a fee which does not exceed the doctor's charge for medical care alone. . . .

"Evidently the question before us is not whether or no we shall have midwives in America, but rather whether or no we shall continue to pass by with averted eyes and leave such a large percentage of mothers and new-born infants in the hands of ignorant women incapable of discharging the important functions which they assume."

THE MIDWIFE IN ENGLAND.

Concerning the midwife in England, Miss Van Blarccm shows that "patients are encouraged to book with a midwife or nursing home early in pregnancy, in order that they may be watched for complications or abnormalities, and be instructed as to their personal hygiene. Patients are always referred to a physician if there is evidence of complication. Moreover, the midwife visits her prospective patient's house, and in a friendly, practical way advises her in preparing for the approaching confinement. Here the midwife may employ the greatest ingenuity in making use of the simple furnishings in the humblest home, and also in advising the mother in the preparation of the layette. It was a revelation to see the satisfactory little outfits which the very poorest mothers, under the direction of the midwife, had been able to prepare for their infants—soft, warm little vests and plain simple slips, instead of the heavy starched garments, usually regarded by members of that class as a necessary part of a baby's wardrobe."

The writer, while appreciating the work which has been done under the Midwives Act, states "that the Act itself can be improved is frankly acknowledged by those who have helped to secure its passage, and who are engaged in carrying out its provisions. They have told me that they desire to secure a longer training than the six

months now given in the schools for midwives, and they also wish to have appointed on the Central Midwives Board a midwife in her representative capacity. These proposed amendments to the Act, which they are hoping to secure, would in my judgment add greatly to its efficiency.

"A course of training covering four, five, or even six months, seems far too short to fit a wholly inexperienced woman to discharge the serious responsibilities which a midwife must assume. . . .

"What has been already accomplished in England, and the promise of further achievement there, should inspire us American workers with the determination to go and do likewise, should encourage us to take up and solve the problem which confronts us—the problem of the untrained, unlicensed, unsupervised midwife."

YORK ROAD LYING-IN HOSPITAL.

Those midwives who attended the Post Graduate Week at the General Lying-in Hospital, York Road, S.E., last year, will be glad to know that a similar course, details of which we give below, is to be held this year. It is open to all midwives. Tickets of admission, (price 5s.) and further information, may be obtained from Sister Olive (Miss M. O. Haydon), at the hospital.

POST-GRADUATE WEEK, MAY 18-23 (INCLUSIVE).

Monday, May 18th.—4.30 p.m.: Reception by Matron and Staff; Tea. 5.30 p.m.: Lecture, Dr. Fairbairn.

Tuesday, May 19th.—11 a.m.: Clinic in Wards. 2.30 p.m.: Meet at Hospital; Visits to Queen Charlotte's, East End Mothers' Home and Salvation Army Maternity Home. 8 p.m.: Lantern Lecture.

Wednesday, May 20th.—11.30 a.m.: Meet at Hospital; Visit to Sanitary Institute, conducted by Dr. Louis Parkes. 5 p.m.: Dr. Fairbairn's Lecture to Pupil Midwives and Clinic on Abnormal Cases.

Thursday, May 21st.—11.30 a.m.: Clinics on "The Baby," conducted by Sisters French and Cash. 2.30 p.m.: Meet at Hospital; Visits to Schools for Mothers' and Infants' Consultation.

Friday, May 22nd.—11 a.m.: Demonstration in Milk Kitchen, Preparation of Infants' Feeds. 2 p.m.: Visit to College of Surgeons' Museum (by permission of Professor Keith). 5 p.m.: Lecture by Sister Olive. 8 p.m.: Dr. Fairbairn's Post-Graduate Lecture at Midwives' Institute; Tickets, 6d. each.

Saturday, May 23rd.—10.30 a.m.—12.30 p.m.: Test Paper (optional); Prizes given.

A HANDBOOK FOR MIDWIVES AND MATERNITY NURSES.

The popularity and usefulness of the Handbook for Midwives and Maternity Nurses by Mr. Comyns Berkeley, M.C. Cantab., is evident from the fact that it is already in its third edition, and study of the book shows it to be clearly and concisely

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