

The Midwife.

THE MIDWIFERY CONFERENCE.

The last session of the Midwifery Conference was held at the Yeomanry Hall, Elverton Street, S.W., on the evening of April 30th. Miss S. Marsters presiding.

THE TEACHING OF MIDWIFERY BY LANTERN SLIDES.

Dr. Fairbairn showed an interesting selection of lantern slides and explained how they can be used, the difficulties, objections, and advantages. They were chiefly useful for teaching purposes with big classes. Thus at York Road only about one-third of the class could see one specimen, but it could be demonstrated with the lantern to any number.

HOW TO USE MATERIAL FOR TEACHING FOR THE DISTRICT.

Mrs. Macdonald, Matron of the Maternity Training School, Weaste, Salford, presented a paper on the above subject, and said:—

"The subject of how to use material for teaching for the district is an important one.

"We acknowledge that this material is to a certain extent limited, but, on the other hand, it can be augmented considerably by the tactful midwife.

"At the outset, district teaching is full of responsibility and anxiety. In Hospital you have all you require, and everything to hand for an emergency. You have medical aid within call, and diagnosis is not altogether left with the teacher for the slightest doubt can very soon be set at rest.

"During the puerperium, the pupils have clean beds, scrupulously clean bowls, plentiful dressings, clean clothes, and last, but not least, a watchful eye on the patient's food, habits and behaviour.

"You are without many things which seem necessary, you are always in a state of trying to make things do, and your ingenuity is taxed to the utmost. You may answer your call to find your patient with "Placenta Previa" or, perhaps, with a foot presenting. No matter, you cannot ring the bell or use the ward telephone for your doctor; you must use the material to hand quickly—which material at that particular moment is your own brains—write out your form for "help," despatch it, and in the meantime do the best you can. In all probability you will have your footling born long before the arrival of the doctor, or you are fighting with great odds against you, for your "Placenta previa."

"During the puerperium, you have dirty beds, in many cases, and the family sleep there, dirty bowls, questionable dressings, unless you carry them yourself, questionable clothes, and *very* questionable habits and behaviour.

"All district midwives have these little drawbacks, which could be recounted a hundredfold, but my point is—Where could you have better material with which to teach the real meaning of those magic words—sepsis and asepsis?"

THE HUMOURS OF MIDWIFERY.

Miss Margaret French, Sister at the General Lying-in Hospital, York Road, presented the final paper, taking for her subject, "The Humours of Midwifery." She said:

"I think you will agree with me that it really is hard luck to be asked to read a humorous paper about midwifery. To begin with, midwifery is a serious subject. And then it always seems to me that the human and dramatic side of the subject lends itself to tragedy far more easily than to comedy.

"Of course a great many incidents do occur that seem at the time irresistibly funny—casual remarks made by the patients, especially criticisms of the nurses. A friend of mine was in a bus the other day, and two nurses ran after it, waving to the conductor who took no notice; an old gentleman asked why he did not stop, and the conductor said, 'Oh! I never stop for the nurses, they climb on like cats.' I don't know if that was a compliment, or a criticism. And the patients themselves are not at all backward in discussing our personal appearance, though to our faces at least, they are usually complimentary. A friend of mine was greeted on arrival at a case with: 'What, Sister, dear, I never thought you'd come yourself, I thought you were too beautiful.' This patient was Irish.

"Then there are the descriptions of their former labours, they are often both humorous and interesting. Unfortunately it is always a *previous* labour, *we* never see such interesting things. You have all heard of the cases in which the placenta sticks to the patients' ribs—they are really quite common—but one of my patients had a labour in which the child's head got 'hitched above the heart.' Have any of you come across that condition?

"In hospital the humour is usually of a rather different type, the patients are shy and do not express themselves so openly. Indeed a good many of them appear to be so terrified at the idea of coming in at all, that I often wish I could find out what they really think about it. I am sure it would be much funnier than anything we *do* hear. Of course many of them think we are not at all particular about sorting out the babies, and believe that if they *do* get their own babies in hospital, it is only by a happy chance, and not because we take any care, or think it really matters.

"Then they are very alarmed at the idea of being examined. They come up, as you know, in large parties to get their letters of admission (each patient bringing about four relations) and

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