

means to prevent any chance infection of the patient. This can only be done by making the surroundings as little likely to be a cause of infection as the circumstances permit, and by taking care that whatever the surroundings nothing enters the vagina which is not in the strictest sense of the words surgically clean, and that everything about the vulva is kept so clean that no infection will spread upwards from there."

Concerning the management of the lying-in mother the author writes that "the first thing that the midwife must recognise in regard to the lying-in mother is that although she is not a sick woman she may readily become one, and that the interior of the uterus may be easily infected if there is any relaxation of the precautions against sepsis. Though septic infection is the chief and greatest danger there are other troubles which must be guarded against, and in every case the attendant must keep her patient under the most careful observation so that early warning is obtained of any trouble."

The chapter on complications of the puerperium, including puerperal infections should be carefully studied, and those on the infant, including physiology, management, and artificial feeding, the management of premature and weakly infants, infection of the eyes, and skin affections, including congenital syphilis, and pemphigus are specially valuable.

Concerning the midwives' bag the author advocates the fitted case supplied by Messrs. Allen & Hanbury, which is shown in an illustration. Midwives are indebted to the author for including a chapter on venereal disease. They often meet with it in their practice, and yet in the past they have too often been left in complete ignorance of both the symptoms and the dangers to which they are exposed. They are here informed that "in any case where the midwife has reason to suspect the presence of venereal disease she should wear indiarubber gloves for her own protection."

The book is a most valuable addition to the manuals written for midwives, filling a place not yet occupied by any other book of this kind, and is the response of the author to the keen and reasonable desire of many midwives to equip themselves more efficiently for their serious and responsible work than is possible if they limit themselves to the information contained in the ordinary text books, concerned merely with meeting the requirements of the Central Midwives Board.

YORK ROAD HOSPITAL, LAMBETH, S.E.

One of the most recent additions to the teaching equipment at York Road Hospital is a magic lantern with an arc lamp. A beautiful set of midwifery slides have been prepared; these illustrate the anatomy, mechanisms, and abnormalities of pregnancy and labour. On Thursday, December 10th, a revision class is to be held by Dr. Fairbairn, open to all candidates for the December examination; this will be illustrated by the slides.

Tickets, 1s. each, may be had on application to the Matron.

INSURANCE OF MATERNITY NURSES. NATIONAL HEALTH COMMISSIONERS' DECISION.

The following decision of the National Health Insurance Commissioners, published in the *South London Press* will be read with interest by midwives and maternity nurses.

Recently Mr. W. A. Sparrow, a commission agent, of 3, New Kent Road, was sued at Southwark County Court by a maternity nurse for damages for breach of contract.

The nurse's case was that she was engaged to attend Mrs. Sparrow, but Mr. Sparrow wrote repudiating the agreement.

The defence was that the plaintiff was not insured under the National Health Insurance Act, and it was against his principle to employ an uninsured person.

Judge Granger, however, said he could give no opinion as to the contention regarding the insurance of maternity nurses, and, giving judgment for the woman for 25s., advised the defendant to write to the Insurance Commissioners.

Mr. Sparrow did as his Honour suggested, and has received a reply in which the Commissioners state:—

"A maternity nurse, working under the direction and supervision of a medical practitioner, is required to be insured under the National Insurance Acts, if the rate of her remuneration for an engagement by any employer does not exceed in value £160 a year. Where any emoluments (e.g., board and lodging) are provided by the employer, their value should be taken into account in estimating the value of the remuneration earned. . . . No contribution is required to be paid in respect of a person for any weeks in which she is temporarily not employed within the meaning of the Acts, but if her normal occupation is employment within the meaning of the Acts, she may herself continue to pay contributions during such periods, if she so wishes, in order to avoid reduction or postponement of benefits. I am to add that an employed person who satisfies any one of the conditions set out in the enclosed memorandum is entitled to a certificate of exemption. Such a certificate would relieve the worker, but not the employer, from the obligation to pay contributions. An employer is only liable in respect of an employee for the period during which the latter is employed by him within the meaning of the above Acts (see paragraph 9 of the enclosed pamphlet). No liability under the Acts in respect of any period previous or subsequent to the period of such employment is incurred by an employer."

The use of pituitary extract in labour has given favourable results at the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, especially when given in the second stage.

previous page

next page