

The Midwife.

MIDWIFERY IN 1914.

THE CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

The minimum term of training enforced by the Central Midwives Board still remains the same, and any woman after three months' training can enter for the examination of the Central Midwives Board, and, if she passes the examiners, thereafter take responsible charge of maternity cases. This term of practical experience, much of which is necessarily devoted to theoretical study, cannot be considered adequate, and we have been glad to observe that the Board has recently shown a disposition for its extension. Those who have the practical training of the pupils would, we believe, welcome this extension, as the present inadequate term necessitates much undesirable cramming.

We have also observed, with pleasure, that the Board has at length realized that midwives who teach pupils their work are teachers of practical midwifery, and now describes them as such, instead of recognizing them for the purpose of signing Forms III and IV (schedules which a candidate for the examination of the Board must present). This JOURNAL has for years claimed that those upon whom the work of teaching falls should be recognized as teachers, and we are glad that the seed has at last fallen on good ground.

The necessity for a Central Authority to maintain standards and discipline amongst midwives is illustrated by the fact that from time to time attempts are made by Associations concerned in supplying midwives to induce the Board to lower their standard, and also by the large number of cases which come up for investigation and judgment at the Penal Meetings of the Board.

The Board takes seriously its responsibilities in regard to the suppression of ophthalmia neonatorum, and we recently noted with satisfaction that when the action of a Health Visitor—who advised a mother to bathe a child's eyes, showing indications of this disease, with boracic lotion, and in the event of their not improving to send for a doctor—was brought to its notice, the Board reported this unwarrantable assumption of the responsibilities of the medical profession in treating disease, and communicated with the authority employing the health visitor. Irreparable

injury may be done, and a child become blind for life, if it does not at once receive skilled treatment when suffering from this acute and infectious disease.

ANTE- AND POST-NATAL CARE.

The necessity for caring for the mothers of the race both before and after their children are born is becoming increasingly recognized, and the grant made by the Exchequer to the Local Government Board for maternity and child welfare centres should help to ease the burden of maternity amongst the very poor.

REGISTRATION OF LYING-IN HOMES.

The London County Council proposal, in its General Powers Bill, for the Registration of Lying-in Homes in the County of London, has not yet become law, but, under proper conditions, it is evident that some central control is desirable.

MIDWIVES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

A Midwives Bill for Scotland, presented by Lord Balfour of Burleigh, was passed by the House of Lords, and one substantially the same, introduced in the House of Commons, passed its second reading, but failed to become law. There is little doubt, however, that this useful measure, which in some directions is an improvement on the English Act, will before long be placed on the Statute Book.

QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S HOSPITAL.

At Queen Charlotte's Hospital, Marylebone Road, London, N.W., over 1,800 poor women are received into the wards every year, and over 2,000 others are attended and nursed in their own homes. On the outbreak of war, arrangements were made for admission to the wards or attendance at their own homes of the wives of sailors and soldiers, and of Belgian and other refugees, without the usual letter of recommendation and free of cost. About 200 of these cases have been registered for admission, and a similar number for attendance at home by the Hospital midwives. The Committee are experiencing the greatest difficulty in obtaining the necessary funds for maintenance, and they make an earnest appeal for generous contributions to enable them to continue the free admission of the wives of soldiers and sailors. Subscriptions and donations will be gratefully received by the Secretary, Mr. Arthur Watts, at the Hospital, Marylebone Road, N.W.

previous page

next page