

the Board was not intended to inquire into the private conduct of a midwife, but it was formulated to secure the better training of such.

The Lord Chief Justice asked how such an opinion would apply to drunkenness.

Counsel replied that the term misconduct would only apply to anything that rendered a woman unfit for her duty. In the case of habitual drunkenness this would be so.

Mr. Justice Avory asked if a woman leading the life of a prostitute would be held unfit according to the meaning of the Act.

Counsel replied that such a life would render her unfit in his opinion; but the fact of a woman living in the house with a man would not render her unfit.

Mr. Justice Avory drew attention to the fact that candidates for the Central Midwives Boards examination had to produce certificates of good moral character.

Counsel replied that test applied also to solicitors, doctors, and members of other professions.

The Lord Chief Justice suggested the case of misconduct in a doctor, *e.g.*, if a doctor were co-respondent in a divorce case, it would only be regarded as professional misconduct if the respondent were a patient.

Mr. Justice Lowe was of opinion that it was unfair to place professional women under disabilities to which professional men were not liable.

Counsel for the Central Midwives Board argued that there was a distinct moral difference between an unchaste man and an unchaste woman.

The Lord Chief Justice remarked that there was a great difference in the way women would regard an unchaste woman to the way men would regard an unchaste man.

Mr. Justice Avory said he did not think anything could be worse for patients in these particular conditions than to be attended by an immoral woman.

It was also argued that the relation of a midwife in the house of her patient was of a far more intimate character than that of a doctor.

Mr. Justice Avory again referred to the term "infamous conduct in a professional respect" with regard to a doctor.

Counsel replied that except such conduct applied to a patient or a nurse it did not touch him professionally.

In support of the evidence against the midwife he urged that if these proceedings had been for divorce, the fact that the parties were living under the same roof would be taken as evidence against them.

The Lord Chief Justice asked if there was sufficient evidence of the midwife's leading an immoral life. Three persons swore that the inference of co-habitation was a wrong inference.

Counsel referred to the evidence that the midwife had spoken of the man as her husband.

Mr. Justice Avory thought that the Central Midwives Board had been influenced by the Warwick Guardians taking away the custody

of the children, and he pointed out that the case papers were very inaccurate.

As we go to press judgment was given for the midwife, and the Lord Chief Justice directed that her name be restored to the Roll of Midwives.

BELGIAN MOTHERS AND BABIES.

Miss L. J. Comber writes in the *Journal of the Cleveland Street Nurses' League*, from Orsett Infirmary, near Grays, Essex:—

"One Sunday in November we had a Belgian woman and little girl admitted, the mother expecting another little one shortly. The woman looked so sad and sat and wept, but the baby girl soon made friends with the nurses. A lovely big girl, sixteen months old, with golden curls and big blue eyes. She wore long earrings and a 'dummy' on a silver chain. The mother knew no English or French, and we knew no Flemish, so we could only show our sympathy by making her comfortable. Then we found Belgians do not take tea, so we soon made some coffee, which is what they are used to drinking. She was pleased with our cake (we heard afterwards they call it 'English pudding'; I was afraid to tell the cook that, as she is such a good cake-maker!) The bath was another difficulty, and she needed a lot of persuasion to get in. However, eventually we got mother and baby comfortably settled, the baby in a cot beside her mother's bed.

"The next day another Belgian mother and little boy came—such a chubby little fellow, thirteen months old. He also had a teat with a nice long rubber tube attached, through which he drank his milk. On the following Thursday we had a Belgian mother and little girl five years old (also with earrings and teat on silver chain) admitted, and this one knew a few words of English and we were thankful. Well, when the three got together they just did talk, and I suppose among other things they discussed the bath, for on the Monday, when nurse made them understand they were to have one, they all shook their heads and talked volubly in Flemish, so we didn't insist, but waited till the Wednesday, when the husband of one of them came. He could speak English, so we explained to him it was the custom in England to bathe. So he said, 'Yes, they must do as you wish; if they don't, whip them.' However, we had no further trouble, and I think they quite enjoyed it. We soon learned a little Flemish and taught them a little English, and they got quite merry over our pronunciation of Flemish words.

"The babies arrived in due time—two boys and one girl. Unfortunately the ones who had boys wanted girls, and the one with a girl wished for a boy. They were all bonnie babies, and the mothers did well in spite of sitting up and getting out of bed frequently. We tried to make them understand it was wrong, but they said 'Belgium up third day.' They all went out before Christmas, each mother having a very nice parcel of clothes from the Belgian Relief Committee."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)