

The Midwife.

THE CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

A Special Meeting of the Central Midwives Board was held at the Board Room, Caxton House, Westminster, on Thursday, October 28th, at 11 a.m., for the hearing of the charges alleged against twelve midwives, Sir Francis Champneys presiding.

Eight cases adjourned for judgment were first considered, two on the final reports of the Local Supervising Authorities and six on interim reports. The interim report on Caroline Meredith (No. 12239), Salop, being unsatisfactory, she was struck off the Roll and her certificate cancelled.

The result of the hearing of the charges was as follows:—

Struck off the Roll and Certificate Cancelled.—Mehatabel Armour (No. 15039), Gateshead; Eliza Jane Brewer (No. 23971), C.M.B. Examination, Wilts; Harriet Cowling (No. 16578), Somerset; Martha Cross (No. 11149), South Shields; Mary Emma Gordon (No. 19321), Stoke-on-Trent; Charlotte Ann Melhuish (No. 20848), Exeter; Alice Mills (No. 12923), Montgomeryshire; Elizabeth Ann Thomas (No. 20683), Birkenhead.

Censured.—Kezia Pierson (No. 19957), Bradford; Agnes Sarah Quinton (No. 10600), L.O.S. Certificate, Warwickshire. In each case the Local Supervising Authority is to be asked to furnish a report in three and six months' time.

Sentence Postponed.—Teresa Agnes Duckett (No. 26708), C.M.B. Examination, Blackburn. Report asked for in three and six months' time.

Judgment Suspended.—Mary Ann Goodhind (No. 14843), Bath. Report asked for in three and six months' time.

The defended cases were Midwives Goodhind, Quinton, Thomas.

In the case of Mrs. Thomas, Mr. Tuke, the learned Counsel who defended her, was at a distinct disadvantage, as he had only been instructed half an hour previously. The Inspector of Midwives, Birkenhead, and the Health Visitor were present. The first charge alleged in this case was that "the patient suffering from serious rupture of the perinæum and other injuries of the soft parts, you did not explain that the case was one in which the attendance of a registered practitioner was required."

The midwife's defence was that the tear was very slight. Dr. Grierson, on the contrary, who saw the patient on the eighth day, being called in owing to her rise of temperature, stated that there was a suppurating tear to within half an inch of the anus, and the patient was suffering from puerperal fever. This was corroborated by Miss Hughes, the Inspector, who was present and who said she examined the patient on the ninth

day, and showed the tear to the midwife, who said she did not know the perinæum was torn. There was a great quantity of pus. Counsel, in cross-examining Miss Hughes, was evidently quite prepared to take the line that, as she had not seen the patient at first, she could not say that the laceration might not have been slight at first, but Miss Hughes informed him so decidedly that the laceration must have taken place at the time of the confinement that he did not pursue that argument further.

Miss Carre, the Health Visitor, told the Board that when she saw the patient she had abdominal pain, and informed her that she was so sore she could hardly lie, and had been since her confinement.

Another charge against the midwife was that, though the patient was suffering from puerperal fever, she attended another patient without having undergone the disinfection prescribed by R. E. 5 to the satisfaction of the Local Supervising Authority. The defence in this instance was that the offence was technical as, though she had not notified, she had disinfected herself.

The Chairman observed that the Local Authority had no opportunity of supervising the disinfection.

The inspector informed the Board that in cases of this kind it was her invariable practice to personally see the instruments boiled and the lining of the bag changed.

Another charge against the midwife was that she discontinued her attendance on the tenth day, though the patient was seriously ill. Her defence was that the doctor (Dr. Grierson) who was called in inquired if she were attending any other cases, and being informed that she was, said, "Don't visit here any more; go home and take the necessary precautions."

In commenting on this, the Chairman said the Board thought it a pity that Dr. Grierson had advised her to cease her attendance.

On the Chairman asking the inspector what kind of a character the midwife bore, she replied that since she had been under her inspection she had been unsatisfactory and evaded inspection. She could not see the midwife's books because they were locked up, and the midwife stated that her husband had the key. She had personally instructed her in the administration of the Act.

Mary Ann Goodhind who was present and was defended by her solicitor was charged with neglecting to explain that medical assistance was necessary in a case of Ophthalmia Neonatorum in which the child subsequently lost the sight of one eye. Also with recording the condition of the child on the ninth day as "well."

Dr. W. H. Symons, M.O.H. for the City of Bath, was present with the Health Visitor for the city. When the latter called she advised that medical

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