

what was meant to start with, by a germ, or infection, or by antiseptics, affected a midwife's practice in any way afterwards. She further stated that the average woman who came up for three months' training, and a very hasty three months, and who had to have all the long syllabus of the Central Midwives Board pushed into her, as well as to get her practical work, was so intensely bewildered that personally she thought it made very little difference to the pupil whether she learned it or not. It was one dead cram to get through the examination, and personally she did not think the pupils understood it.

Questioned further by the Chairman Miss Gregory expressed the opinion that the course of training did not leave any beneficial result at all. She thought it absolutely and entirely inadequate. She thought the theory of antiseptics was explained in the course of training very carefully and thoroughly, but the women had not the education to understand or put what they learnt into practice unless there was a daily drill, and somebody perpetually watching to see that they carried out their duties. Hospital nurses were not trusted to do important dressings for certainly the first year on this account.

Questioned by the Chairman as to whether in the case of grave mischance owing to incompetence or insufficient training every case came to light, Miss Gregory replied she thought not. She only knew of two cases where midwives had contracted the disease. They were almost always hushed up. It was considered a great stigma to the midwife, always. The public never knew of these cases.

Sir Almeric Fitzroy said he shared Miss Gregory's view that the period of training for midwives could properly be increased, but asked if she did not think people assisted practical reforms much better by not having impossible goals (*i.e.*, two years' training).

Miss Gregory said she had proved one year was not an impossible goal, and was hopeful of being able to extend it.

Sir Almeric Fitzroy then said: "Apart from that, I put it to you, that you have laid before the Commission a very highly coloured and exaggerated view of the facts, in order to demonstrate, in your judgment, the great need of this change." Miss Gregory replied she was sorry if Sir Almeric thought so, but those were her beliefs.

Questioned further by him, as to whether she was aware that none of the symptoms of syphilis could escape the eyes of the doctor without the rules of the C.M.B. being broken, and the midwife rendered liable to penal consequences, Miss Gregory replied: "I am perfectly aware of that, but, nevertheless, a great many of them, I imagine, do."

Sir Almeric Fitzroy replied: "You imagine; just so. Now we come to my root objection to the character of this evidence. It is not your imaginations, however picturesque they may be, that we are dealing with, but the facts of the case." The witness replied, "Yes; only if I may say so,

I do not think many people have a more intimate knowledge of midwives than I have myself."

We think, in spite of the somewhat severe cross-examination to which Miss Gregory was subjected for the faith that is in her, that most experienced educated midwives would substantially endorse her evidence. We commend it, in its entirety, to the attention of our readers.

#### CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

At the examination held by the Central Midwives Board on February 15th in London, Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester, and Newcastle-on-Tyne, 450 candidates were examined and 359 passed the examiners. The percentage of failures was 20.2.

#### THE PREVENTION OF INFANT MORTALITY.

"Cookery for Children Under School Age" was the subject of the lecture delivered by Miss Florence Petty, under the auspices of the National Association for the Prevention of Infant Mortality, in the lecture hall of the Royal Society of Medicine, on Monday, March 6th.

Miss Petty began by advocating the superiority of brown bread, and pointed out that wheat-meal contains three times the phosphoric acid, and four times the acid than is found in white flour. She stated that in America the bleached flour was not used, but that it was sent over to England, the Americans saying that they will swallow anything over the water.

The lecturer gave several simple recipes for the cooking of vegetables and milk puddings, showing how their valuable properties can best be retained.

#### AN URGENT NATIONAL APPEAL.

We have received an influentially signed letter on behalf of the Royal Free Hospital, more particularly on behalf of its ante-natal and other special clinics, in which the strong argument is used that "but for the want of enlightened and modernized methods in the care of maternity and childhood, we British could have put into the field a million more men than are available to-day." It is urged that the wholesale destruction of fellow creatures in the present War is not more appalling than the chronic ignorance and neglect which have prevailed so widely hitherto in regard to the preservation and fostering of human life almost from its source.

For the past five years the Royal Free Hospital has been developing a project for further safeguarding infant life by the establishment of ante-natal and other special clinics, these specialized clinics being the consultative centre of a number of departments devoted to the promotion of infant welfare at all stages. The committee are appealing for £200,000 to put this scheme into constructive and permanent shape. All information concerning it may be obtained from the Secretary, Special Appeal Fund, Royal Free Hospital, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.

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