

Lady Barrett concluded her lecture with advice on what to do while waiting for medical help.

In slighter cases it was important to get the nervous system soothed, and an opiate suppository would be justified in case of delay in the doctor's arrival. In severer cases, she advocated thorough plugging of the vagina with due antiseptic precautions.

### PRACTICAL VALUE OF MEASURES AGAINST INFANTILE MORTALITY.

In his third Milroy Lecture before the Royal College of Physicians of London, Dr. S. G. Moore, M.O.H. Huddersfield (as reported in the *British Medical Journal*) gave an account of the remarkable results in the preservation of infant life achieved at Villiers-le-Duc, a commune of the French Midi, by M. Morel de Villiers, who became mayor in 1884 and followed in the footsteps of his father, who had been mayor for some years before 1866. Dr. Moore gave a translation of a report made to the French Academy of Medicine, which confirmed the astonishing fact that the infant mortality in Villiers had been zero for ten years (1893-1903). The report embodied the text of the communal regulations. The preamble set out that it was the duty of the municipal authorities to endeavour to stop depopulation of the country by taking the measures necessary to prevent birth mortality and stillbirths and to do away with infantile mortality. Consequently the municipal council issued an order containing ten articles. The first provided that—

Every woman with child, whether married or not, having her home in the village, and not in possession of sufficient means to allow her to take upon herself the expense of the measures necessary to secure, as far as possible, not only her own life, but also that of the child about to be born, shall have the right to require the help of the village authority.

The second invites the woman to declare her condition, before the seventh month, at the office of the mayor, and state the midwife by whom she wishes to be attended. The midwife would then be instructed by the mayor to visit the woman and to ascertain that there was neither albuminuria nor dystocia, nor dangerous presentation. The third article provided that if the midwife then considered it necessary to call in a medical man she must at once notify the authority without giving the reason for the notice, and the authority then requests a medical man, chosen by the woman, to take the necessary measures. The fees of the medical man and of the midwife are paid out of a village fund for free medical aid, and do not involve any liability on the State or on the department; a grant of 10d. a day, paid to the woman if she stays in bed for six days, is drawn from the same fund. The fifth article required a woman who takes in a child to nurse, if she does not feed it only at the breast, to provide herself

with an apparatus to sterilize the milk. She can obtain the apparatus from the municipal authority at a low price, and poor mothers who nurse their own children can obtain the apparatus on loan. All infants placed out to nurse are weighed on the communal baby weighing machine every fortnight, and any illness in any nurse-child, especially diarrhoea, vomiting, or respiratory trouble, must be notified to the municipality within twenty-four hours. If a nurse fails to carry out these requirements her certificate may be withdrawn. The last regulation provided that every nurse bringing up her own child, or a child entrusted to her, whether at the breast or by bottle, who produces the child in good health at the age of one year shall be entitled to a grant of two francs a month, dating from the time when she began to nurse the child. An additional rule made later is that a midwife must call in a doctor if a confinement is not brought to an end within twenty-four hours. From statistics furnished by M. Morel de Villiers, it appeared that from 1804 to 1878 there were forty-three stillbirths, and only two from 1878 to 1903. The report to the Academy concludes as follows: "All the facts clearly impress upon us how necessary and essential it is to have the union, the combined strength of both the officials of the administration and the representatives of the medical profession. Isolated, their efforts, however good their intentions and wishes, will be fruitless and ineffective, but combined their efforts will be all-powerful. However, it is not always so, unfortunately."

The trial of Dr. John Thomas Dickie, of 37, Lauriston Place, and Ann Taylor, of 4A, Lauriston Gardens, Edinburgh, on a charge of acting in concert in June, 1914, and between January 29th and February 5th, 1916, with using instruments upon two young women, in consequence of which both died, took place recently in the High Court of Justiciary in Edinburgh, with the result that sentence of five years' penal servitude was passed by Lord Justice Clerk in each case.

The jury, after hearing the evidence in regard to the two cases, after an absence of twenty-five minutes, found both accused guilty of procuring abortion in the first charge and also guilty in the second charge.

At the monthly meeting of the National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street, Dublin, on May 10th, the Master's report showed that in connection with the recent disturbances 40 gunshot injuries were attended to in the hospital, including men, women, and children. The Lady Superintendent's report showed that 4,000 loaves of bread, kindly given by the military authorities and Messrs. Boland, Ltd., were distributed by the hospital staff among the poor of the district. The Governors placed on record their appreciation of the noble conduct of the medical and nursing staff, who were often under fire.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)