

The Midwife.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

PENAL BOARD.

Special meetings of the Central Midwives Board were held at Caxton Hall, Westminster, on June 14th, 15th and 16th, for the hearing of charges alleged against certified midwives. Sir Francis Champneys presided.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14TH.

On Wednesday, June 14th, the following penal cases were considered and judgment given as under:—

Struck off the Roll and Certificate Cancelled.—Esther Peacock (No. 6145).

Cautioned.—Susan Barratt (No. 19780), Jane Jones (No. 208), Sarah Jane Pulley (No. 5782).

No Action Taken.—Elizabeth Dunn (No. 6439), Sarah Fryer (No. 5793), Mary Till (No. 34807).

One case was postponed on account of the illness of the midwife.

Final Reports.—Elizabeth Butlin (No. 28), Elizabeth Read (No. 11603). These reports being satisfactory, no further action was taken.

In the case of Teresa Agnes Duckett (No. 26708) she was reported to be in such a serious condition of health that she had not been able to pursue her calling. It was decided that she should remain on probation another three months or longer as it had not been possible to report upon her work.

The charge against Midwife Dunn, who was defended, was that a child of her patient was suffering from an infectious illness at the time of the confinement and that she neglected to undergo the disinfection of herself and her clothing required under the rules.

The midwife's defence was that though she knew the child was sick, she did not know the illness to be of an infectious character.

The Chairman considered that though the charge was technically proved, it was "just a piece of ill-luck."

Midwife Fryer, who was defended by Sir Ryland Adkins, M.P., was charged with negligence on the count that the patient suffering from injuries to the soft parts and offensive lochia, "you did not explain that the case was one in which the attendance of a registered medical practitioner was required," and further that without having undergone disinfection she attended as a midwife on another woman.

Her defence was that she did not consider the case septic when she left it, and though she was recalled by a medical man to douche the woman he said nothing to her about sepsis. He admitted in his declaration that he had no opportunity to warn the midwife. He stated that there was a

deep vaginal wound, but the midwife said that when she enquired at the hospital where the patient was eventually taken she ascertained that no operation had been performed. She had destroyed her record of pulse and temperature later, when she had heard the report of the medical man, as she thought they would be a source of danger.

The Chairman said the Board considered she had done this in good faith. Also that the medical man had not informed her of the nature of the case and, in addition, they were by no means satisfied that it was a case of sepsis at all. This midwife was therefore exonerated.

Midwife Pulley was charged with notifying as stillborn a child that had lived some hours, and also that the patient, suffering from a "serious rupture of the perinæum," "you did not explain," &c.

Her explanation of the first charge was that in the form of notification of birth she had struck out the word "living" instead of the word "dead."

This was accepted by the Board as she had notified the death the next day.

Mrs. Holland, who said she was a Health Visitor and a midwife, stated she had examined the patient and considered the laceration referred to as too serious to heal by itself. The midwife considered it a slight tear, but at the time she examined the patient the light was bad.

Midwife Till was charged with negligence in regard to the cleanliness and comfort of patient and child and also that the child, being dangerously feeble, "you did not explain," &c.

This case was of some interest, the midwife attended in person. There was present the Chief Inspector of Midwives for the county and a Health Visitor, who was also an inspector of midwives.

The infant was premature, and the midwife answered the charge of failing to wash it by saying that she had bathed it with oil. It had sucked vigorously and she had it well in hand until the visit of the Health Visitor who, though an inspector, was not the inspector for her area.

The Health Visitor had ordered the child to be bottle fed. The midwife said that it was not true that the mother had no milk, but that she did not nurse it as she wished to go out to work.

The Chairman enquired of the Health Visitor why, the child being so feeble, she did not advise medical help, and said the Board did not recognise health visitors or inspectors as such, but dealt with them as midwives.

The case was gone into and considered at some length, and the Board decided that the charges were not proved.

Application for restoration to the Roll by Elizabeth Ann Thomas (No. 20583) was refused.

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