

The Midwife.

PROBLEMS OF ANTE-NATAL CARE.

The following letter, signed by seventeen midwives (fourteen of whom are certified by examination), has been sent to the President of the Committee of an Ante-Natal Centre in London, by the local Association of Midwives, as a result of the suggestion of a medical woman, at an Ante-Natal Centre that as soon as the *patients book with the midwives* they should send them up to the centre for examination. It is thought that as the midwives in other localities may be approached with a similar proposition a knowledge of the action taken by their colleagues may be of use to them.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE ANTE-NATAL CENTRE. FROM THE LOCAL ASSOCIATION OF MIDWIVES.

We, the local midwives, wish to thank you very much for asking us to meet the two lady doctors who were so very kind as to speak to us about the Ante-Natal Centre.

We midwives are fully aware of the importance of the ante-natal work—we welcome any movement that will help to improve the health of the mothers and we will most willingly co-operate for this good end.

We are, however, greatly disappointed to find that you do not propose to supply treatment at the Centre—this we should gladly avail ourselves of for such patients who, requiring advice, have no family doctor or who are too poor to pay his fee. . . .

Our patients do not book with us as early as we would wish *now*, and we fear if they found that we sent them for *further* examination at the Centre it might prevent them booking with *us*. They would not be likely to submit to a second set of enquiries and examinations simply to be recommended afterwards to attend a hospital or to consult a private practitioner, which we had already advised them to do. We think also that the doctor who is eventually to be consulted will tell us that we have taken a very round-about way about it and that we had better have sent them to him in the first instance. Should his diagnosis differ from yours, which is within the bounds of possibility, we foresee still more trouble. We need not point out to you how very important it is for us to keep in with our doctors on whom we depend in emergencies at confinements. . . .

We fully appreciate the scientific attainments and capacity of these lady consultants, but we feel that perhaps they do not quite grasp (how is it possible that they should?) the difficulties of a midwife's practice and her responsibilities in regard to her patients, nor the instruction that the Central Midwives Board insists on her having before she goes up for examination. The Central

Midwives Board Rules say that pupils are to be instructed and examined in "pregnancy, its complications including abortion," &c.

There was a great deal of confused talk at the meeting the other day as to the advantages of diagnosis, and who could diagnose and who could not, and that the midwife was not competent to do this. This may or may not be true, but the midwife is (or should be) trained very carefully and minutely to observe the symptoms and signs, and these symptoms and signs are the foundation on which the diagnosis is made. But a diagnosis by itself is of no more use than the recognition of symptoms and signs unless treatment is to follow. The responsibility we feel in regard to our patients makes us very anxious not to shake their confidence in us, but if this is not interfered with please rest assured of our co-operation with you in every possible way.

We shall be glad to receive from you leaflets about your work, which if suitable we may give to our patients, so that they may take advantage of your Centre, should they wish to do so.

We need not point out to you that the power that the midwife has for good as a health worker is tremendous, as she is in the confidence of the people and her opportunities are vast and unique.

THE MIDWIVES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

The Midwives (Scotland) Bill received the Royal Assent on Thursday, December 23rd, and has therefore now become law. It now only remains for Ireland to follow suit.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

A special meeting of the Central Midwives Board was held at the Board Room, Caxton House, Westminster, on Friday, December 17th, at 11 a.m., for the hearing of the charges alleged against seven midwives, Sir Francis Champneys presiding. The result was as follows:—

Struck off the Roll and Certificate Cancelled.—Annie Jane Hewitt, L.O.S. Certificate (No. 9612); Amelia Penketh, No. 8179, Cert. Liverpool Lying-in Hospital; Ellen Langley (No. 50559).

Judgment suspended.—Margaret Emery (No. 25875), C.M.B. examination; Eleanor Steel (No. 28919), C.M.B. examination; Mary Frances Rhodes (No. 18242), L.O.S. Certificate. Report asked for in three and six months' time.

Cautioned.—Blanche Alice Battershall (No. 35604), C.M.B. examination.

Judgment Postponed.—Agnes Ann Gordon (No. 34893, C.M.B. examination). Report asked for in three and six months' time.

Midwife Battershall should have been defended, and also have appeared, but her counsel was detained in court and she herself was not well

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)