

The Midwife.

AN OBSTETRICAL TRAGEDY.

Under the above heading the *Lancet* publishes an interesting article by Dr. S. D. Chippingdale, who points out that November 6th is the anniversary of what he describes as a "tragedy in the annals of English obstetrics," the delivery and death of H.R.H. the Princess Charlotte of Wales. The untoward event is thus announced in a *London Gazette Extraordinary* issued at the time:—

"Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte of Wales was delivered of a stillborn male child at nine o'clock last night, and about half-past twelve Her Royal Highness was seized with great difficulty of breathing, restlessness, and exhaustion, which alarming symptoms increased till half past two o'clock this morning, when Her Royal Highness expired."

The Princess was in her twenty-first year. Her grandmother, Queen Charlotte, had been attended in her thirteen confinements by a midwife, a Mrs. Draper, with the happiest results. When, however, the Princess Charlotte was known to be pregnant, and an heir to the throne anxiously desired, it was decided to take every possible precaution. Hers was the first Royal accouchement to be attended by male practitioners. Three were employed—Dr. Mathew Baillie, Dr. John Sims, and Sir Richard Croft. Of these, Sir Richard Croft was regarded as a specialist and controlled the case. The Court wished the Princess's confinement to take place at Kensington. The Princess, however, preferred Claremont, fifteen miles away, and, at that time, not easily accessible. The labour was protracted and abnormal. There was hour-glass contraction of the uterus. The infant was known to be dead some hours before it was born, yet no steps were taken either to remove it or to terminate labour. The Princess was in an enfeebled condition from low diet, repeated bleedings, and unrelieved bowels. Finally there was post-partum hæmorrhage. A Mr. A. Jesse Foot demanded a public inquiry, stating, upon the report of the nurse, that when the infant was born, all three doctors were fast asleep. This, however, was denied by Dr. Sims, who, in a letter which will be found in Playfair's "Midwifery," says: "It has been said we had all gone to bed, but this is not a fact. Baillie retired about eleven, and I lay down in my clothes at twelve, but Croft never left her room." A path is still shown at Claremont where Sir Richard Croft had walked up and down in agony not knowing what to do for the best, and Foot's statement that he went to bed is a libel. By command of the king a post-mortem examination was made by Sir Everard Home and Sir David Dundas, who reported to the king that there was no evidence of neglect, but that everything had been done which "human science

could devise or human skill effect." The event so preyed upon the mind of Sir Richard Croft that three months later he shot himself.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARDS.

EXAMINATION PAPERS.

ENGLAND.

The following questions were set at the Examination held by the Central Midwives Board (England) in London and the provinces on November 1st:—

1. Describe the arrangement of the bones of the vault of the foetal skull.

Explain how moulding is possible in the case of the foetal skull, and the manner in which it is produced in a first vertex presentation.

2. A patient has had a severe post-partum hæmorrhage, but the bleeding has entirely stopped. In the absence of medical help, how would you treat the shock and faintness resulting from the loss of blood?

3. What is the usual cause of inflammation of the bladder occurring during the puerperium? What symptoms would it give rise to?

4. Give a brief description of each of the following conditions, and explain your duty in connection with them: Cephalhæmatoma, cleft palate, hare-lip, and phimosis.

5. What are the special points to be attended to in rearing a premature baby during the first ten days of its life?

6. Explain briefly what differences there are between inspired and expired air, how these changes are brought about, and what purposes they serve in the body.

SCOTLAND.

The following questions were set by the Central Midwives Board for Scotland, at its examination, October 29th:—

1. Twin pregnancy.

(a) What are the dangers connected with it?

(b) State the management after the birth of the first child.

2. What measures should the midwife employ in order to ensure the healthy action of the bowels of her patient—(a) in pregnancy, (b) during the course of labour, and (c) in the puerperium?

3. What serious complications may occur within the first 24 hours of the puerperium? Select one of them and describe the nurse's duty if it occurs in the absence of the doctor.

4. In a breech delivery, after the body is born, what complications may arise, and how would you deal with them?

5. What causes retained placenta, and how would you manage such a case?

6. Enumerate the early signs and symptoms of pregnancy.

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