

# The Midwife.

## IDEALS IN THE TEACHING OF MIDWIFERY.

MAY 29TH.

The Conference on the above subject held at the Midwives' Institute last week, and which was open to all midwives teaching pupils midwifery, began with a reception by Miss Rosalind Paget at 12, Buckingham Street, Strand, at which those present were able quickly to get into touch with their hostess, with the Hon. Secretary of the Conference, Miss M. Olive Haydon, and with one another, as each wore as a badge a small cardboard disc bearing her name. A small, well arranged exhibit, containing many specimens of great interest, appliances, charts, methods of keeping records, &c., excited much interest.

When Dr. Fairbairn delivered the inaugural lecture on "Methods in the Teaching of Midwifery," there was a full house in the lecture room, and he made many interesting suggestions as to methods of teaching, which, no doubt, those present will make use of. He emphasised the enormous advantages of a broad general education, such as that afforded by a university, as a preliminary to special training; thus, of two given students—one who had had this educational advantage and one who had gone straight to a hospital without this training—the first, if their abilities were equal, would be much the better man.

As it was not possible to double the length of the period of training for midwives and to widen their outlook by foundation teaching in general culture, teachers should take special pains to use the professional education for both functions, and in teaching their special subjects to cultivate the mind and the power of intellect, to show their pupils how to get away from learning by rote without understanding, and to grasp the importance of knowing the why and wherefore, which they should be encouraged to work out.

MAY 30TH.

The work of the Conference began on the morning of May 30th at 9.30 a.m., with visits to Guy's Hospital, the General Lying-in Hospital, York Road, S.E., and to the intensely interesting Historical Medical Exhibition, 54, Wigmore Street, W., organised by Messrs. Burroughs, Wellcome & Co.—under the inspiring guidance of Sister Olive.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR THE HIGHER AND BROADER EDUCATION OF MIDWIVES.

At 11 o'clock the members of the Conference assembled at 12, Buckingham Street, Strand, under the chairmanship of Sir Francis Champneys, who, in his introductory remarks, spoke of the probable establishment of a Ministry of Health and the opportunity for a midwifery service to be

worked into the scheme; he referred also to the granting of the franchise to women, and commended to midwives the interests of those in their charge. Selfish voting in politics always produced a recoil. He further spoke of the duty of midwives to uphold the dignity of their profession.

### IDEALS IN EDUCATION OF MIDWIVES.

Dr. Janet Campbell presented the first paper and emphasised the fact of the reduction of medical practitioners and students caused by the war had created a shortage which would not be made good for years to come. More midwifery and more responsibility would, consequently, devolve upon midwives, but midwives would only be successful if they were equipped for their work by having received a good professional education, and they should work together to secure this. They should, moreover, be educated women, understanding the social problems of the day, able to take a definite and responsible part in the promotion of infant welfare. The work of a midwife should by no means be restricted to attendance on the patient at the time of her confinement and ten days subsequently. They needed a wider training, including amongst other things instruction in the physiology of pregnancy, a knowledge of the care of infants, of infant feeding, of the initial difficulties of breast feeding, of minor gynaecology, so that they may understand the results of unsuccessful midwifery, and of venereal diseases.

Briefly, the fundamental requirements of a first-rate professional training for midwives were to broaden it, to extend the practice and clinical training and its duration, and to provide for post-graduate instruction.

Miss Elsie Hall's paper on "The Teaching of Ante-Natal Work" was read by Miss Duffield, as Miss Hall was unfortunately unable, through illness, to be present. Miss Hall emphasised the importance of ante-natal work, and was hopeful as to the development of citizen associations for mothers, worked by themselves, with the help of their friend the midwife.

Miss Graham presented a paper by herself and Miss Walter on "The Teaching of Delicate Subjects," dealing with the motherhood of single girls, the contraction of venereal disease, and abortion.

The paper by Miss M. O. Haydon, "Is a special training for midwives desirable?" was well reasoned, forcible, and practical. The arguments advanced in a contrary sense were not convincing.

(To be continued.)

We hope to publish next week a report of the Conference on Maternity Nursing, convened by the Central Council for District Nursing in London, and held at the offices of the Metropolitan Asylums Board on Tuesday last.

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