

The Midwife.

WET-NURSE DIRECTORY.

That first-class monthly magazine, *Maternity and Child Welfare*, this month publishes a most instructive article by its official commissioner, who has returned from "A Child Welfare Tour in U.S.A.," from which we quote the following:—

"WET-NURSE DIRECTORY."

"The 'Wet-nurse Directory,' at 63, Binney Street, Boston, Mass., was started in 1910, and has been under the direction of the Infants' Hospital since 1914. The object is to supply mother's milk to babies who are ill or who, for some reason, are deprived of their own mother's milk. It also affords an opportunity for unmarried or deserted mothers to keep their babies with them and earn good wages, one of the rules being that the baby shall not be separated from its mother. Both mother and baby are examined by a physician of the hospital, and no case is accepted unless it is found to be free from infectious and contagious diseases. The report of the Superintendent, Miss H. Hartwell, is sufficiently interesting to quote substantially in full:—

Formerly the girls, while waiting in the directory for cases, received no wages. Now, after a week, they receive the same wage as if they were on a case—8 dols. a week, and they supply us with drawn breast-milk, which enables us to fill small orders and have some to give away. All that is not ordered or sold by a certain time each day is sent to the hospital, or given to any other hospital which wishes to send for it.

With the exception of reducing the price of drawn breast-milk from 50c. to 25c. an ounce, our prices remain the same. The charge for a wet nurse is 15 dols. a week, of which the nurse receives 8 dols. and the directory 7 dols. If the wet-nurse is not taken to the employer's home, but kept at the directory and her milk drawn, the charge is 30 dols. a week. Drawn breast milk at 25c. an ounce may be obtained, also, at the directory. A room is especially equipped as a milk-room, where the milk is drawn, and poured immediately into sterile bottles and iced. The infants' hospital is supplied with from 18 to 21 oz. a day.

The expenses of the directory are necessarily large, owing to the need of so much personal attention and training for the girls and the necessity of much nourishing food. When a wet-nurse is no longer able to nurse a baby, we help her to find other work, usually through the society from which she came to us. During 1919 twenty-five mothers were admitted to the directory. Thirteen others made application but were not accepted. Forty calls for nurses were filled, forty-five calls for milk for babies. One hundred and seventeen ounces have been given to the Massachusetts General Hospital, 368 oz. to the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, 58 oz. to the Floating Hospital, and 6,711 oz. to the Infants' Hospital. Milk has been given in a few cases to families who could not afford to pay for it. The receipts from milk sold were 1,934 dols., and from milk given 1,958 dols., making a total of 3,892 dols.

"Besides helping babies in Boston and vicinity this milk has extended into the White Mountains

and has even gone across the Continent from Maine to California.

"Among the studies enumerated in the post-graduate course is a clinic on stools—a feature which might find a very useful plate elsewhere."

DISGRACEFUL BEHAVIOUR.

At Old Street Police Court a woman summoned for assault alleged that the complainant attended her in her confinement, and then went away to Folkestone with her husband, where they lived together as man and wife. The complainant admitted that this was true. The Magistrate.—Very disgraceful behaviour for a midwife. In binding over the defendant, the Magistrate said she had been very much wronged, but must not take the law into her own hands.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MIDWIVES IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

MADAM,—In to-day's issue of your valuable journal it would appear that an unfortunate wording that occurs in my County Health Report for 1919, for the Isle of Wight, has very much misled you into commenting adversely on the midwifery service in the Island.

As a matter of fact thirty-two out of the thirty-three midwives possess their C.M.B. Certificates through their having passed an examination entitling them to be placed on the Midwives' Register.

Their good work has been evident from the fact that for several years the Isle of Wight has had an Infantile Mortality rate lower than any other Administrative County.

I hope therefore you will be good enough to allow this further statement to appear in your columns in fairness to an admirable body of hard-working and successful midwives,

Yours faithfully,

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(The unfortunate wording which we quoted from the Report, stated that "There are 33 midwives practising in the Island, all of whom have received a certain amount of training, and only one of this number is on the register, through being a *bona fide* midwife, engaged in practice at the time of the passing of the Midwives' Act, 1902."

We are very pleased to learn that thirty-two out of the thirty-three midwives alluded to possess the certificate of the Central Midwives' Board, and are no doubt of the utmost service in their respective districts.—ED.)

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