

As to one section of the Rules, my own professional training enabled me to render special and, I hope, useful service. I refer to the Rules governing the penal procedure and jurisdiction of the Board. This important section of the Rules presented many difficulties. The jurisdiction the Board possesses is, I think, unique. It is analogous to that possessed by the General Medical Council, but is much more rigid, in a sense, as it is founded on the observance of a severe code of minutely detailed regulations, whereas the General Medical Council is, if I understand the matter aright, pretty much a law unto itself in defining what and what are not infractions, not so much of Rules binding practitioners to special knowledge and special forms of treatment of disease, as of what is known as "unprofessional conduct."

My interest in this matter even to-day arises from the fact that, if my recollection serves me, the Rules in this respect were drafted by me—substantially as they are now applied. They were framed on the method, generally, of the General Medical Council, so far as it was applicable, and I had the advantage of discussing and settling them here in Cambridge with Sir Donald Macalister, then, as now, President of the General Medical Council.

In the result they obtained an easy passage through the Board and the Privy Council Office, the latter acting on the advice of the President of the General Medical Council, and have, I believe, solved most of the solvable difficulties of the situation.

The penal sittings of the Board in the early days, were not, however, without those difficulties which are incident to the discharge of judicial duties by persons untrained in such matters.

This is a sketch, and a brief one. The very full minutes of the Board which have been printed, indexed and bound in volumes would have enabled me to elaborate much more fully than I have done the history of their early proceedings in the building up of this important instrument of progress in public health—the profession of midwifery and the care of both mother and child.

In the early stages of the Board's penal practice cases came before that tribunal which opened wide the eyes even of the layman to the far-reaching and destructive evils which lay at the root of neglected maternity. And so much of this evil is preventable—and even easily preventable! One has only to think of puerperal fever and of ophthalmia neonatorum to realise what preventive treatment properly and systematically applied can do to abate long-drawn-out human suffering. And the root of so much life-disease is in the birth-period and the early childhood!

Nothing, in my opinion, has been and is, so important in modern preventive medicine—I speak, of course, as a layman and as an ex-administrator, and thus with a certain diffidence—as the work of the past twenty years which has been done by that laborious and little-known (I had almost said obscure) body, the Central Midwives Board. Nothing in detail—and in devotion and sacrifice—

is to-day more important to the general welfare of our population than the work of the nurse-midwife.

## A BETTER MIDWIFERY SERVICE REQUIRED.

Dr. Aleck W. Bourne, B.Ch., F.R.C.S., addressing the recent Congress of the Royal Sanitary Institute on "The Effects of an Inefficient Midwifery Service on the Health of the Female Population," pleaded for improved teaching of the medical student and midwife. He concluded:—

"In the case of the midwife we are trying to give a highly specialised scientific instruction, involving strange technical terms, to a woman, frequently illiterate, who has had no previous education in the scientific method, in a period of six months. In this brief time a woman with a short and incomplete general education, who has never developed the habit of learning, is suddenly expected to learn anatomy, physiology, the mechanics and clinical aspects of pregnancy and labour and treatment of abnormalities. The result is that she gains no understanding but a superficial parrot-like and unreasoning knowledge.

"The remedy is to insist on a far better type of woman, a much higher standard of general education, and a higher intelligence than the low level attained by many who now aspire to be midwives.

"The teaching of the London schools for midwives, I believe, to be good, but some of the lesser known, smaller provincial schools must be sadly deficient, judging from the standard reached at the examinations of the C.M.B."

## NO PRESENTATION.

The following was told by a private hospital inspectress in West Australia where they have a baby bonus of £5 to all mothers, to secure which a form has to be filled in by the midwife.

There are several questions, including the following: "Duration of labour," "Presentation, &c."

Against the latter question one Sarah Gamp, who was registered, who had had two births, wrote against:—

1st for presentation none.

2nd for presentation, turkey and two chickens.

—From Miss Bothwell's Diary, *South African Nursing Record*.

## READY AT THE CALL OF DUTY.

The mothers of the Ray Lodge Infant Welfare Centre, Woodford, have presented to Nurse Harvey a cut-glass rose bowl, an umbrella, and an overmantel art pot to show their appreciation of the indefatigable way in which she has worked amongst them. At all hours and times she has been ever ready to answer the call of duty, and when she was in attendance on a case those concerned knew well that everything possible would be done for the welfare of the patient.

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