

The Midwife.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES' BOARD.

EXAMINATION PAPER.

The following are the questions set at the Examination held by the Central Midwives Board on December 5th, 1922:—

1. Describe the position of the various organs in the female pelvis, and, if you are able, draw a diagram of them.
2. How do you recognise in a breech case that the arms are extended? How would you deliver them and the after-coming head?
3. What special care should be taken in the case of an infant born during an epidemic of small pox? What are the advantages of vaccination?
4. What are the causes of delay in involution of the uterus during the puerperium? What symptoms may be present?
5. Describe in detail your examination of a pregnant woman at term. What conditions may you find that would require the services of a registered medical practitioner? What are your duties under the Rules of the Board in such conditions?
6. What symptoms does cancer of the womb give rise to in a pregnant woman? If you have reason to suspect the presence of this disease, what is your duty?

A DEVOTED FOSTER MOTHER.

The devotion of the Indian ayah to her small charges is well known, but we do not so often hear of that of the coloured races in America, and it seems worth while to put on record a story told in "My Beloved South," by Mrs. T. P. O'Connor, born in Texas, and saturated in its history and folk-lore.

"At one time in Texas we had—an unusual thing for us—a spell of terrible unceasingly hot weather. The sun sank to rest a brazen shield, leaving the earth baked and cracked like a pie-crust; it rose the next morning a blazing eye of unrelenting fire, and continued unblinking throughout the long day. Old people died from exhaustion, middle-aged people suffered, young people were excitable and impatient, and the poor little children were simply scorched out of existence by this dreadful tropical weather.

"The first little baby of a young cousin of mine, who lived on the adjoining place, was taken suddenly very ill. The doctor was almost hopeless about the child's recovery, and said it depended on a change in the weather. The young mother, pale and wan from the heat, was in despair, but

the negro foster mother, a strong, vigorous young woman, said, 'Ef dat's all de trouble; ef its coolness dat's wanted, I'se gwine to save dis chile.' And giving orders to a little darkey in the room, she said, 'Bring me a bucket of cold water, and drop it deep in de well.' And into the water she dipped a wide palm-leaf fan, and began slowly, evenly, and continually, to make a cool, moist breeze from the baby's hot head to his little restless feet.

"Except to nurse him she never stopped the flail-like movement for thirty-six hours. The fan was dipped again and again into the water, and on and on it went in its regularity of movement, keeping down the fever, and letting the child get an occasional hour or two of sleep.

"Late in the evening of the second day came a merciful thunder storm. The heavens were riven with lightning, and peals of thunder sounded like heavy artillery. The sky opened and let down, not rain, but great waterfalls of cooling water. The outsides of the houses were washed clean. The cracks of the baked earth were filled with the blessed fluid. The creeks began to murmur, and in a few hours the dry beds of streams became roaring torrents. The air rapidly cooled and the baby was out of danger, but when his black mammy dropped the fan her arm was the size of a human leg; the muscles stood out, swollen and rigid, and her hand was almost paralysed. The doctor found the young mother smoothing the big swollen hand, and crying like a baby. The crisis was passed; for the first time in weeks the child had taken notice of things about it, and was actually hungry.

"'Well, Jemima,' said the doctor, picking up the fan, 'the youngster owes his life entirely to you and this.'

"'Why, laws a mercy, doctor,' said Jemima, with a shaky laugh, 'you don't spose I was gwine to let my chile die when one ob dese here five-cent fans could save him, did you? Course, I wouldn't! But my arm feels mighty funny. I 'spect it will all pass away, though.' And it did. In a few days Jemima's strong arm was normal again, and to-day that palm-leaf fan baby is a flourishing and brilliant young lawyer. Now, of course, science has arranged the electric fan to be worked by machinery, but in those days cool air came from love and service, and splendid muscular strength."

The resourcefulness and devotion to duty of this "black mammy," who knew nothing of an eight hours' day, could not be exceeded by any modern nurse, and indeed we must never forget that the traditions of unselfish devotion which inspire the best nurses are their heritage from a great company of those who, without the advantages of the present careful and thorough training given to probationers, yet "did what they could."

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