

The Midwife.

MIDWIVES AND OPIUM.

A resolution protesting against the use of opium by midwives has been passed at the Annual Meeting of the British Medical Association at Glasgow.

Dr. Scudamore expressed the opinion midwives should not be allowed to administer any poison. There were some whose ignorance was colossal.

Dr. Turner, on the other hand, pertinently enquired whether a woman in a remote rural district ought to remain in pain while the midwife sent five or ten miles to a doctor to come out and say: "Yes, I will give a prescription for ten grains of laudanum?"

More even than pain may be the result of withholding opium when needed, and the patient may lose her life for lack of a drug which a properly qualified midwife is quite competent to give. It must be remembered that midwives are in responsible charge of their patients, and considered by a Central Midwives Board competent to conduct a labour, and to care for mother and child. Why, then, deprive her of the use of a drug which in some cases is invaluable?

It will be remembered that the Central Midwives Board, which has been administering the Act for England and Wales for twenty years, has never had to deal with a case of improper administration of drugs.

"AN INJUSTICE TO THE MATRON."

We quite agree that discipline must be maintained and that nurses must carry out the directions of their superior officers, but if the facts concerning Nurse Mayne at the Strabane District Hospital are as reported in the *Tyrone Constitutional*, she seems to have been somewhat arbitrarily treated.

When Major M'Cormack, D.S.O., Commissioner, recently transacted the business of this hospital, the Matron, in her report, stated that Dr. Hill, Medical Officer, gave her instructions that Nurse Mayne was to do maternity work, but she refused to carry out the order.

The Commissioner said that Nurse Mayne would have to do as she was ordered. When orders were given they should be carried out at once; if nurses had a grievance they could complain afterwards.

Nurse Mayne wrote alleging that she was not being fairly treated by the Matron, as she had to remain on day duty and look after the maternity cases while on duty and was now being called upon to discharge maternity duty at night. She did not consider she should be asked to discharge both day and night duty, and stated she was

unable to discharge all the duty imposed upon her by the Matron.

The Nurse was asked to appear before the Commissioner, and she stated that she did not consider the attendance on maternity cases at night was part of her duty. She would be unable to obey all the orders of the Matron. She was not getting fair play and should not be asked to do this duty when there was a nurse with maternity training on duty.

The Commissioner said they must have discipline in the institution, but everyone who carried out their duties would be supported by him. This was the second complaint which had come before him in regard to Nurse Mayne and if not dealt with now it was an injustice to the Matron. He ordered Nurse Mayne's suspension and that in the meantime she leave the institution.

No nurse should be required to be on duty night and day. It not only results in indifferent care of the patients, but is contrary to the laws of nature, and therefore bad for the nurse.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD FOR IRELAND.

The seventh examination of the Central Midwives Board for Ireland was held simultaneously in Dublin, Belfast and Cork on June 27th and 28th, 1922. Ninety-five candidates entered, of whom one did not attend, six failed, and eighty-eight passed satisfactorily. The following registered medical practitioners acted as Examiners:— Doctors G. Tierney, T. Neill, Agnes Barry, F. W. Doyle, J. D. Williamson, J. McLiesh, J. Booth and P. J. O'Brien.

EXAMINATION PAPER.

The following is the paper set to candidates for the Examination of the Central Midwives Board for Ireland, June 27th, 1922:—

1. Give the signs and symptoms of pregnancy and state how you will calculate the probable date of delivery.

2. What are the structures in the umbilical cord? Describe how you will tie and cut it. Give your reasons.

3. What conditions on the part of the mother in the second stage of labour will require medical assistance?

4. Explain shortly the following terms:—

(a) Hydramnios; (b) Vesicular mole; (c) Quickening; (d) Pyrosis; (e) Wharton's jelly.

5. Describe the varieties of Mastitis, their treatment and prevention.

6. State briefly how you would palpate a pregnant uterus, and what information you would obtain.

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