

# The Midwife.

## YOUTH AND THE RACE.

Those who are interested in the question of the breeding of a vigorous race, and what midwife or nurse is not, will be specially interested in the fourth report of the Birth Rate Commission which deals with the subject of Youth and the Race. The enquiry was carried out by the Bishop of Birmingham, President of the Commission, and others.

The terms of reference were very wide, but the present volume is concerned with a study of the development and education of young citizens for worthy parenthood.

The first conclusion arrived at by the Commission is that moral education of the young "cannot with due regard to the moral safety and welfare of youth be shirked, but must be undertaken, and should be therefore considered not as an irksome duty but as a privilege." All the witnesses were of opinion that full and frank answers, in accordance with the capacity of the child, should be given to questions concerning his origin. Dr. Lyttleton put the age of nine as the time when boys should be perfectly able to understand the facts of maternity.

While it was generally held that sex instruction is a duty which should be performed by parents, it was also realised that parents are frequently not competent to give it. In this case, the consent of the parent having been obtained, such instruction should be given by the teacher, who should receive special instruction for this purpose. The Commission consider that use may be made of Maternity and Child Welfare Centres in this connection.

## THE BASTARDY BILL.

The Bastardy Bill, promoted by Captain Bowyer, the objects of which are the amendment of the present bastardy laws and the obtaining of better provision for the children of unmarried parents, is of much interest to nurses and midwives, who, although they constantly come in contact with reluctance on the part of unmarried mothers to claim the support of an infant's father for the child he has begotten, realise the importance of placing responsibility where it rightly belongs.

When the Bill was in Committee, which it is now safely through, Captain Bowyer explained that it had the support of every organisation concerned in London, including boards of guardians.

A new clause, moved by Captain Bowyer, seeking to increase the amount which the mother of an illegitimate child might claim from the father from 10s. to 20s. a week was passed almost without

discussion; it was also agreed that when a defendant is committed to prison for non-payment of money under an affiliation order, the Court may direct that the imprisonment for non-compliance with the order shall not extinguish the liability of the defendant to pay the said sum.

## LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THE C.M.B.

Nurses and Midwives who are registered under the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, and also under the Central Midwives Board, no doubt realise the fundamental difference in the two Acts, under which they are set up, for making provision for the expenses of the Council and the Board.

Under the Midwives Acts provision is made that the Board shall, as soon as practicable after the 31st day of December in each year, publish a financial statement made up to that date. The Board shall submit a copy of such statement to the Privy Council, and if the statement shows any balance against the Board, and such balance is approved by the Privy Council, it can recover from the Councils of the Counties and County Boroughs, any apportionment of such balance being according to the returns of the last published census for the time being.

The Ministry of Health is now the authority to which the Central Midwives Board submits this statement, and the sum so apportioned for 1922 is no less than £5,280 11s. It will be seen therefore that the fees paid by midwives do not, by this amount, cover the expenses of registration and examination and the cost of administration.

On the other hand, it was always intended that the General Nursing Council for England and Wales should be self-supporting, and one of the arguments used in favour of the Nurses' Registration Bill when it was before the House of Commons was that it was intended that the Nurses' Act should be self-supporting, and that no claim was made in the Bill on public funds. This is one reason why it is so important that the fees, both for the registration and examination of nurses should be arranged on a scale to cover the expenses of each, and provide a margin in each case for the working expenses of the Council. It is also a reason why the nurses should keep a watchful eye on the expenditure of the Council because extravagance in this connection will automatically send up fees, the Council having no other source of income.

The Registrar's Report of the Liverpool Hospital and Ladies' Charity, Brownlow Hill, for the year 1919, just published, is an interesting statement of the cases treated during the year.

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