

The Midwife.

THE TRAINING OF MIDWIVES.

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In regard to the position of students who are either trained nurses, or who do not intend to practise, Dr. Campbell is of opinion that although a lengthened training will be more inconvenient to those who have no intention of practising, but merely wish to obtain the certificate as an additional qualification, most of these are either potential health visitors or trained nurses. Many health visitors holding the C.M.B. certificate have never acted as midwives, and their knowledge of practical midwifery is consequently very limited; the additional experience gained by a wider training should be of much value to them in view of the increase in maternity work under local authorities.

In the case of trained nurses, Dr. Campbell points out that the extension from four to six months is not a great increase, and while it would no doubt be inconvenient to training schools, especially to those which prefer to take nurses rather than untrained pupils, and which are supported largely by pupils' fees, this does not seem sufficient reason for making a further exception in regard to nurses. Although it is claimed that a nurse can learn all that is necessary in three or four months, and may indeed become fairly expert in the art of delivery, she cannot possibly gain in that short time that wider conception of midwifery which is so desirable.

Dr. Campbell considers that if the longer training period results in a reduction in the number of nurses who wish to possess the C.M.B. certificate but not to practise midwifery, this, owing to the shortage of cases available for teaching purposes, will be greatly to the benefit of medical students and pupil midwives who do mean to practise.

THE NURSES IN A DILEMMA.

"The nurses themselves are in a dilemma, as so many of the higher posts in nursing are only open to those who hold the C.M.B. certificate. The Central Midwives Board clearly cannot offer anything in the nature of an inferior certificate in midwifery to meet the needs of these nurses, but perhaps the General Nursing Council might be able to devise some special training in gynaecological and maternity nursing which could be accepted in lieu of the C.M.B. certificate when actual midwifery experience was not essential."

In regard to the possible dearth of students, if the training is lengthened, Dr. Campbell considers it doubtful whether most students who intend to practise would be deterred by a longer period of study which, even if extended to a year, would be shorter than the training for any comparable profession or occupation. She points out that a year is not a long time to spend in equipping oneself for a life's work, and it is more than likely that

good candidates would welcome rather than object to opportunities for a more effective training.

In regard to the better financial reward which should result on this extended training, Dr. Campbell thinks a considerable increase might be necessary in the partially or wholly subsidised midwifery service in urban and rural districts.

THREE EXCELLENT RECOMMENDATIONS.

Under the heading, "Curriculum," Dr. Campbell advocates the reorganisation of the whole present Curriculum of Training, and amongst the general requirements to be insisted upon considers that every pupil should be required to take a certain amount of her training in a properly equipped lying-in hospital or home. This is not at present essential.

Under "Training Schools and Approved Teachers" she points out that Poor Law Institutions are not at present subject to the supervision of the Central Midwives' Board. She suggests that the training of midwives in these institutions should fulfil precisely the same conditions as obtain in non-poor law institutions under the Central Midwives' Board.

Under the heading, "The Qualifications of a Teacher of Midwifery," Dr. Campbell writes:—

"It has been suggested that it would be an advantage if there were some form of special certificate of midwifery which could be obtained by midwives anxious to improve their professional standing and which might be required of teachers seeking approval for the first time. Such a certificate need not imply any overstepping of the legitimate functions of the midwife; it would, however, ensure that the midwife aspiring to a position of special responsibility, such as that of a teacher, a matron, or an inspector, had taken pains to equip herself with a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of her proper professional duties. Such certificates might be open, as a rule, only to the fully-trained nurse, not because the midwife who has only her Central Midwives Board certificate may not be very competent in her own way, but because more advanced teaching can only be given successfully if based on a better education and wider knowledge of general nursing and hygiene than she can possess. . . ."

"The course of training in the theory of the subject should include instruction and practice in the art and method of teaching. Some persons are born with a natural gift for teaching, but the majority have no such aptitude and need to be specially trained how best to present a subject to a class. This has long been recognised in the teaching profession, and the appointment of sister-tutors in hospitals shows that nurses are also alive to the importance of the teaching of students being in the hands of those who not only possess knowledge but know how to impart it."

(To be concluded.)

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