

The Midwife.

DAME ROSALIND PAGET, A.R.R.C.

State Certified Midwives will wish to congratulate Miss Rosalind Paget on becoming a Dame of the British Empire, in the recent Birthday Honours of the King. The citation states that this recognition has been bestowed "For Services to Nursing"; but although Dame Rosalind Paget is a Registered Nurse, her great life's work has been the statutory organisation of midwives through the Midwives Act, for which she worked devotedly for many years, against the usual nineteenth-century opposition to legal status for women's professions.

Once the Midwives Act was in force, Dame Rosalind became a member of the Central Midwives Board, on which she worked for many years, and helped to draft rules and regulations for the organisation of its educational and disciplinary standards, which have been raised from time to time, the length of training having been extended, although it does not yet meet the needs of the very responsible duties the State Certified Midwives have to perform.

Dame Rosalind's work for improved midwifery, and thus for the safer care of poor mothers in childbirth, has been of very special value to the community, and it was high time her services were recognised. Her wide circle of friends will rejoice that this has now been done and wish that she may long enjoy her honourable status.

THE MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE MOVEMENT.*

"The Maternity and Child Welfare Movement," by Dr. G. F. McCleary, M.D. (Cantab.), D.P.H., formerly a Deputy Senior Medical Officer in the Ministry of Health and Examiner in Public Health in the University of Liverpool, is a book which for the first time describes "how the maternity and child welfare movement began, how it developed, and what it does."

The book has the following dedication: "To the memory of Robert Laurie Morant, First Secretary of the Ministry of Health, 1919-1920."

"We held him for another Herakles,
Battling with custom, prejudice, disease,
As once the son of Zeus with Death and Hell."

W. E. HENLEY.

The author writes in his preface that "Dr. C. J. Cullingworth, in an article published a few years before his death, expressed the hope that the history of the agitation for the State recognition of Midwives would be written while the workers whose persistent efforts secured the passing of the first Midwives Act were still living. Nearly 30 years elapsed and the history was still unwritten. In Chapter IX of this book I have endeavoured to write it; and my task has been lightened by the help I have received from the last of the workers to whom Dr. Cullingworth referred—the sole survivor of the pioneers of 1890—Miss Rosalind Paget, to whom I am greatly indebted."

The chapters on "How the State Recognition of Midwives was Secured," and "The Working of the Midwives Act," are some of the most interesting in this book of absorbing interest from cover to cover.

The first chapter deals with "The Origins of the Maternity and Child Welfare Movement," which at first had different origins and for a long time proceeded on independent lines. "Each was a separate movement concentrated on attain-

ing a definite but limited object. As time went on the movements began to converge. It became more and more clear that they were travelling along ways that led to the same destination which was broader than it had at first sight appeared. Agencies that had worked in isolation began to work in co-ordination with other agencies without sacrifice, however, of individual outlook or initiative. The result is the maternity and child welfare movement."

(1) The Infant Welfare Movement which began about the end of the last century and which met with no check from the War but "on the contrary it advanced and expanded, encouraged by substantial grants of money from the National Exchequer." (2) The movement for the State recognition of midwives, and (3) the more the problems of infant life were studied the more clearly did it appear that the health of the child was intimately bound up with the health of the mother both before and after childbirth. Beginnings were made with the provision of food for under-nourished nursing mothers and of ante-natal care. The movement, which began with the care of the infant, was thus extended to include measures to promote the welfare of the mother and the pre-school child. Beginning as an infant welfare movement it developed into the maternity and child welfare movement."

It is not surprising that the necessity for the conservation of child life received emphasis during the War, when the unprecedented wastage of the life of the manhood of the country was appalling. This feeling was expressed in a circular issued by the Local Government Board on July 19th, 1915, to local authorities urging them to make the fullest use of their powers for promoting maternity and child welfare to secure the health of mothers and children and to diminish ante-natal and post-natal mortality. It said further "the importance of conserving the infant life of the population makes it desirable that steps should be taken in the direction indicated, even at the present time, when strict economy is required in the expenditure both of public bodies and private individuals."

Concerning Health Visiting the author describes it as a "peculiarly British contribution to the various agencies of the maternity and child welfare movement." It dates back to 1862 when it was begun by the Ladies' Sanitary Reform Association of Manchester and Salford on the suggestion of Mr. Turner, a leading surgeon in Manchester. In 1892 the Bucks County Council began to employ three health visitors who had successfully taken a course of instruction arranged by the North Bucks Technical Education Committee on the initiative of Florence Nightingale, who was deeply interested in the pioneer health visiting work carried on in Manchester and wished to see such work extended into rural areas.

Very interesting is the chapter on "the unmarried mother and her child," concerning which we read: "No field of maternity and child welfare work presents problems so complex and difficult."

"The protection of the unwanted baby" is discussed in another chapter. It opens with the story of Margaret Waters, a notorious baby farmer in 1870, which ended with her execution for wilful murder.

Dr. J. B. Curgenvin, a notable pioneer in infant welfare, honorary secretary to the Harveian Society, had in 1866 read a paper before it on the methods of baby farmers, and a committee was appointed to investigate the subject, and formulated a series of recommendations which they laid before the Home Secretary at an interview in January, 1867, but owing to the preoccupation of the Government with the franchise question no action was taken. The following

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