

have the observations of the Minister of Health on these interim considerations as soon as possible.

The memorandum, which was sent on March 18th, 1949, dealt with the following points :

(1) The Board felt that the uncertainty of the future of domiciliary midwifery had to be considered in relation to the Working Party Report. This uncertainty was referred to in the postscript to the Report and had already been referred to by the Board in its memorandum of April 15th, 1948, and its letter of November 5th, 1948, addressed to the Minister. The approved second period training schools were experiencing grave difficulty in providing adequate domiciliary training material for the present scheme of training and the pupil midwives of 14 such schools had required concessions to enable them to sit the Board's December, 1948, Second Examinations. Applications for similar concessions were being made at the time for the Board's March Second Examinations. In the Board's view it would be impossible to carry on with the domiciliary training of pupil-midwives at even its present level unless administrative action was taken to reverse the present trend.

The number of district cases available for training was steadily falling, due to several causes :

(a) a decrease in the birth rate, without a relative decrease in the number of institutional confinements ;

(b) the incursion of the general practitioner into normal midwifery under the provisions of the National Health Service (Maternity Medical Services) ;

(c) the economic pressure forcing the mother to choose institutional confinement owing to the provision of an entirely free hospital service, while in the case of a domiciliary confinement she was not relieved of the cost of food and had to provide domestic help or make a contribution towards the Home Help provided by the local health authority ;

(d) housing shortage, which made domiciliary confinement unsuitable in many cases. This last, however, was short-term and should be rectified in due course.

If the Board were to put into effect the Working Party's suggestions, it must either increase the domiciliary training facilities available or decrease the number of approved places to equal the present domiciliary training facilities.

Training Midwives in the Administration of Analgesia.

The Board is anxious to make available to midwives every method of administering analgesia which is considered safe by the appropriate body of medical opinion, in this case the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. The Board has, therefore, asked the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists for early information on the reconsideration of trilete apparatus which was referred to in the last Annual Report, and of the Chassar-Moir attachment to the gas and air machine. In March, 1949, the Board agreed to an investigation of the use of the Chassar-Moir attachment to the gas and air machine in the county of Hertfordshire, subject to satisfactory safeguards.

In June, 1948, the Board received a memorandum from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists recommending that pethidine be made available to midwives, and the Board requested the Home Secretary to consider amending the Dangerous Drugs Regulations to permit the use of pethidine by midwives on their own responsibility, subject to such conditions and safeguards as he might think fit. This is still under active consideration by the Home Office.

National Uniform for Midwives.

Since February 1st, 1947, when the Board began to issue signed permits to midwives for the purpose of purchasing part or all of the national uniform, 2,637 permits have been issued, 963 of them during the year under review.

Cure for the Blues.

Calf-Love.

IT is a fact that even amongst beautiful surroundings, such as rivers, dales, woods, summer skies and happy singing birds, one sometimes falls a victim to a fit of the blues. It's hard to believe, but it's true. Thus it was, that one exquisite evening, close on the heels of a shattering disappointment, feeling ill-used and friendless, a walk seemed indicated. Not that we really thought a walk would dispel our gloom and depression, things seemed too bad for that ; yet effort was obviously required of us.

We set off through the fields by the river, and for once Nature's glories went unheeded. Dark and brooding thoughts held us in their evil grip and we could find no peace or deliverance. The pain of loving and the agony of being distant from loved ones, in addition to having to bear everyday trivial frustrations, were the last straw and our cup was full. Thus brooding we continued our walk.

Quite suddenly, in our self-indulgent musings, we were conscious of a large and determined obstruction in our path. It was a cow. Not a very old cow, but obviously a proud and courageous one. She had the most lovely pair of large limpid, velvety brown eyes we had ever seen. She refused to budge on our approach and we noticed that she often looked in the direction of a near-by hedge. There were lots of other cows about, but none of these appeared to be on the alert or interested in us at all. Curiosity overcame our natural slight fear of cows and we approached the hedge cautiously. There we saw the dearest little calf imaginable. It was almost square shaped, very small, lonely and defenceless looking, and wearing a cute little birthday suit of soft, feathery brown and white fur. It had its mother's appealingly lovely eyes.

We turned to congratulate the mother on her infant. And then we heard a most tender and gentle moo proceed from the cow. Quietly she walked up to her baby and licked its head lovingly, and then she moo-ed to it in a soft, caressing tone. She plainly said, " My darling little baby, I love you dearly, have no fear." It was sheer joy to listen. All the mother-love in creation seemed to be contained in that lovely sound, and we were fascinated by the music and tenderness of it.

Slowly the cow walked away from us, with her beloved calf at her side. Even now we can recapture the essence of those soft and gentle moos, and see the love and pride of that bovine mother. We sat down on the grass and watched the animals amble slowly out of sight.

A new mood descended on us. One of peace and calm and beauty. The evening air was scented. Delicate, wild, pale-pink roses in the hedges were closing for sleep. The silver flying fish were leaving the flies untroubled on the surface of the crystal river. The sun was setting in golden glory and all nature was preparing for the night.

We were grateful for our encounter with mother cow as we sauntered homeward. The joys of London, eternally desirable, faded into the shadows, and the absence of loved ones tortured us less. Our recent heavy disappointment was blunted and we even found it in our hearts to say, " it evidently was not to be." We had cast away one fit of the blues !!

G. M. H.

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