

room for the nurse. The door of this ward is flush with the walls, and is beautifully hung, so that it opens and closes most quietly.

The Matron's Quarters are in the centre of the building on the first floor, consisting of sitting room, bedroom, and bath room.

The permanent nursing staff, in addition to the Matron, consists of a day and a night sister and three staff nurses. There are usually 12 pupil midwives in training, and 20 pupil monthly nurses, who have lectures and classes both from members of the staff and the Matron. Pupil midwives, with no previous training, are received for a four months' course, for which they pay 28 guineas. Nurses holding a three years' certificate of general training take a three months' course, for which they pay 21 guineas. The pupil monthly nurses pay a fee of £12 12s. for a course of two months, except in the case of certificated nurses, when the term of residence is one month, and the fee 7 guineas. Midwives and nurses are required to pay a deposit of £2 2s. and £1 1s. respectively, on entering their names, which is forfeited if they do not proceed with their engagements. These deposits are included in the fees.

The Midwives' Act.

The working of the Midwives' Act, on which there has recently been some correspondence in the *Times*, has been the subject of a leading article in that paper. Our contemporary points out that the effective administration of the Act is a matter demanding the attention of all who are desirous that the benefits which the Act was intended to confer should be realised by the classes who chiefly need its assistance. It states that the Act is not the first in which the wisdom of Parliament has directed that certain functions should be performed by a body of persons still to be called into existence for the purpose of performing them. But in previous examples the demand was of a character certain to be followed by supply, as prospects of remunerative employment were created, thus inducing a practical study of the questions at issue. With the midwife it is otherwise, and in the absence of any reasonable expectation of remunerative employment, women of the class most suitable for the purpose will hardly be tempted to pass through a course of midwifery training and incur the danger of possible failure at an examination. The prospective rewards have not been brought into any reasonable proportion to the definite expenditure and risk, and it seems clear this must be done before a sufficient number of midwives will be obtained.

The Skin of the Newly Born.

An important part of the duty of a Maternity Nurse is the care of the infant, and a matter which often gives her considerable anxiety is the condition of the back of the child. Everyone knows, in the case of an adult when the evacuations are passed unconsciously the amount of attention which is necessary to keep the patient's back in good condition. It needs continual watchfulness, care as to changing whenever he passes fæces or urine, and in applying some spirit and powder or an emollient to the back so that the skin may be kept healthy and unbroken. The skin of a newly-born infant is, of course, very much more tender than that of an adult, and the need of constant attention is paramount, but even so, the utmost care is sometimes needed to keep the infant's skin in good condition.

In the first place the *meconium*, which the child passes by the bowels for the first few days is of a thick and tenacious consistency, dark green in colour, and very irritating to the skin. The buttocks must be kept well oiled until the stools become normal. After this takes place, when the child has been cleansed, changed, and well dried, the use of Fuller's earth, or Mennen's powder will, in the case of a healthy infant usually suffice to keep the parts in good condition. Some authorities are of opinion that no powder is necessary. In cleansing an infant after a stool it is a mistake to use soap and water too frequently, plain water as a rule is sufficient, and is less irritating. In the case of an unhealthy infant, there is a necessity for increased care. One of the signs by which an observant nurse judges of the health of the infant is by the condition of the buttocks. If they are firm, with a normal unreddened and unbroken skin, she feels content as a rule as to its well being. If, on the contrary, they become wasted and flabby, or reddened and excoriated, the cause is frequently not a local one only; some deviation of health from the normal is indicated, which needs medical treatment, and the attention of the medical attendant should always be drawn to the condition, which by no means necessarily betokens neglect on the part of the nurse.

Nurses who carefully observe their patients will notice that the condition of the buttocks is an indication of the state of health in others besides infants. After a severe and prolonged illness, in an adult, they sometimes waste so that they become mere flabby bags of skin, and an increase in firmness is then a good sign.

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