

mortality amongst the mothers for nearly two years; and not only so, but I am able to state, since I am called in consultation to every case of serious illness, that there has not been one arising from septic causes amongst the 907 women delivered during this period. I do not call attention to this in a boasting, but in a very thankful spirit, for this Hospital has not always been able to report so favourably. In 1870, when I first became connected with the Institution, the mortality during the year was 4 per cent. In the ten years from Jan. 1st, 1873, to Dec. 31st, 1883—the Hospital being closed in 1878—the mortality was over 2 per cent. (1 in 46). In the four years from January, 1880, to January, 1884, it was over 3 per cent. (1 in 32). But during the last six years, that is from January, 1887, to January, 1893, the death-rate has been 1 in 319, or 0.31 per cent.

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This is a remarkable reduction, and naturally one looks for the reason. I have no doubt it results chiefly from the very thorough manner in which the Matron sees that the antiseptic management of labour is carried out. Every patient has a vaginal douche of a solution of perchloride of mercury (1 in 2,000) administered during labour, and another after the delivery of the placenta; and six more of these douches are given subsequently, generally one night and morning. After this, Condy's fluid or carbolic acid lotions are used. But it is not so much by the use of these douches that immunity from septicæmia is ensured as by the scrupulous attention that is paid to the hands and the finger-nails of all those coming into contact with the patients. It is seen that the nails are kept short, that the nail brush is never neglected, and that after washing the hands in soap and water they are plunged in the sublimate lotion.

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In a lecture which I gave in 1887 at the Midwives' Institute on "Antiseptic Midwifery," I spoke of the risk, according to published statements, of mercurial poisoning from the employment of sublimate lotion, and I said that in the fifteen months that it had been universally employed at the City of London Lying-in Hospital not a single instance of it had occurred. I am now able to state that, during six more years of its employment there, no symptom of poisoning by it had been observed, which proves, I think, that all fear of such may be dismissed. Of course it cannot be expected that this absence of mortality amongst the patients can continue for long, for it must be borne in mind that deaths from all causes are included. I, for one, firmly believe in the occurrence of puerperal peritonitis from traumatic causes, injuries during labour, and rupture of a pyosalpinx, for instance; for I have seen such in private practice where the antiseptic management has been most rigidly carried out. But what it is desired to secure, and I believe has been arrived at, is the prevention of puerperal infection being communicated from one patient to another in the lying-in Hospitals.

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Surely this is the time to do honour to Semmelweiss, who was the first to point out the causes which gave rise to puerperal fever in lying-in institutions and the means of preventing its occurrence by the use of disinfectants. Dr. Theodore Duka, in a pamphlet published last year, states that in May, 1847, Semmelweiss issued orders that, in the clinique under his control in the General Hospital, Vienna, every person, before proceeding to examine any

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patient, should thoroughly wash his hand with liquid chlorine or chlorinated lime-water; and in a work he published at a later date, entitled "Die Aetiologie, &c.," he insisted on "removal of maternity wards from insanitary surroundings, scrupulous attention to general cleanliness and frequent use of antiseptics in every form." Semmelweiss died in 1865 at the age of 47, and certainly until recently his name has been forgotten—if ever known—by most of us. It is now, however, proposed to erect an international monument to his memory in his native town of Budapest, in recognition of his discoveries in connexion with the etiology and prevention of puerperal fever; and, for the purpose of obtaining contributions from the United Kingdom, India and the British Colonies, an executive committee has been formed, of which Sir Spencer Wells is chairman and Dr. Cullingworth honorary treasurer. The maximum subscription has been fixed at one guinea in order that the project may meet with general support. I venture to hope that this communication may stimulate some of my professional brethren to contribute."

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Dr. LEDIARD, of Carlisle, who has been recently delivering a most interesting course of Lectures on Nursing, has been taking higher ground than that which lecturers usually adopt, and pointing out that Nursing has its high duties as well as its great privileges. He reminded his hearers that their calling is no mere occupation, but a trust, the possession of which is an honour to womanhood. Enthusiasm and sympathy combined with intelligent observation were in its exercise the true guarantees of success, which in this case must be judged, not by conspicuous recognition, not always even by the accomplishment of the individual Nurse's intended purpose, but by the proofs of duty patiently discharged and a gain of experience which might leave her profession the better because she had belonged to it.

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I AM glad to be able to announce that the first of the series of new departures to be taken by the R.B.N.A., to which we have recently alluded in these columns, was successfully commenced yesterday by a large and influential meeting of medical men and nurses held in Edinburgh to consider the advisability of forming a Scottish Branch of the Association, with its head-quarters in Edinburgh, and a full account of which I hope to be able to give next week.

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AN American reader has sent me an eloquent address, delivered by Dr. ALEXANDER HUTCHINS, delivered to the Nurses of the Brooklyn Training School last year, from which I extract the following interesting paragraphs, which have deep lessons for Nurses in this country:—

"The South Carolina doctors objected strenuously to the introduction of trained Nurses into that State, the instinct of self-preservation being

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