

mothers prepare the babies' feeds and wash and sterilise the feeding bottles. Upstairs, the staff quarters are to the back of the house; all seemed to show the happy atmosphere essential in a room of one's own. Then there is a complete little wing for isolation purposes. To the front of the house we come to the mothers' bedrooms—three large rooms, each of which accommodates two families, two adult beds and four cots; and three smaller rooms for one family, one mother and two children each. These were simply furnished with chest of drawers and cupboard or wardrobe for each mother.

We felt, what a triumph to inspire the perfect cleanliness evident throughout the establishment! Smoking is not allowed.

On arrival, the mothers are given a new outfit of clothing and they are also allowed 5s. per week for pocket money. On Thursday and Saturday afternoons the mothers, with their children, go shopping, and sometimes they go for picnics down to the shore after all duties are done. Invariably these mothers are heavy smokers, but Major Newcombe has reason to believe that when out they do not smoke. As we traced the view over the house tops and through the trees to Plymouth Hoe from the long windows of this generously constructed Victorian dwelling of now past affluent days, we asked: was not this experience of four months' training a glimpse of heaven to these mothers? Major Newcombe thought it was, to judge from the letters of appreciation received from the mothers on their return to their homes! Indeed requests are received to be allowed to return for a few days' holiday, which in several cases has been sanctioned.

The care of and work for these mothers does not end on the completion of her four months' training. During her absence at Mayflower the Probation Officer does much to help the husband to re-adjust and clean up the home in readiness for the return of the family. There is also a three years' after-care, which is largely done by correspondence with the mother, to show that they are still interested and will help if possible.

The spiritual courage and devotion of the workers in the Mayflower Tuition—the *only one* of its kind—has so far resulted in the reclamation to a better way of life of some 75 per cent. of these otherwise ruined lives! This wonderful "way out" could only be achieved by those of unquestioning faith in the power of redemption!

A. S. B.

Annual Conference on Maternity and Child Welfare.

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE on Maternity and Child Welfare arranged by the National Association for Maternity and Child Welfare is arranged to take place on June 25th, 26th and 27th at the Church House, Westminster.

The Conference will be formally opened by the Chairman of the Association, George Mitchell, Esq., J.P., L.C.C., and the subjects to be discussed are "The Problem and Facts"; "Infertility and Abortion"; "Neonatal Deaths"; "Infant Deaths"; and "Prematurity."

There will be a display of films on child care and allied subjects, and the Conference will close with an Address by the Minister of Health, the Right Hon. I. Macleod, J.P.

Food and Disease.

By A. E. HOPKINS.

ALTHOUGH THE HUMAN BODY possesses the most wonderful mechanism imaginable for converting food into what is required to maintain life and health, continuous overeating of unsuitable foods or the insufficient supply of needed ingredients can, in course of time, have an adverse effect on it.

To appreciate the reason for this it may be well to outline the reason why the body will not tolerate indefinitely an ingestion of wrong foods or combination of foods.

The body as a whole comprises various structures consisting of solids and fluids which, whilst acting apparently independently of each other, are nevertheless complementary, all of them being based physiologically on the cell unit, and by the process of metabolism uses the nutritional elements conveyed to it by the bloodstream. It is the function of digestion and of absorption which allows the cellular activity of the human body to be maintained at the correct metabolic rate.

Cellular activity determines that the nutritional elements extracted from the food intake are directed in adequate quantities to the tissues, thus enabling the body to function as a unified whole. This metabolic process is carried out throughout life and only ends when death intervenes.

The process of tissue nourishment consists of two definite operations, the one being that of using food elements in balanced form for the purpose of nourishment, and the other that of eliminating the waste products produced by the body activities.

The relation between the food eaten and the condition of the body as a result of its ingestion, decides to some extent the state of health or disease it may be expected to enjoy or suffer, as the case may be.

There are about 16 accepted chemicals in the make-up of the human body including the important elements oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, carbon, calcium, phosphorus and sulphur.

Scientific physiologists, in their chemical analyses, have found that it is according to the predominance of any one of the chemical constituents of the body, which determines the cellular composition, which results in any one cell being functionally adequate to perform the duty allotted to it in any part of the structural form of the human body. By virtue of its composition and chemical balance it exercises its essential influence on the hair, teeth, blood, lymph, nerves and so on.

Thus the efficient maintenance of correct balance in the cellular structure depends for its growth, repair and function, on the elements extracted from food by the digestive processes, and the extraction and discard of waste matter by the eliminatory channels.

Thus in brief is outlined the process of maintaining health which is carried on without pause throughout life.

It is a popular fallacy that it matters little what is eaten or drunk, providing it satisfies the craving of appetite or thirst, but it is reasonable to accept that as the cell, the basic unit of metabolic function, depends for its activity on the elements extracted from food, by the processes of digestion and absorption, it cannot function satisfactorily if certain elements are lacking. This being so its functional ability is likely to be accelerated

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)