

This decision was taken in the light of the position under the National Health Service, where waiting lists for mental deficiency hospitals over the country as a whole stood at 12,000, and parents often had to wait several years to secure admission for a child in urgent need of care. By splendid endeavour, The National Association of Parents of Backward Children raised the money to buy and equip "Orchard Dene," and in July, 1952, asked The National Association for Mental Health to run the Home.

"Orchard Dene" has not been an easy undertaking. It was hoped at first that the children coming for temporary care would be fit and able to enjoy a holiday. In fact, three-quarters of those who come are so severely handicapped that they need constant nursing care. This has placed a heavy burden on the staff, and has meant the provision of nursing facilities which were not originally contemplated at considerable cost. The rapid intake of sick children naturally brings grave risks of cross-infection, and these risks have to be guarded against.

"Orchard Dene" relies for its running costs on fees paid by local authorities or by private individuals, for the children in its care. If the Home has to be closed for infectious disease, or for any other cause, the financial position becomes grave, and The National Association for Mental Health which has no large capital reserves, has to try to meet the deficiency.

The gratitude of parents and the happiness of the children themselves who come to "Orchard Dene," make it a wonderfully worthwhile experiment which has brought happiness and relief already to many hundreds of families. "Orchard Dene" welcomes the difficult child, since it knows that the more difficult the child, the greater the relief to its parents.

The amenities of the Home are watched over by a local Welfare Committee composed of representatives of the National Association of Parents of Backward Children and The National Association for Mental Health under the chairmanship of Miss Keeling. The Home owes much to their interest and encouragement.

Children between the ages of two and 12 are accepted for care for periods up to six weeks. The fee charged is 6½ guineas per week. Applications should be sent to Residential Services Department, The National Association for Mental Health, 39, Queen Anne Street, London, W.1.

Visitors to "Orchard Dene" never fail to be impressed by the devotion of the staff and by a realisation of what the work of the home means to hard-pressed families. If you have been impressed and would like to help the work forward please send a donation either to The National Association of Parents of Backward Children, 84, Chancery Lane, London, W.C.2, or to The National Association for Mental Health. It will be most gratefully acknowledged.

Clean Food.

REFERENCE TO THE setting-up of a Standing Committee on the Hygiene of Food and Food Equipment is contained in the annual report of the Royal Sanitary Institute.

This Committee, it is pointed out, which includes representatives of almost all sections of the food and catering industries, is concerned with raising the standard of food hygiene in the United Kingdom.

The report was approved at the annual general meeting of the R.S.I., held in London on Tuesday, May 18th, when Lord Percy of Newcastle presided over a good attendance of members.

In a review of the Institute's activities during the previous twelve months, it was stated that a new policy of staging special exhibitions dealing with various aspects of health education had been an unqualified success. These exhibitions had attracted over 12,000 visitors.

Reference was also made to the introduction of a new examination in the inspection of water drainage installations designed to create the highest standard of plumbing.

The Midwife.

Maternity Ward

By Lucy Argles.

Having read in a previous issue of this Journal the article entitled "The Patient Complains," this patient was prompted to write of her experiences.

BEFORE I WENT INTO hospital, I was told by a former patient "My dear, you'll have a ghastly time, but they're all absolutely marvellous, absolutely wonderful, my dear, you'll love them." The meaning of this somewhat cryptic comment did not become clear until my baby was several days old. By this time I had cause to realize that it expressed my sentiments exactly.

First, the "ghastly" time—and here I must digress to say that expectant mothers, brides-to-be and even potential fathers need not be alarmed. My 12 days' sojourn was most stimulating, my sentimentalities were quite debunked and I learnt a great deal about how "the other half" lives and almost everything about its anatomy. I left, not a sadder, but certainly a wiser woman, and do not let hopeful parents be in any way dismayed by my experience.

The ghastliness began at five in the morning when "they" rushed into the wards, pulling curtains with one hand, lights on with the other, a cup of tea in a third and a bed pan in a fourth. At two minutes past five we had drunk our tea, dealt with the bed pan and were already acquainted with the dramas of the preceding night. We had also completed the process known as "clearing all that rubbish off your lockertops" and concealed our cold cream, glasses of water, handkerchiefs and letters from home from the scornful eye of the night-nurse. We awaited, somewhat complacently, the next move, which was "Washing." This was speedy and inadequate because by now all the babies were awake and howling. The night staff seized one bundle after another and took it off to be weighed. "Here, Mrs. A aren't you ready for your baby yet? Oh sorry, this is yours, Mrs. B. Mrs. D, you can weigh your own, you're 'up' aren't you? Well, hurry up then" and she was gone. Peace for half-an-hour and then more weighings followed by admonishments, "Yours has only had an ounce, you must try again. Sister won't let you have a bottle you know. OF COURSE you can feed your own baby. Oh well, if you like to deprive her of her birthright (straight from Truby-King, this) I suppose that's your business—but while you're in here you'll feed your own baby!" All the protests were in vain, she was gone again!

At six came breakfast. The mothers who were "up" waited on the bed-ridden. The food was not unappetising, but it was a good target for our grumbles and we swapped kippers, cadged extra marmalade and watered the tea-pot endlessly. At seven we made the beds. "Come on now, haven't you folded your sheets. You're not ill, Mrs. A, you know. No, you can't have a clean draw-sheet, we're short already. Sister's in a tearing rage and all the laundry's away with 'flu. Yes, you can have a clean 'end' I suppose, but we've got to get on so hurry up. No, no one's allowed to have more than three pillows. If Sister saw you had four there'd be hell to pay. Can you do your own covers? There's a darling, You're wonderful!" and they'd gone again. Tidy and clean, "now is the time" we thought, "to make up that lost sleep," but no, there were temperatures and measurements and medicines and then the paper man and nurse standing, pencil in hand, in the middle of the ward asking how our bowels were and writing it down in a book and then at eight-thirty SISTER with the post. Sister was small, neat and dapper, she was terrifying and missed nothing. "Letters for you, Mrs. A, and SIT UP, you're not ill you know. Mrs. B, what's this I hear about you not feeding your baby. OF COURSE you'll feed your baby while

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