

of lead prevents the proper elimination from the body of the salts which, when in excess, are known to be the exciting cause of gouty attacks. It was for this reason that the iodides of potassium and sodium were first recommended and used in the treatment of lead poisoning; and the rapid effects which these medicines exhibit in the removal of lead from the system, have rendered their administration the recognised method of treatment in all complaints due to, or associated with, the presence of lead in the body. The precautionary measures which are evidently still necessary are a greater care in the use of preparations of lead which are soluble or easily inhaled, and strict attention to cleanliness on the part of those who work with such materials.

THE MORTALITY OF CHILDBIRTH.

A very important paper recently read before the Royal Statistical Society, concerning the births during three years in New South Wales, deserves careful attention. During the years in question, 115,669 children were born, and 813 mothers died during labour, that is to say, no less than seven per thousand births. The married, as usual, showed a considerably smaller mortality than the unmarried, the former losing 6.7 per thousand, and the latter 10 per thousand. These rates do not compare favourably with the percentages in this country. The mean puerperal death rate of England and Wales, during the thirty years 1861-90, was only 4.72 per 1,000; that is to say, one mother died out of every 212 births. The difference probably is explainable by the greater hardships, and the less accessible medical and nursing help in the colony in question. There is a general impression that the use of antiseptics has very considerably reduced the mortality of childbirth. But, taking the whole nation, this is not definitely shown by the statistics of recent years, although in local centres where puerperal fever was formerly rife, and where the employment of antiseptics has abolished that disease, the difference in mortality now and formerly is certainly remarkable. In some institutions also the fall in the death rate has been phenomenal during recent years, as we have already noticed in these columns. We are informed, for example, that the City of London Hospital, where the mortality was formerly terribly high, has passed through a whole year of work without one single death.

Nursing Politics.

THE FARDONIAN OLIGARCHY.

A CORRESPONDENT calls our attention to a conclusive proof of our contention that the whole aim of the Thorne policy in the Royal British Nurses' Association—so zealously prosecuted by his successor in office, Mr. Edward Fardon, of Middlesex Hospital—has been the suppression of the Matrons.

IN dissecting the new General Council list it will be found that *eighteen* out of the thirty elected medical men are resident in London, that *twenty-nine* sisters and nurses out of thirty are also resident in London, *but that only eleven Matrons out of thirty reside in London*, so that the combined votes of the elected doctors and nurses amount to forty-seven, leaving the Matrons in a minority of one in five!

THE Hon. Officers have sent round a document in which they talk largely about the *ex-officio* seats to be offered to certain Matrons—of training schools containing upwards of 200 beds—quite omitting to remind the members that those *ex-officio* seats were promised to, and held by, these ladies for seven years—in fact, until Dr. Thorne managed to deprive them of these seats in 1895. We find, upon referring to the roll, that there are only fifteen Matron members eligible for *ex-officio* seats on the Council; more than one half of these, we hear, do not intend to accept office under the present Bye-Laws, as their colleagues have been deprived, after years of hard work, of the seats promised to them on the Executive Committee, and we think they show their sense and good feeling.

THE voting power in the Council is absolutely in the hands of the medical members, as the following table will show:—

Vice-Presidents	33
Elected Medical members	30
Hon. Officers	4
	<hr/>
	67
	<hr/>
Resident in London	39
	<hr/>
Ex-officio Matrons	11 (if they accept)
Elected Matrons	30
	<hr/>
	41
	<hr/>
Resident in London	18
	<hr/>
Sisters and Nurses	30
	<hr/>
Resident in London	29
	<hr/>

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)