

The Hospital World.

THE INFANTS' HOSPITAL, VINCENT'S SQUARE, S.W.

One of the most interesting hospitals in London is the beautiful little Infants' Hospital in Vincent's Square, S.W., the work of which is unique not only in this country but in Europe. Built and equipped by Mr. Robert Mond as a memorial to his wife, who took a deep interest in the temporary hospital at Hampstead, no expense has been spared to make the institution efficient in every department as well as beautiful and harmonious in design and equipment.

The hospital is the only one devoted exclusively to babies, and the primary object is the scientific treatment of infants suffering from malnutrition, but it fulfils a much wider mission than this, inasmuch as it is a centre for the study of all the factors connected with the rearing of a strong people and the prevention of conditions responsible for the prevalence of tuberculosis and for physical imperfections endangering the national health. With these ends in view, most interesting and valuable lectures on infant feeding and management, intended for nurses, health visitors, and others interested in the study of infant life, illustrated by experiments and epidiascopic demonstrations, are delivered periodically by the physicians in the beautiful lecture theatre; and courses of post-graduate instruction, restricted to qualified medical practitioners, are held at the hospital three days a week.

THE ANNUAL MEETING.

At the Annual Court of Governors of the Hospital, held on Thursday, March 25th, at which Lord Cheylesmore, Chairman of the Committee of Management, presided, a most interesting report of the first year's work in the new hospital was presented. Happily the Committee were able to announce that at the close of the year the institution was free from debt, but they wish to impress on its friends that a sufficient income in the future is by no means assured, but is a matter of anxious consideration.

Commenting on the report, Lord Cheylesmore pointed out in regard to the washing bill that the lowest estimate the Committee could obtain was 45s. per thousand pieces, but that a large proportion of the washing is now done on the hospital premises at an average cost of 10s. per thousand pieces. Another important announcement in the report referred to by the Chairman was that the milk laboratory was completed last June, so that the physicians' milk prescriptions for each infant are now dis-

pensed in the hospital, and that the work of this department, which is carried on under the immediate supervision of the medical staff, has been attended with the most beneficial results.

The Committee also reported that arrangements have been made for the reception of paying probationers into the hospital at a fee of fifteen guineas for three months. This affords a valuable opportunity for an insight into the methods of the hospital, which we commend to nurses.

The joint report of Dr. Ralph Vincent and Dr. Kelynack, Hon. Physicians to the Hospital, proves the mortality, disease, and unnecessary suffering caused amongst babies by improper feeding and ignorant guardianship. One baby, for instance, made satisfactory progress while under the care of a foster-mother, but when transferred to that of another—an aged, decrepit person in receipt of parish relief, who had had nothing to do with babies for thirty or more years—was brought to the hospital within five days extremely ill and evidently dying. It died ten hours after admission. Another evil referred to in this medical report is the condition prevailing in some maternity homes. In one, the "Matron" is not a trained nurse, although the uniform she wears is calculated to convey the impression that she has received such training. The women at the home (each of whom pays about 7s. per week), do all the housework, no servants being employed. No infant-weighing machine is to be found. All the babies are in charge of one of the women, who take it in turn to be the "nurse-in-charge." When the doctor makes inquiries in regard to the babies, he can obtain no information of any value, for the woman in charge varies from day to day, and nothing is recorded. When an infant dies the doctor is pressed to certify the death as arising from congenital disease, as that will show "the home is not to blame."

After reporting other cases, the medical report concludes:—"We have cited these cases in evidence of a state of things which is being continually and emphatically brought to our notice. It is no part of our duty, as physicians to the hospital, nor do we desire, to raise controversial points connected with the management or mismanagement of such institutions as have been referred to; but we feel we should be failing in our duty were we not to call attention to the conditions prevailing in certain maternity homes and similar institutions, by which the lives and health of many infants are gravely imperilled."

The adoption of the report having been duly

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