

# The Midwife.

## Midwives Act Committee.

The ninth meeting of the Departmental Committee appointed by the Lord President of the Council to consider the working of the Midwives' Act was held at the Privy Council Office on Wednesday, March 31st, Mr. Almeric W. FitzRoy, the Clerk of the Council, presiding.

The following witnesses attended and gave evidence:—Sir Shirley F. Murphy, Medical Officer of Health of the County of London, on behalf of the London County Council; Mrs. Swinton, Matron of the Buckingham Palace Road Workhouse of the St. George's (Hanover Square) Union, on behalf of the National Association of Workhouse Masters and Matrons; Mr. Edward Sergeant, County Medical Officer of Health, Lancashire, on behalf of the Incorporated Society of Medical Officers of Health, and on behalf of the Midwives' Act Committee of the Lancashire County Council.

## The British Lying-In Hospital.

At the Annual General Meeting of the British Lying-In Hospital, Endell Street, W.C., the Chairman was able to report remarkable progress. In 1897 seven beds were occupied daily, now the number is twenty-two. There is urgent need for further accommodation, for which funds will be required. A resident medical officer has been appointed, and major operations are now undertaken, and the institution ranks as a first rate lying-in hospital.

We regret to notice that there is a deficit of £673 on the year's working. Many of our Maternity Hospitals are hampered by lack of funds, and yet there are no institutions which are doing more useful work, or are more highly appreciated by those cared for within their walls.

## The Glasgow Maternity Hospital.

Dr. Robert Gourlay, who presided at the seventy-fourth annual meeting of the Glasgow Maternity Hospital last week, said that the new hospital was thoroughly equipped in every respect, and its administration, under the zealous care and kindly management of the Matron, Mrs. Lawson, has been carried on with the utmost success, and with great comfort to the patients, medical staff, and officials.

## Pure Milk for Babes.

Miss Lillian Simpson, member of the Los Angeles County Nurses' Association, and a Graduate of the California Hospital, gives an interesting account in the *Nurses' Journal of the Pacific Coast*, of a day spent in the Boston Floating Hospital, the only floating charity hospital in the world. The large white ship flies a flag with the green cross, and is given the right of way in Boston Harbour; she was specially built for hospital purposes, and has her own licensed captain and crew.

Most of the cases aboard are infants suffering from infectious diarrhoea. As they are admitted they are taken at once to the treatment room, where there are rows of rubber-covered cushions for the babies to lie on and a trough that empties into the sea. The baby is placed upon the little table, a nurse holds up the feet and manages the fountain syringe, and the interne flushes the bowels with normal salt solution. It is said that it requires fourteen quarts to clean out one little "dago." This is done as often as is necessary to reduce the temperature and keep the bowels clean.

The diapers are thrown into a cauldron of boiling suds, and sterilised before washing. Old cloths are used inside the diapers, and are immediately burned.

N.B.—In connection with the term infectious diarrhoea it will be remembered by those who read the extremely interesting lecture published in this journal by Dr. Ralph Vincent, Senior Physician to the Infants' Hospital, Vincent Square, London, last year, that Dr. Vincent believes strongly there is no such disease as infectious or epidemic diarrhoea, and gave good reasons for his belief.

1. Babies are remarkably immune from all epidemic disease.

2. Although cases of so-called epidemic diarrhoea or zymotic enteritis are admitted to the Infants' Hospital, no infant has ever contracted the disease in the hospital.

3. Breast fed babies are practically immune, and when attacked have generally had other food in addition.

4. The practical experience of this hospital points to the one cause of the disease, viz., that the babies are poisoned by the administration of food, which is poisonous in its character.

5. The fact that in the hot weather the disease suddenly arises and kills large numbers of infants in a limited area points superficially to its being an epidemic. In reality, Dr. Vincent says, "it is a filth disease, arising from the consumption of filth, and the fact that very large numbers of babies are attacked is only to be explained by the fact that very large numbers of babies are consuming filth. By filth I mean, for example, the ordinary milk supply of London." Further, he says, "It is not a sudden disease; it does not arise spontaneously or very quickly. It is, generally

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)