

The Midwife.

Schools of Midwifery.

THE LIVERPOOL MATERNITY HOSPITAL.

Liverpool is a city of hospitals, but of all to be found there none is busier, or does a larger amount of work in proportion to the number of beds than the Maternity Hospital and Ladies' Charity, Brownlow Hill, which has a record of over 100 years' good work behind it, for the Ladies Charity was founded in 1796, the hospital in 1841, and the two were amalgamated in 1869.

The Hospital is built on the plan of separate houses—the cottages as they are called—connected together by corridors, for it was built at a time when puerperal fever was the terror of all responsible for the care of maternity patients, and means of isolating suspected cases were essential. The patients also are nursed in single rooms, or sometimes two in a room, a method which is ideal so far as the patients are concerned, but entails considerably more work on the nursing staff than when a number are under observation in the same ward.

The present hospital, which is fed with patients from the seven districts into which the city is mapped out, has now become quite too small for the work demanded of it, and the generous offer of Sir William Hartley to build a new hospital for 50 patients and a resident staff of 25 persons, on condition that the Committee provide the site, is most welcome. The cost is estimated at about £15,000, including the furniture and equipment. Sir William Hartley's desire is that the advantages of the hospital shall not be limited to married women, but that the first cases of others may have equal consideration.

One is not surprised to learn from the Matron, Miss Cauty, that a large number of the patients admitted to the hospital suffer from abnormalities or complications during labour. The straightforward cases are attended by the district midwives connected with the institution. So during the past year 515 cases were admitted to the hospital, and operations were performed in 75 of these. There is a well-appointed little theatre, somewhat an unusual addition to the equipment of a maternity hospital, but very necessary in one which receives so many abnormal cases. Thus amongst the operations performed were 16 Cæsarean sections, 4 craniotomies, forceps were applied in 17 cases, and there were 21 cases of perineal suture. Amongst the more serious complica-

tions admitted were twelve cases of placenta prævia, the only death from this cause being that of a patient suffering also from advanced phthisis.

Contracted pelvis was present in 22 cases, and indeed the conditions of life in our large cities resulting in rickets during childhood, and deformity in adult life, make child bearing which should be a normal and healthy process one involving considerable danger to life in many instances. On a recent visit to the hospital, the deformity resulting from rickets was painfully evident in some of the patients, and it was pitiful to hear of one little dwarf who dreaded to leave the kindly shelter of the hospital because the baby, of which she has been delivered by Cæsarean section was bigger and heavier than she could well carry.

In a hospital of this kind, with a large district maternity attached, there is plenty of experience for midwifery and monthly nursing pupils, and 68 were trained in the School of Midwifery during the year. Fifty-five of these passed the examination of the Central Midwives' Board at the first attempt, and five of those who failed passed subsequently. It is satisfactory to note in the regulations for monthly nurses and pupil midwives that the period of training for the combined course is eight months, four of which is devoted to instruction in nursing and the general care of the sick room. The fee for training, board, lodging, lectures, and classes in this combined course is £26 5s. A special combined course is also arranged of four months' duration for nurses who have had training in general nursing at a fee of eighteen guineas.

There is also a four months' course in midwifery for pupil midwives who reside in the District Homes, and take all their practical work in the districts attending the hospital for lectures and classes only. The fee in this case is £15 15s. Training in maternity nursing and midwifery is most valuable to every nurse, and all should make a point of securing it.

A course taken partly in a Maternity Hospital, and partly in the homes of the poor, is probably the best arrangement.

At the Liverpool Maternity Hospital the experience is exceptionally good, and the Matron, Miss Cauty, before her appointment, had considerable experience in midwifery work as Superintendent in the large district connected with the London Hospital, White-chapel, E.

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