

St. Pancras School for Mothers

In spite of a cold, wet, and rather depressing day, the Hall of the St. Pancras "School for Mothers," 37, Chalfont Street, Euston Road, N.W., which was prettily decorated for the occasion, was filled with people, obviously interested in this very important branch of social reform.

The occasion was the second annual meeting of the Society, on Wednesday, June 9th.

Mr. Moon, who has been connected with the borough for over 20 years, occupied the chair, and introduced Mrs. Sidney Webb, so well known in connection with her valuable work with the Poor Law Commission, as the first speaker. She was greeted with applause, and showed her expert knowledge of social questions in a very interesting address.

In speaking of infant mortality, although she did not attempt to minimise the seriousness of the evil—she gave as her opinion that a greater evil than the *death* rate was the *damage* rate, both mental and physical. She pointed out that bad conditions of nurture often mean serious mental deterioration, and that the only way of getting at the soul of a young baby, was through good physical habits. She considered that the most serious matter affecting the nation was the condition of the babies that do *not die*, but live to become poor human derelicts—physical and mental.

Mrs. Webb refuted the argument, one so often hears, namely, that by giving much assistance to the children, there is the danger of undermining the responsibility of the parents, by saying that if you leave people alone in very demoralising circumstances, they do *not* fulfil their responsibilities; she therefore congratulated the voluntary workers of the Institution, upon their power and opportunity of developing the personal responsibility of the parents.

The able speaker was very strong on the point that the community, in default of the parents, in permitting thousands of infants to grow up with enfeebled bodies, is responsible not merely for preventible physical suffering, but preventible moral deterioration and preventible crime.

Dr. David Forsyth, of the Evelina Hospital for Children, confined his remarks to child life as seen in private practice. It gave one rather a shock to hear him say how common an evil dirty and infected milk still is, and of course this has very serious effects upon young children; he supported his statements by some rather alarming statistics.

Dr. Stanley Atkinson, of the Metropolitan Asylums Board and the Central Midwives' Board, made a short speech much to the point.

The Hon. Mrs. Bertrand Russell pleaded

for funds to relieve the financial anxiety of the Committee, due to increased expenditure on account of removal into larger and more commodious premises within the last year, to which it is to be hoped a liberal response was made. She spoke with great gratification of a new departure in the work, which has been a great success, namely, "Fathers' Conferences."

These are just informal talks, held one evening in the week, and are intended indirectly to help the mother by directing the attention of the fathers to the fact of their own responsibility as fathers and husbands, and to point out that the ill-health of mother or babe is a serious burden upon *both* parents.

This co-operation of parents should tend to largely increase the ultimate value of this splendid work, which it is gratifying to relate is spreading rapidly, no less than 15 daughter institutions, actual or prospective, of the St. Pancras "School for Mothers" are following in her wake.

Tea was served in the basement, and then the visitors inspected the "Home."

It would have rejoiced the heart of Mr. John Burns, could he have seen the banana boxes serving the useful purpose—prettily draped—of cradles! Among the many useful departments of the work are:—Dinners for necessitous working mothers, for which they pay if they can, 1½d., and classes of various kinds, both theoretical and practical. Cooking and sewing classes are especially appreciated. The abysmal ignorance of parents of the lower classes of all knowledge of rearing children can only be compared with the ignorance of many of the higher classes of how the poor live; if this were not so, this excellent preventive work, would not be so handicapped for want of money.

BEATRICE KENT.

The Central Midwives' Board.

The following is the examination paper set by the Central Midwives' Board on June 9th:—

1. What is the brim of the pelvis, what is its shape, what bones form it, and what are its measurements?

2. How would you find out the position of the child at the beginning of labour?

3. What is meant by inertia of the womb? To what may it give rise after the birth of the child, and how would you treat it?

4. Describe the healthy discharges from the womb during the first week after delivery. How may they become unhealthy?

5. Describe exactly how you would treat the child's eyes after birth.

6. What are the duties of the midwife to the patient and child during the lying-in period according to the rules of the Central Midwives' Board?

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