

was ragged and torn on the maternal surface, and there were long tough amniotic adhesions attached to it. The greater part of the membranes were retained. Ergot was prescribed, and the membranes were expelled with the lochia on the third day. The lying-in period was normal.

M. F.

### The Nursing and Midwifery Exhibition.

The third annual Nursing and Midwifery Conference and Exhibition, organised by Mr. Ernest Schofield, is to be held this year at the Royal Horticultural Hall, Westminster, from April 27th to 30th inclusive, from noon to nine each day. The Exhibition will be opened on the first day by her Royal Highness Princess Christian of Schleswig Holstein.

The Organising Secretary of the Conference is Miss R. V. Gill, and amongst the questions announced for discussion are *Hospital Nursing*, including fever nursing, private nursing and nursing homes, and registration for nurses, though why these last two subjects should come under the heading of hospital nursing is not apparent. *District Nursing and Midwifery*, including the combination of midwifery and general nursing, blindness in infants, the living wage for midwives in rural districts. The Departmental Committee's Report on the Midwives' Act, direct representation on the Central Midwives' Board, the care of infants, and puerperal fever, Mental Nursing and Brain Diseases, Poor Law Nursing, Army Nursing, and Health Questions are also to be discussed.

### Manchester Midwives.

Mrs. J. E. H. Malcolm, Corresponding Secretary of the National Association of Midwives, 9, Albert Square, Manchester, has forwarded to us for insertion a copy of the subjoined protest and resolution, which has been sent to the Board of Management of the Royal Infirmary, Manchester, and to the Manchester papers:—

"We as members of the National Association of Midwives emphatically protest against the exclusion of lady doctors from the New Infirmary. We, as midwives, know only too well the need for such medicos, and at a meeting of the members of the above Association a resolution was unanimously carried.

"That the Board of Management of the new Infirmary be urged to at once reconsider their decision and admit the lady doctors. We feel the position of these ladies should be one of dignity, not humiliation."

J. E. H. MALCOLM, *Secretary.*

### Midwifery Half a Century Ago.

Dr. Lambe Atthill, ex-Master of the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, writing his "Recollections of a Long Professional Life" in the *British Medical Journal*, gives an interesting description of the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, in 1851, when he was appointed assistant to the then Master. He writes:—"There were twelve lying-in wards, each containing ten beds; there were also small wards opening off these, into which cases of serious illness were moved. Each of the large wards in turn became 'the labour ward,' into which the patients were admitted till all the beds were filled. The bedsteads were wooden, all of hard old oak, and, although they were probably a hundred years old, were perfectly sound and good. The bedding was primitive, the mattress consisted of a coarse canvas bag filled with clean straw, over which was laid an under blanket and sheets. The straw was taken out and clean straw put in as each patient was discharged or removed to another ward, which always took place on the eighth day after delivery, but the sack which contained the straw was not washed with any regularity, nor were the blankets; these were, however, well aired, the ward and bedsteads were scrubbed, windows opened, and the ward thoroughly cleaned and ventilated for one or more days before another batch of patients came in.

"The patients were delivered on a small bed termed 'the couch,' and then carried to their beds. The diet was gruel, bread, and tea for the first five days after delivery, then broth was given for dinner; and so it remained till I became Master, when I was enabled to change the diet, and broth was given from the first, and meat on the fourth or fifth day. It must be borne in mind that sixty or seventy years ago no air was admitted into the lying-in chamber in private practice; and there even light was excluded, that nothing but warm drinks were given for several days, and that the patient was always perspiring. In the old authors will be found learned discussions on the treatment of 'miliary fever,' and a description of its peculiar rash, till at last someone discovered that all this was due to the long-continued sweating!

"In the hospital itself no precautions whatever were taken either by pupils or nurses. The number of pupils was unlimited; there were generally about eight or ten internal and a large number of external pupils always on the roll; six or eight, often more, being on duty together for twelve hours. These made vaginal examinations as often as they liked, none thought of washing hands before doing so. There was a table with two basins on it for the use of the pupils, and a tub stood near it on the floor into which the basins were supposed to be, but not always were, emptied after being used, and things so remained till I became Master in 1875, when one of my first acts was to get water laid on to each of the wards with proper lavatory arrangements and the posting up of a notice that pupils 'must wash their hands before making an examination,' and rinse them in a solution of carbolic acid supplied for the purpose—rules I found very difficult to enforce; indeed, they were ridiculed."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)