

### The East-End Mothers' Home.

The East-End Mothers' Home, 394, Commercial Road, E., the Annual Meeting of which was held at the Mansion House on Monday last, under the presidency of the Lord Mayor, is an institution which is doing an immense amount of good work in an extremely poor locality, and, in addition to the skilled care bestowed on the patients, extends to them a human sympathy and interest which extends far beyond the time in which the women are patients in the institution.

The Resident Lady Superintendent, Miss Margaret Anderson, from whom so much of the home-like atmosphere of the institution emanates, says in her report to the Committee for last year that the poverty in the neighbourhood is absolutely heart-rending. The nursing of out-patients without having recourse to the Samaritan Fund, which sadly needs augmenting, would indeed be hopeless work. She instances the fact that 104 patients who booked to enter the institution were struck off the register, the reason being that in a large number of cases the sole support of the home was the mother. After a certain period the latter could not get work, and the result was that before it was time for the baby to arrive the whole family had been compelled by stress of hunger to enter the workhouse, and again it has sometimes happened that when discharged from the Home mothers have had to join their families in the workhouse, their homes having been sold up in their absence.

It is the normal condition of patients admitted to the Home that they are badly nourished, but until the past winter it has "never had to deal with women whose vitality has suffered by continued want and the absence of the common necessities of life. In this condition they face a most perilous and critical time, and the anxiety caused is tremendous. It is indeed a burning lesson for the bravest heart, and a stern and terrible trial for the strongest faith to witness the patience and endurance of these poor mothers. In ordinary circumstances the coming of a precious baby is a joyful event, but to our poor women the joy must be heavily discounted. Yet who will say that they do not give the new comer love and make much of it while they may.

"This is where our Samaritan Fund comes in. We relieve the immediate distress and feed the mother while she is in bed, at the same time moving to get permanent help for the family from other sources. In this connection we get help from the Stepney Welcome, which aids us with food for the nursing mothers."

Besides the good work which it is doing for the patients, the Home is an excellent and successful training school for midwives and monthly nurses.

At the Mansion House Meeting, the Lord Mayor, who supported the appeal for funds, said that he and the Lady Mayoress had recently visited the Home and were extremely pleased with the excellent management. The Bishop of Stepney, in proposing a resolution, stating that the good work of the Home merits increased support, spoke of the tenderness, affection, and enthusiasm with which the work was carried on. The resolution was seconded by Mrs. Quintin Hogg.

### The Midwives Act and Ireland.

It is announced that at a recent Conference in Ireland, at which representatives of almost all the important corporations and medical societies in Ireland were present, a unanimous decision was arrived at in favour of the extension of the Midwives' Act to Ireland.

The following memorandum has been issued by the Board of Governors of the Rotunda Hospital:—

We beg to draw attention to the serious disabilities under which Irish midwifery nurses are now placed owing to the limitation of the scope of the Midwives' Act of 1902, which applies only to England and Wales.

As this Act at present stands it is quite possible for the Central Midwives' Board to frame rules which will preclude Irish trained midwives from practising in England, and will largely lessen their chances of employment in the Colonies. That this is not hypothetical is proved by the fact that rules actually were framed which had this result; moreover, under the Act, Irish-trained midwives can practise in England only by a special concession from the Central Midwives' Board, a concession which may at any time be withdrawn by the vote of a bare majority of that Board.

Since the establishment of a State Registration for midwives it has been an almost universal requirement in advertisements for appointments in the Colonies that the State degree must be held; unless, therefore, an Irish midwife is prepared to go to the expense and inconvenience of crossing to England, remaining there for ten days, and spending money for a diploma, thus contributing to the support of the English Board, she is practically debarred from receiving a Colonial appointment. Further, the military authorities at the Curragh, when advertising for a midwife in this, the very centre of Ireland, require that she should hold a diploma from the Central Midwives' Board.

Thus the Act is a one-sided and inequitable measure of protection, for while English midwives can practise in Ireland, Irish midwives are prohibited from practising in England. An unmerited stigma is thus cast on Irish midwives, and this, too, in spite of the fact that the time devoted to their training is longer than that required by the Central Midwives' Board, and the standard of excellence exacted from them will bear favourable comparison with any in the United Kingdom. To meet this injustice it is only necessary to extend the scope of the existing Act so as to include this country, giving it adequate representation on the Central Midwives' Board, with a branch Council, to hold examinations in Dublin, Belfast, and Cork, and to grant diplomas.

This extension of the Act has the unqualified support of the Royal College of Physicians, of the Academy of Medicine, and of the other medical bodies in Ireland. It would also contribute largely to the discontinuance of the employment of unqualified women throughout the country districts, and in this way effect for our country what the Act of 1902 has done for England and Wales.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)