

# The Midwife.

## THE MATERNITY WARD AT ST. THOMAS'S HOSPITAL.

Dr. John S. Fairbairn and Dr. James M. Wyatt contribute to the *British Medical Journal* an interesting account of the work of the Maternity Ward at St. Thomas's Hospital during 1911. The ward, which is named "Mary" after Her Majesty the Queen, was opened in October, 1910.

We can readily believe that, as the authors state, the conversion of a large 28-bed ward into a small lying-in hospital is a problem which presents many difficulties, and they therefore describe in detail the alterations and furnishing of this small hospital within a hospital, and give a sketch of the way in which the teaching work of the hospital has been brought into accordance with the recent recommendations of the General Medical Council.

The usual plan of having small wards of 8 to 10 beds, which could be emptied and cleaned after each batch of patients, was discarded as impracticable, and it was ultimately decided that under modern conditions closing the wards for disinfection after each batch of patients was no longer so essential as in former days, and that there ought to be no difficulty in keeping a lying-in ward in continuous service, like an ordinary surgical ward, and accommodating as many as 20 patients at a time.

A small ward was converted into a receiving-room, which has "a floor space of 224 square feet, including portions cut off for a cupboard for patients' clothing and a w.c., and is floored with terrazzo mosaic, cored to the wall and channelled to take the waste of the bath and sink. The walls are lined to the height of 6 ft. with 6-in. cream tiles with green borders, and the upper portion finished in Parian cement and painted with Gay's enamel. It contains a white enamel bath on wheels, an earthenware sink fixed on cantilevers, set clear of the walls, and a bedpan sink, fitted with elbow-action taps, placed here for emergency use in case of the large labour room being used for lying-in patients, when the ordinary sink room is unapproachable during the cleaning of the main ward. The only other furniture in the room is an examination couch and a few screens. Patients on arrival at the hospital are not seen in the casualty like ordinary patients, but are sent straight up in the lift to the receiving room. There they are examined, and if in labour, or to

be admitted to the ward, are given a bath, put into hospital clothes, and sent to the labour room or the ward, as their condition requires. The room is also used occasionally for the examination of advice-patients, who may come for measurement or determination of the time for induction and such like."

A large and a small labour room, and a baby room or nursery, have been cut off from the main ward, leaving the remainder as the lying-in ward.

"The nursery contains a double babies' bath, consisting of an enamelled iron top 3 ft. 8 in. by 3 ft. 3 in., with two oval-shaped basins 2 ft. 2 in. by 1 ft. 3 in. by 9 in. deep, with hot and cold taps between the basins to serve both. The whole is fixed on an enamelled iron stand 2 ft. 2 in. from the floor, the most convenient height for a nurse to sit at, with a knee-action waste to discharge to a channel on the floor. There is a hot coil by the side of the bath, and the only furnishing is a weighing machine and a small cupboard in the wall fitted with pigeon-holes, numbered for each cot, to contain the washing materials for each baby.

"The ward bedsteads are like those in the labour-room, except that they are without the zinc cover (provided in the former bedsteads), and have a wire spring mattress and ordinary castors; at each end of the foot are detachable standards which can be arranged to carry the cots. The cots are of wire caging, with a flat bottom, so that they rest on the floor. In the ward are also a number of collapsible stands in which the cot can be swung when in the nursery. The bedsteads were specially designed, and, having an increased height, stays are provided from leg to leg, practically forming a double frame. As they have large rubber castors, each bedstead is a perfect ambulance.

"At the river end of the ward is a door opening on to the balcony (which commands a magnificent view of Westminster and the north of the river) and on each side are doors leading on the left to the sanitary annexe and on the right to the isolation ward. Each annexe is cut off from the main ward by a short corridor with cross ventilation."

The sanitary annexe contains three earthenware sinks. "The first one is the patient's washing sink, and the next is used for washing basins and utensils, and the third is a mackintosh sink, and is also used for soiled linen, and

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