

The Midwife.

EXPECTANT MOTHERHOOD.

The second lecture of the advanced course on Infant Care was commenced by Mrs. Florence Willey, M.D., at the Royal Society of Medicine, 1, Wimpole Street, on January 31st. To the great disappointment of the large audience, the lecture, which promised to be an exceptionally interesting one, was brought to an abrupt conclusion by the Secretary announcing that Zeppelins were on their way to London, and it was suggested that the audience would probably prefer to get to their homes as soon as possible. Events proved subsequently that they might have listened to the whole lecture in peace and comfort.

Dr. Willey in commencing her lecture said, that in this advanced course she expected her hearers to look at the subject from wide stand-points. It might be asked why all this fuss about expectant mothers and ante-natal hygiene? The first reason was that by far the greater number of cases of abortion and still-birth were preventible, due to preventible causes during pregnancy and labour.

The second reason was that by it would be diminished the number of maternal deaths.

The third reason was that subsequent pregnancies would be safer, the woman herself healthier, and more fit to take charge of her children and her home.

Statistics showed that 23 per cent. of the infantile deaths during the first year of life were due to premature birth, deficient breathing power, and injury at birth; 21 per cent. were due to specific diseases and 40 per cent. to infectious disease. The lecturer reminded her hearers that the contraction of infection was due to lowered resistance, and not merely to the fact that the child had come in contact with the germ of the disease, which, of course, it was continually doing.

Dr. Newsholme had shewn that all these diseases were influenced by ante-natal nutrition.

THE LEEDS MATERNITY HOSPITAL.

The Lord Mayor of Leeds (Mr. Charles Lupton), presided at the annual meeting of the Leeds Maternity Hospital, held last week in the Lord Mayor's rooms at the Town Hall, when a very satisfactory annual report was submitted by the Hon. Secretary, Mrs. R. Hudson.

The report stated that there has been a phenomenal increase, both in the hospital and on the districts, due in part to the War, but also to the growing knowledge among poor women that greater safety, better nursing, and more comfort are to be obtained by coming under the care of the hospital than otherwise it is in their power to obtain. Many Belgian refugees have been admitted during the year, and there has been a large number of abnormal and serious cases sent

for treatment by the medical practitioners in the city and the surrounding area.

It was further reported that, as a training centre, the hospital grows in importance and success, and also that official notice has been received by the committee from the Central Midwives' Board of the extension of the period of training to six months. In conclusion, the report urged the need for increased financial support, as at no period in this generation has the necessity for maternity work been more apparent.

We are glad to observe that, in moving the adoption of the report, the Lord Mayor said he thought the six months mentioned in the report was a very short time in which to train a person to undertake the work of what was really a surgical nurse. It was more than ever important that the work of nurses should be maintained at the very highest possible standard. He urged the claims of the institution upon the charitable public, seeing that it carried on one part of the warfare on behalf of the child life of the country.

Miss Caroline March was re-elected President; and Mrs. R. Hudson, Hon. Secretary.

THE DANGER OF PRESERVATIVES IN MILK.

Dr. W. B. Drummond, F.R.C.P., in his interesting book "The Child: His Nature and Nurture," published by J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., gives a striking illustration of the danger of introducing preservatives into milk. In this connection he writes:—

"The importance of guarding the milk supply from contamination by the germs of infectious diseases has been forced upon the attention of the local authorities by the occurrence of numerous epidemics which have been traced to milk infection. For some time past another aspect of the milk supply has been attracting a great deal of interest. Most milk has to travel a long distance from the country. In order to prevent the milk from turning sour, many dairymen have been in the habit of adding some preservative to the milk, and have maintained that such a practice did not constitute an adulteration, on the ground that the preservative used, usually boracic acid, was non-poisonous and harmless. To test the truth of this assertion, Professor Boyce, of Liverpool, tried the experiment of feeding a number of kittens on milk containing 10 grains of boracic acid in each pint. He found that the kittens underwent rapid emaciation and died. Kittens fed on milk containing only five grains of boracic acid also emaciated and died. Again, "kittens fed on milk containing 1 part formalin in 50,000 increased in weight by only 70 per cent. of the weekly gain of healthily fed kittens. There can be no reasonable doubt that these preservatives would have a similar effect upon infants."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)