

## MOTHERS AND BABIES AT CHARING CROSS HOSPITAL.

Nothing could have been prettier than the scene in the Out-patient Department at Charing Cross Hospital, when 50 mothers, babies in arms, sat down to tea on New Year's Eve.

On the tables were tiny fir trees, scarlet and white flowers, scarlet crackers, and any amount of good things, frosted cakes, and fancy cakes of all descriptions, dainty china, and all the appointments of a well served tea. It was a pleasure to see the mothers having an abundance of the good things which so seldom come their way, and when they do are generally reserved for other members of the family, in surroundings of refinement and beauty for which in their toiling lives they have no time as a general rule. The only drawback was that the mothers were so excited by the festivities that their appetites suffered somewhat.

The babies behaved like cherubs. Not a cry was heard from one of the fifty who, in immaculately clean clothes, with roseleaf faces, were the prettiest flowerets in the room, contentedly snuggling in their mothers' arms, or nursed by admiring visitors.

Most interesting of all is the work going on in connection with the hospital of which this gathering was the outward and visible sign. For some time past two of the Ranyard Nurses, Miss Bryning and Miss Bayley, both of whom are certified midwives, have been attending with the Charing Cross students the midwifery cases booked with the hospital, and since October mainly through the good offices of Mrs. Pillow, the Lady Almoner—who with two assistants investigates all cases, general and midwifery, which come under the care of the hospital—an ante-natal and babies' clinic has been organised, and expectant mothers come up to the hospital, and are seen by members of the visiting staff, and treated if necessary. It is hoped in this way to keep the expectant mothers under observation for some four months before confinement. If necessary they are seen by Dr. Eden or Dr. C. Lockyer, the Obstetric and Assistant Obstetric physicians.

After the birth of the baby it is brought to the hospital by the mother, when convalescent, weighed, and its general condition investigated, and she is then told how soon to bring it again. In this way it is hoped to keep the babies under observation until they are of five years of age and come under the inspection of the school medical officer. The knowledge and therefore the future work of the students, who learn many nursing points in the management of the cases, will attain a higher level than that of students who go out from hospitals into the homes of the poor to gain their experience as best they may, sending back to the hospital for the resident accoucheur if in need of assistance, the difficulty being that a student with little experience of these cases to guide him often does not recognise beforehand that complications are likely to occur. Here the advice of an experienced midwife, even if she

is only ostensibly acting as a monthly nurse, must be of great value. She can further show the student how to make the bed and keep it clean, how to manage the patient, and how to wash the baby, and the students, we learn, are very appreciative of this help.

The work has indeed such potentialities that we do not hesitate to say it is the most interesting new departure made by any hospital with which we have come in contact for some time.

At the conclusion of the tea party a Christmas tree was stripped of its fruit by Dr. R. C. Jewsbury, who called out the names on each parcel, and it was evident that he and the mothers were well acquainted with one another. Many willing hands distributed them, while Miss M. Heather-Bigg, the Matron, looked on well pleased. Most useful presents all the parcels contained. Warm woollies, dainty frocks and other delightful gifts for the babies. No wonder that they crowed and gurgled, or that the mothers radiated pleasure.

The tea party was really charming, bright, friendly, gay, indeed quite ideal. It was quickly over, and the mothers who went out once more into the dull streets and to a drab existence must surely have taken with them some of the brightness and warmth in which they had been enveloped.

## PEACE AND SECURITY FOR THE HUNTED AND FORLORN.

The happiness of the mothers and babes in the East End Mothers' Home on Christmas Day, so quaintly expressed by a poor Belgian refugee mother, for whom kindly Providence had found a home in her sorrow that indeed surpassed the humble stable shelter of the Royal Babe and His Holy Mother, bore grateful testimony to the loving and skilful hearts and hands of the generous benefactors and staff.

Passing her bed, on Christmas night, I was struck by her radiant face, as she gazed with mother love on her tiny, soft, sweet babe, and stopping beside her I asked her, "Are you happy, mother?" and with a smile that only peace and security can bring to the erstwhile hunted and forlorn, she answered me—

"Ah moi, comme je suis bien contente!" and clasped her babe to her bosom, tears of thankfulness filling her eyes. Gratitude for security—gratitude for shelter—gratitude for love and skill—gratitude for generosity in abundance—and gratitude for a home for herself and her little babe amidst friends in England.

This Christmas Day for her in this lovely home meant all these, and she, I know, with many another woman whose homes are devastated and countries ravaged by the Hun and the Turk, return thanks to God, and pray for and look for the blessings of the Babe of Bethlehem on those whose generosity and love have provided the joys and comforts of this Christmas—in a strange land—at the East End Mothers' Home.

"I was a stranger, and ye took me in."

A VISITOR.

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