

evening they sang every recent street song—a noisy, happy lot. Four of the children of mothers who were burnt to death in a fire at a local factory were asked, and one of the little girls got the only big doll on the tree. The whole crowd were delighted that it fell to her share, "because her mother was dead and she ain't got no father."

The mothers and husbands had a lovely "meaty, hammy, plum-puddingey-cakey," tea in Queen Mary Ward, and enjoyed themselves immensely. One sailor said that he hadn't had such a feed since he went to sea, and it would last him another six months. We expected no husbands, but three soldiers—one sailor and one flying man—had Christmas leave, so were able to be present, besides two men who were daily expecting to be called up and six elderly unfits.

Miss Anderson's concluding words to the supporters of the Home are:—

The misery of our mothers is mitigated by your benevolence and humanity. Your kind words and deeds are the golden rivets which help to hold together the splintered vase of human happiness. May Almighty God reward you for all your infinite pity and goodness to our mothers, and for all the practical help and sympathy which never fail me.

We hope many golden rivets will be placed in Miss Anderson's hands. She is an expert riveter.

#### INFANTILE DEATH RATE.

Answering Mr. O'Grady, who put a question in the House of Commons on March 26th respecting the decline in the infantile death-rate to 91 per 1,000 registered births, Mr. Hayes Fisher (Secretary to the Local Government Board) said: "There is no foundation for the suggestion that the decline in the infant death-rate is due to the decline in the number of children who are vaccinated. The lower death-rate is not confined to districts in which vaccination is neglected, and at least one-half of the infants die before the age at which vaccination is usually performed. The decline in the infant death-rate is no doubt due to a number of causes, one of the most important of which is the valuable work which is now undertaken by local authorities and voluntary agencies for attending to the health of mothers and infants."

#### THE ROYAL MATERNITY CHARITY.

The 160th Annual Report of the Royal Maternity Charity is now available. Price 6d. to non-subscribers. The midwives of the Charity all hold the certificate of the Central Midwives Board, and, as far as possible, are selected from those who are all fully trained hospital nurses.

#### THE MIDWIVES ACT COMMITTEE, L.C.C.

Mrs. Wilton Phipps has been appointed Chairman, and Miss A. S. Gregory Vice-Chairman of the Midwives Act Committee of the London County Council for the ensuing year.

#### INFANT WELFARE WORK AT THE ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL.

A meeting over which the Lord Mayor will preside is to be held at the Mansion House on Friday afternoon, April 27th, when Lord Rhondda, Mr. Balfour and Lady Barrett will be the speakers, on behalf of the Infant Welfare Appeal Committee of the Royal Free Hospital.

The hospital has had a gift of an adjoining site, valued at £30,000, to further its infant-welfare schemes. As a consultative centre for the many infant-aiding associations of the boroughs in the neighbourhood, the hospital has great reputation. It has a fine infant clinic, and babies who cannot be looked after properly in their own homes are taken into a special ward.

Money for the infant-welfare section of the hospital is urgently needed, and may be sent to the appeal secretary, Miss Marie Arnold, 34, Victoria Street, S.W.

#### THE EDINBURGH ROYAL MATERNITY HOSPITAL.

Sir Alfred Ewing, K.C.B., Principal of the University of Edinburgh who presided at the Annual Meeting of the Edinburgh Royal Maternity and Simpson Memorial Hospital held on March 26th said that 1,890 cases were treated by the hospital during 1916, an increase on 1915, and the indoor cases (738) were also a record. A large proportion of the cases the institution assists were the difficult ones in which the need for help was greatest. It was important to make good the terrible losses of manhood in the war by aiding and encouraging the birth of children in every possible way. At present, sad to relate, though fewer children were born, one in nine did not survive the first twelve months after birth. As these deaths were due for the most part to preventable causes those interested in infant welfare were directing their energies to a reduction of that figure.

Speaking of the falling birth rate the Medical Officer for the city, Dr. Maxwell Williamson, said that it had not fallen more during the war than during the forty-five years immediately preceding the war, but it clearly indicated the need for associating a maternity with a child welfare scheme. Of the 575 deaths of infants under one year in the city during 1916 no fewer than 220 were due to prematurity and immaturity, and 175 occurred during the first four weeks of life. There was ground for hope that much good might result from the co-operation of the Royal Maternity Hospital and other maternity centres with the Corporation in its new scheme for maternity and infant welfare.

The report presented at the Annual Meeting of the Leicester and Leicestershire Maternity Hospital showed that eight private pupils and five sent by the County Nursing Association had entered for the C.M.B. examination and all passed.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)