

The Midwife.

POST GRADUATE WEEK.

GENERAL LYING-IN-HOSPITAL, YORK ROAD,
LAMBETH.

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TUESDAY, MAY 22ND.

The Maternity Hospital and Infant Welfare Centre in Underwood Street, Whitechapel, is a very desirable, complete and efficient piece of work. It is a very great advantage to have these two organisations under one administration.

The Matron, Miss Walter, most kindly invited the post-graduate midwives from York Road to visit the hospital, and they spent there a most enjoyable afternoon.

They first visited the Infant Welfare and saw the most charming little naked babies turning the scale at various weights. One remarkably fine, breast-fed boy of nine months weighed 19 lb. 10 oz. In another room they were shown various cunning patterns for infants' clothing, which the mothers are taught to cut out and make. Wool binders and vests are insisted upon for all infants, and cork umbilical pads are advised. When the napkins are discarded, drawers must be worn; one of the doctors refuses to examine the baby unless this regulation is obeyed.

Two of the baby boys had that morning undergone circumcision, which is, of course, a religious rite, and they were wearing elaborate robes in consequence.

The hospital is small, being originally intended for only six beds; but when the rush of refugees came extra beds were put up, which have never since been removed. To prevent overcrowding the infants are kept in a ward by themselves.

Everything connected with mothers and babies is exquisitely neat and dainty. One mother observed that it was worth while having a baby to come in.

The hospital is a recognised training school for midwives who enjoy a year's tuition, six months' midwifery and six months' health visitor's training. Pre-natal work has always been recognised as part of the hospital routine. On the discharge of the mother, at the end of fourteen days, she is followed up by the health visitor and is encouraged to join the Infant Welfare, so that mother and child are both kept in touch with the nurses and doctors who have intimate knowledge of their history.

Everyone exclaimed with admiration at the linen cupboards, which were well stocked and were in most perfect order—each pile of articles being encircled with blue linen bands which gave them a very smart appearance.

The nurses' bedrooms were also much admired. The lavatory basins, with hot and cold water

laid on, were a great feature; the cupboard accommodation was also to be envied.

The guests were invited to tea in the nurses' charming dining room, which opened on to the roof garden, and a delightful meal of home-made cakes was partaken of.

Miss Walter, it is obvious, possesses the secret of getting the best out of those who work for her, and every department spoke of thoughtful care. More than one of the guests remarked on the refreshing absence of "frills" in those in authority.

With all concerned it was evidently a case of "With goodwill doing service."

WEDNESDAY, MAY 23RD.

On Wednesday morning, "Clinics on the Baby" were conducted by the Ward Sisters.

Sister French described the different modes of treatment of the cord by different physicians. One prefers that the baby shall be put in the bath from the first, while another does not allow a bath until after the cord has separated.

Bad eyes from gonorrhœal infection were rare, though occasionally they had cases of bad eyes from other causes. The trouble usually coincided with the time that the mother was able to sit up and do little things on her own account for the baby; this, of course, could not be altogether prevented.

She considers that twice a day is sufficient to bathe an infant's eyes, in the ordinary way.

As regards the cleaning of the mouth, she pointed out the dangers of inexperienced mothers or nurses being entrusted with this duty and said that at York Road it was found better to abandon the practice altogether than risk injury to the mucous membrane.

In the afternoon, Professor Arthur Keith lectured to the midwives. Sister Olive prefaced his lecture by saying what a great honour he had done them by coming down to speak to them.

His subject was on "The Reason why Certain Things are Done to Arrest Hæmorrhage."

He said that it was commonly said, "I pulled round" such a person, whereas they were but nature's agent—the assistants of nature. They simply put persons into a position to get better.

He illustrated the analogy between a burst water pipe and a cut artery. Faintness was the cause of the slowing down of the heart's action, the turning off of the blood at the main, and the consequent coagulation which ensued as the blood passed over the dead surface.

He pointed out how that the fœtus, in common with the chick in the egg, was an absolute parasite upon the mother, and with diagrams illustrated the means by which the fœtus obtained its nourishment and oxygen from the mother's blood vessels.

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