

# The Midwife.

## NATIONAL BABY WEEK.

### THE FESTIVAL OF THE NEWLY BORN.

Adeline Duchess of Bedford presided at the Mass Meeting for Mothers in the Central Hall, Westminster, on July 3rd, and said instead of "Baby Week" she would prefer to call it the "Festival of the Newly Born." Everyone must recognise that babies are the treasures of the nation, and should do their utmost to preserve them. She was glad to announce that she had acquired, with the help of a few generous friends, a house that would be equipped for the reception of blind babies. The sad case of the little ones was very near her heart.

### MOTHERS' RIGHTS.

Dr. Wilson, who spoke on Mothers' Rights, began by saying that the womanhood of England had saved England. "You have," he said, "England in your hand to make it or lose it."

What Rights had the mother?

The *Right* to be looked after and protected when she was going to have a child.

The *Right* to be looked after when it was being born. Certain doctors, he said, shamefully neglected women in their confinements; they had more patients than they could attend to.

Mothers had a *Right* to good and adequate medical attendance and good nursing.

The maternity nursing was not good, it needed to be much improved. The midwives must receive better pay. At present they were offered money that would not be given to a humble house boy. This was monstrous.

It was not a matter for charity. The health of the mother and the health of the children should be made a matter for the State.

They had a *Right* to clean, wholesome food for their children at a decent price.

Why was London milk allowed by Government to be sold in its dangerously dirty condition? Because of powerful communal vested interests, that will fight to prevent any efforts to improve it.

It was cheaper to sell dirty milk than clean.

The Profiteer was no thing of yesterday. Because of the Profiteer no Government had had the courage to deal with it. Lord Rhondda had introduced proposals for a Ministry of Health that would care for the child from the cradle to the grave. Why was it postponed when it was so needed? The Profiteer had said, "Thou shalt not." Who was going to smash vested interests? "You mothers," said Dr. Wilson, "will soon have the vote." Organised Motherhood with only one purpose, the safety of the children, would be so strong, so irresistible, that nothing in the whole world would stand against it.

A large number of women with infants attended this meeting, and were much impressed by Dr.

Wilson's address. A varied musical programme followed. Previously a cinematograph was shown representing the Day and Night Crèches for the children of munition workers at Woolwich, which was most interesting, one of the pictures, "Somebody's Darling," eliciting "Ohs" of admiration from the mothers.

"Kill that Fly" films were more instructive than pleasant.

The performance concluded with films illustrating the Montessori educational methods, of which the Handkerchief Drill seemed to be a very sensible plan.

During the day the blind children from the Royal Normal College, Upper Norwood, practical demonstrations in Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Kindergarten work.

It was touching and pathetic to hear Hans Andersen's "Tin Soldier" spelt out by chubby fingers wandering over the pages of the book. It is a magnificent work, which enables these little ones to share to some extent in the joys of more fortunate children.

### THE CONFERENCE.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 4TH. MORNING SESSION.

The chief feature of Wednesday's programme was the Midwifery Conference.

The Morning Session was presided over by Sir Francis Champneys.

### THE POSITION AND FUTURE OF THE URBAN MIDWIFE.

Dr. Hope, Medical Officer of Health for Liverpool spoke on "The Position and Future of the Urban Midwife."

He said, that Dr. Janet Campbell had well spoken to the "terrors of midwifery." The services which the midwife is able to render are of fundamental importance in any scheme for the welfare of motherhood and infancy. Her potentialities increase year by year with increasing demands for her services. He spoke of her opportunities in ante natal work, and her intimate knowledge of her patients' history. What induced her to enter a calling where there was so much work and so little pay? Sometimes vocation. He had ascertained that in from 15-20 per cent. of cases the daughter followed the mother in the profession. For some, it was the only way of earning a living. Some married women added to their incomes in this manner. It was hardly possible under existing circumstances to obtain a decent living.

Things had improved, but they must go a great deal farther. There must be a larger supply of midwives trained to the highest standard.

The need for midwives was not likely to diminish. There was not the slightest possibility that sufficient hospital accommodation would ever be provided for all lying-in cases. There were

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)