

# The Midwife.

## THE HOMES OF THE PEOPLE.

In connection with housing schemes to be undertaken after the war, Mrs. Edwin Gray, in a letter addressed to *Maternity and Child Welfare*, urges that women must press for earnest consideration of the question how to make home work easier and pleasanter, by the provision of modern scientific appliances and arrangements. This is as important from the national as from the individual point of view. She writes:—

"Let us for a moment concentrate imagination on the daily toil of a young wife with three or four children. If she does her duty by them, she is of necessity hard at work, or on guard all the twenty-four hours, for even the night does not bring complete rest. The higher her standard and her idea of duty, the harder her work. The educational effort of the last twenty years on the part of schools for mothers, medical officers of health and all concerned in child welfare, has tended to increase the toil of the conscientious home mother. The standard of comfort in the home has risen meaning more possessions and therefore more work.

"How many realise the severe overwork and strain endured by the mothers whom we now extol as beings to be nationally glorified? Ask the doctors attending infant welfare centres; ask health visitors and midwives. From these you will learn of preventable suffering borne without complaint, or hope of avoiding illness and hard work, which ages prematurely and takes the spirit out of a person.

"Something must be done. It is intolerable that the present daily drudgery in the home should be allowed to continue without taking drastic steps to find some remedy, and it will be nothing short of a national disaster if the new housing scheme does not include all kinds of plans for labour saving.

"The first need is a constant and plentiful supply of hot water, to be run from a central building to all the cottages in a given group, each one of which would contain a bath. Then there should be a laundry, with up-to-date machinery worked probably by electricity, to be used by all the tenants in their turn. A caretaker would, of course, be necessary. In the central block there should be a day nursery with a qualified nurse in charge, where for a small payment little children could be safely left while their mothers are doing their work. Probably the Board of Education would give a grant towards the cost of such nurseries. Another co-operative service might be a baking oven, to which the tenants might send their bread and pies. If this were done, a gas stove in the scullery at home would do all the other cooking, and a pleasant open fire would heat the living room."

## CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

Dr. J. S. Fairbairn has been appointed representative of the Incorporated Midwives Institute on the Central Midwives Board, in place of Sir Shirley Murphy, who has resigned.

## ASSOCIATION FOR PROMOTING THE TRAINING AND SUPPLY OF MIDWIVES.

The Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Association for Promoting the Training and Supply of Midwives, of which Her Majesty Queen Alexandra is Patron, and H.R.H. Princess Christian President of the Council, will be held on Wednesday, March 20th, at 3.30 p.m., at 9, Park Crescent, Portland Place, W. 1, by kind permission of Mrs. Harmer, when the chair will be taken by the Right Hon. T. McKinnon Wood, M.P.

## BELFAST MATERNITY HOSPITAL.

At the recent Annual Meeting of the Belfast Maternity Hospital the Chairman, Mr. Herbert Ewart, J.P., who presided, said that he had had an interview with Dr. Bailie, with the object of finding out what help their institution could give to the Corporation in carrying out the Child Welfare Scheme, and had expressed not only their willingness, but their desire, to help in any way that would improve the health conditions of women and children in the city.

The number of patients treated in the hospital was 571, an increase of 116 on the previous year.

## INFANTILE BERI-BERI.

Infantile beriberi due to breast-feeding by mothers with the disease in a latent or declared form has (says the *British Medical Journal*) been recognised in two forms: (a) the chronic aphonic, lasting for several weeks, with a hoarse voice and a dilated and hypertrophied right heart, and (b) the acute pernicious cardialgic, lasting from several hours to two days, and characterised by intense and incessant crying. In addition, J. Albert ("Philippine Journ, Sc.") briefly describes the pseudo-meningitic form in infants of five to six months, or somewhat older than the ordinary cases. Ptosis giving the infants an idiotic expression, is a prominent feature; drowsiness, retraction of the head, and upward rotation of the eyes also occur. The right side of the heart is shown by X-rays to be enlarged. In two out of the three cases there was a history of previous aphonia, thus suggesting that the meningeal symptoms were due to a second attack of beriberi. The cases were rapidly cured by the extract of tiqui-tiqui, which is a specific for infantile beriberi.

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