

## The Midwife.

### THE CLAPHAM MATERNITY HOSPITAL.

The annual meeting of the Clapham Maternity Hospital was held on May 28th, at the hospital, 37-43, Jeffreys Road, S.W. 4. Mrs. Ransom Wallis (Superior of the Haven of Hope Rescue Home, Denman Street, S.E.), presided, and said that in the past thirty years, since Dr. McCall first started the hospital the whole question of maternity nursing was on different lines. Dr. McCall had lived through the dark days of criticism and opposition, and was a true pioneer.

Miss Marion Ritchie (Honorary Secretary and Treasurer), in presenting her report, said that, though they were within their income owing to a generous grant of £600 from the King's Fund, their expenses in 1917 were £517 more than in the previous year. This she accounted for by the increased price of food, drugs, &c., and domestic upkeep. A source of diminution of income was the nurses' fees, which brought in £138 less than in the previous year. They could not get sufficient pupils at the present time to pay the fees.

Miss Gregory, in moving the adoption of the report, gave some interesting extracts from old manuscripts relating to midwives, and said that, in the archives of St. Paul's, there was the licence of one Sarah Keymer, which enjoined the said midwife to be diligent in her care of the poor mother and child, and not to forsake it for richer patients. In view of the shortage of doctors, the midwife should be specially well equipped, and she trusted that in the near future the law would insist on a longer training—at least one year. She held that without undertaking more than 150 cases per annum the midwife should be assured of an income of not less than £120.

Dr. Caroline Sturge, in referring to the small number of pupil applicants, said though there were an immense number of occupations now open to women, that after the war many of them would be thrown out of work, but midwives would always be required.

Dr. McCall, in a characteristically energetic speech, also referred to the shortage, and said they were unable to use the full capacity of the hospital, as under present conditions it was impossible to give the full number of patients proper attention. Speaking of Infant Welfare Work, which occupied the public mind so much to-day, she said she considered the mother ten times more important than the child. She realized that the times had put a severe strain on everyone, but, whereas in the old days, when she was doing her midwifery training, the ambition of the pupils was that everyone should be present at every case, now the tone was—"Who is the poor victim to go out to-night?"

A large number of visitors were present.

### NATIONAL BABY WEEK COUNCIL.

#### PROVISION FOR MATERNITY.

The third of the Course of Lectures given under the auspices of the above Council took place at Dr. Williams' Library, 14, Gordon Square, on Monday, May 27th. The lecturer on this occasion was J. H. Fairbairn, Esq., F.R.C.S. Dr. Murray Leslie, who presided, said that the importance of the subject could scarcely be exaggerated. He deplored the great scarcity of midwives, and drew the conclusion—a very obvious one—that the cause was due to the fact that the remuneration they received was inadequate. The audience showed their appreciation of this remark.

Dr. Fairbairn said that there was more than one side to the question, but he did not mean to deal with it either from the social or political side, but only from the medical. He laid great stress upon the importance of ante-natal work, as being really a branch of preventive medicine; in fact, the care of the pregnant woman was, he observed, the beginning of all preventive medicine, because the baby was the beginning of life. That is the atmosphere in which we are now beginning to work. The ideal thing was to endeavour to watch the expectant mother all through her pregnancy, and so, in the first place, to avoid all preventable complication, and, secondly, to try and preserve the pregnancy to term. Abortions were a great loss to the population, probably far greater than deaths. Abortion caused by drugs and other methods, the lecturer remarked, was a very serious matter for the woman, and as it was a common practice public opinion would have to be roused to the seriousness of it. The loss of prospective life, and the mischievous results to the health of the mother, were the evils specified. The doctor was not in favour of notification of pregnancy, but urged that a pregnant woman should be persuaded and encouraged to make her condition known as early as possible to the midwife or doctor, in order to give herself and the child the very best possible chance. Such things as the mouth and teeth must be attended to, also the bowels and urine, the latter more especially if the slightest signs were observed of eclampsia, when the urine should be frequently examined. Dr. Fairbairn then described the symptoms. He strongly advocated the need of establishing post-graduate courses for all those engaged in maternity work.

A discussion followed.

#### COMPETITIONS.

The National Baby Week Council (27A, Cavendish Square, W. 1) has arranged a series of attractive competitions which will appeal to amateurs interested in literature, art and music.

*Prize 1. Best Design for a Poster for Baby Week (double quarto).—First prize, £2 2s.; second prize*

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)