

The Midwife.

RECONSTRUCTION.

At the beginning of a new year it is natural that we should look forward into the future, and the immediate problem after the war is that indicated by the word "reconstruction"—a word so often on the lips of politicians in these days that it is familiar to all.

If reconstruction is to be effective the foundation upon which our social fabric is built up must be firm and sound. Where, in the general upheaval which has shaken the world to its foundations, shall we look for material out of which the national life may once again be reconstructed?

Sir George Newman, in the Annual Report of the Medical Department of the Board of Education, indicates the direction in which we must seek such material when he says:—

"The European War has given new emphasis to the importance of the child as a primary national asset. The future and strength of the nation unquestionably depend upon the vitality of the child, upon his health and development, and upon his education and equipment for citizenship. Great and far-reaching issues have their origin and some of their inspiration in him. Yet in a certain though narrow sense everything depends upon his physique. If that be sound, we have the rock upon which a nation and a race may be built; if that be impaired, we lack that foundation and build on the sand. It would be difficult to over-estimate the volume of national inefficiency, of unfitness and suffering, of unnecessary expenditure, and of industrial unrest and unemployability to which this country consents because of its relative failure to rear and to educate a healthy, virile, and well-equipped race of children and young people. There is no investment comparable to this, no national economy so fundamental; there is also no waste so irretrievable as that of a nation which is careless of its rising generation. And the goal is not an industrial machine, a technical workman, a "hand," available merely for the increase of material output and the acquisition of a wage at the earliest possible moment, but a human personality, well grown and ready in body and mind, able to work, able to play, a good citizen, the healthy parent of a future generation. If these things be true, and I believe they are, no Reconstruction of the State can wisely ignore the claims of the child."

That being so, the office of the midwife, who, in so large a number of births, is responsible for the wise management of the mother at the birth of the child, upon which its future health depends so largely, cannot be too highly esteemed; no pains can be too great to ensure that her education shall be adequate and thorough to fit her for her great responsibilities. In an increasing degree the ante-natal care of the mother also devolves upon the midwife, as well as the post-natal supervision of the health of mother and infant.

There is every indication, therefore, that the education of the midwife should be broadened and her outlook enlarged, so that the work may increasingly attract women whose education and personality fit them for the honourable and supremely important task with which midwives are entrusted by the State. In the past the work of midwives has been most miserably paid, and their education for their responsible work insufficient. Their office has in consequence been looked down upon, whereas it is really one of the most honourable, and, under proper conditions, one of the happiest and satisfying that a woman can adopt.

IF BABY COULD TALK.

If baby could talk one of the first requests would be for a Treasure Cot.

The difference in baby's comfort when tucked up and free from all possible draughts or discomfort in a dainty Treasure Cot is so great that every mother who can possibly manage it should get one. They are so very inexpensive, and inspection (without any pressure to buy) is cordially invited at the Treasure Cot Showrooms, 124, Victoria Street, London (almost opposite Victoria Station).

HALIFAX MATERNITY HOME.

The Halifax and District Maternity Home, affiliated with the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute, has established a Maternity Home, and so given the lead to similar associations in Yorkshire. Just now there is special need for such homes because of the shortage of medical practitioners, but there are always cases which require special care and attention and cannot be properly treated in their own homes.

WAR BONUS FOR MATERNITY NURSES.

The eight maternity nurses in the Derry Union applied to the Board of Guardians recently for an additional war bonus to the £5 they received last year. It was decided to grant them £7 each.

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