

## The Midwife.

### THE QUEEN VISITS QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S HOSPITAL.

The Queen gave much pleasure by her visit to Queen Charlotte's Hospital, Marylebone Road, W. last week. Her Majesty was received by the Chairman, Major Sir Samuel Scott, M.P., and members of the Committee and Ladies' Association.

The Queen visited all the wards, a very considerate action, for naturally all the mothers were keenly desirous that their own ward should be so honoured, and spoke to the wife of a French soldier, reported missing, in her own language. She also noticed a cot named "Alastair," after the little son of Princess Arthur of Connaught. As our readers know, her Royal Highness has not only taken an active interest in the hospital, but has worked in the wards, and so has a first-hand knowledge of the work of the institution and its value to the mothers whom it assists.

A detail which did not escape her Majesty's keen vision was the shape of the babies' ears, all of which, she said, seemed remarkably flat. Comparatively few people realise what a beautiful thing a well-shaped, well-placed ear is, or how ugly a misshapen one may be.

The hospital is at present hoping to extend its borders. We know that the plans for this extension were ready before the war. It includes a new out-patient department, dining room, staff kitchen, and other necessary extensions, and we hope that these may now become a reality, and that the Secretary, Mr. Arthur Watts, may at last see the fruition of his work in this direction. A guard of honour was formed by the Sisters of the hospital, and her Majesty spoke individually to those who were wearing war decorations.

### GUARDING THE PORTALS OF LIFE.

The war has taught us, as never before, the importance of conserving every life in the Empire. We also have learnt, on the authority of the late Lord Rhondda that 1,000 infant lives are sacrificed weekly in the United Kingdom from preventable causes. There are many women who, during the last four strenuous years, have learnt the joy of service, and who now, with demobilization, have come to the parting of the ways, and must determine whether they shall resume the life of pleasure and ease which they led before the war, or whether they shall claim, and qualify for, a place amongst the world's workers.

To those who decide in favour of the latter course, the opportunity of useful social service offered by the life of a midwife may well appeal. It is always satisfactory to have a share in the

beginning of things, and, to the midwife who loves her work, and realises its importance, one of its great attractions is that it is her province and privilege to stand at the threshold of life, guarding its portals, acting as counsellor and friend to the expectant mother, at a time when the counsel and skilled assistance of a wise and sympathetic woman are of peculiar value, and are almost invariably greatly appreciated; and guiding mother and child through the all important period of ten days following the birth of the child. During these days, as well as in the months preceding them, the foundations of the child's life are laid, and as the foundation, so will the superstructure be. If the former is weak, the latter will be fragile, to the detriment of the individual, and the loss of the community. To women who have the protective instinct—and they comprise the greater number of their sex—what more satisfying life can there be than one which enables them to safeguard the lives of mother and child, so that instead of the wrecks who now fill the wards of our women's hospitals we shall have a race of healthy mothers to whom motherhood is joy, instead of bringing in its train ills which make life a continual burden and weariness. Let it be thoroughly understood that the life of a midwife, even under equitable conditions of work and pay, can never be an easy one, and that at present these are too often neither one nor the other. Indications, however, are not wanting that they will be improved in the near future. But the work, though hard, is satisfying, because of its humanitarian interest, and the opportunities it affords for social service; and, further, because of its scientific interest. To the midwife is entrusted the responsibility of diagnosis. If she is wrong the consequence may be that two lives are imperilled, and the sense of her responsibility stimulates, and interests her in a way which the carrying out of orders can never do.

To those, then, who do not shirk responsibility or shun hard work we commend the career of a midwife as affording scope for the development of their highest faculties.

### FREE MEALS FOR NURSING MOTHERS.

The Maternity and Child Welfare Committee of the Wandsworth Borough Council are anxious that arrangements shall be made for the provision of food for expectant and nursing mothers, and for children under five years of age, through the various Infant Welfare Centres in the Borough. The food is to be provided by and consumed at the national kitchens or approved catering establishments, and the meals will be paid for by the Maternity and Child Welfare Committee at the rate of 1s. per meal for adults, and 6d. per meal for children.

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