

The Midwife.

QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S HOSPITAL.

SERIOUS FINANCIAL POSITION.

The Annual Meeting of the Committee of Management of Queen Charlotte's Hospital took place in the Board Room of the hospital on the 29th ult, the Chairman, Major Sir Samuel Scott, Bart., presiding.

He said that the number of patients showed a considerable increase during the past year. This increase he attributed chiefly to the lack of housing accommodation, a number of the applicants who sought the hospital benefit would ordinarily have been quite well off in their own homes. There had also been an increase in abnormal and serious emergency cases, which had been sent from all quarters, both in London and in the country, and many were in a moribund condition on admission. As a result, the death rate had been higher, and there had been in all twenty maternal deaths. Up to the present time the wives of soldiers and sailors had been treated, both as in and out-patients, free of cost, and without the usual letters. The Committee regretted that they had come to the conclusion that for financial reasons, this practice must now cease.

The overcrowding of the wards was causing the authorities great anxiety. The accommodation of the hospital provided for 71 beds, and extra emergency cases had at times brought up the number to 80. It was not possible to send on these cases elsewhere, as they always arrived at the last minute. A certain number of cases had been sent on to the St. Pancras and the Marylebone Infirmarys. The subscribers who sent patients with letters objected strongly to this procedure.

The overcrowding could only be dealt with by enlarging the hospital. The scheme for this work before the war was estimated at from £9,000 to £10,000 pounds, the same work would now cost £50,000. At present there was not the money to carry it out.

Many improvements ought to be effected in the wards, and the electrical department should be brought up-to-date. In fact the hospital suffered from old age.

Expenditure continued to rise on all sides. Every effort was made to keep it down, but it was found to be impossible.

It was estimated that to bring the hospital up-to-date, the sum of from £30,000 to £100,000 pounds was required, in addition to the deficit already existing of £11,000.

Queen Charlotte's Hospital was not alone in this condition of affairs. He could not think complacently of the future of hospitals. A Government grant must be given. In the past they had been supported by private individuals,

and the largest subscribers had been those who were hardest hit by the war. He did not see how it was possible for them to continue on the voluntary basis.

The position of the Training School was satisfactory. The entrances were larger than those of previous years. At present there was a long waiting list which was very satisfactory, and showed the high repute in which it stood.

After the usual votes of thanks, duly seconded and proposed, the meeting terminated.

POST GRADUATE COURSE FOR MIDWIVES.

The eighth annual Post Graduate Course will be held at the General Lying-in Hospital, York Road, Lambeth, from June 21st to June 25th, inclusive. Lectures and clinics will be held.

Full particulars and programme can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary for the Post Graduate week. Further announcements will be made later. Fee for the course 6s.

INFANT'S DEATH FROM INSECT'S STING.

An infant, six weeks old, in the Strood (Kent) Infirmary, died in convulsions thirty hours after being stung on the left cheek by an unknown insect.

The nurse in charge of the ward told the Coroner at the subsequent inquest that she caught the insect, which had bronzed variegated wings, and threw it out of the window, and did not notice till afterwards that the child had been stung. This was unfortunate, as presumably the first thing she would have done, as a trained nurse, had she realised the baby had been stung, would have been carefully to preserve the insect which inflicted the wound for medical inspection.

The Coroner, who said that he had never met with a similar case, suggested that the insect might have been imported from abroad in a bale of goods.

BILL TO AMEND THE BASTARDY LAWS.

All nurses and midwives should acquaint themselves with the provisions of the Bill introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Neville Chamberlain to amend the Bastardy Laws. The Bill proposes to legitimise children whose parents have afterwards married, it requires the mother to divulge the paternity of the child when registering it, and makes the maximum order for maintenance which may be made against the father 40s., instead of 5s. Every illegitimate child is to be a ward of the local Juvenile Court.

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