

## HOUSE OF SAINT ULTAN.

### INFANTS' HOSPITAL, DUBLIN.

Just below Charlemont Bridge, which is the boundary line between prosperity and adversity, No. 37, Charlemont Street stands back from the noise of tram and traffic.

There is an inscription on it in Irish which interpreted in English means House of Holy Ultan. Ultan was the holy man of Cied Breecain who lived in the seventh century when plague, pestilence and famine were in full sway, and when the mothers brought their babies and young children and put them under his care. But as one looks around the surroundings of this Infants' Hospital, one wonders whether things are much improved, and whether the results of present day science and charities—the housing “of our heroes,” and health administration, are things “yet to come.” It is quite alarming to learn that Dublin's infant mortality is the highest in the world (164 per 1,000), and its pauper percentage greater than any other city in Ireland. With this sad record imprinted on their minds and hearts, a band of brave women and lady doctors started this Infants' Hospital—the first in Ireland—having followed the initiative and lines of the “Manchester Baby Hospital.”

Their object was to try to save young babies from their birth up to one year old. Consequently they interfere with neither maternities, crèches, nor yet children's hospitals. Their search in a poor part resulted in their finding a deserted house which fifteen years' previously had been used as a laundry and servants' training school, but which at one time was said to be Lord Charlemont's country mansion.

This derelict building was bought by one of the benevolent band of women and rented at a nominal sum. The debris was removed by the City Corporation, the walls were distempered, the brass handles were polished, and in May, 1919, the first baby was received. There are ten babies in the hospital now, in ten improvised little cots of various designs. There is a “milk room,” where the milk is tested and bottles kept clean, and the special foods prepared, and there is an out-patients' room. But there is no room for luxury or show; no frustrations or demonstrations for the doctor's visit. There are a matron and five nurses for the service of these ten babes, making six devoted servants to these little sick tyrants. The matron, Miss Dougan, was trained in Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital under Miss Haughton, and though experienced in other branches, she went to the Manchester Baby Hospital to acquire full knowledge in this special work for which she is ideal; for all the training in the world could not give her the qualities and the real love she possesses for these sad babes. Aye—such wee, sickly, ill-nourished mortals, born to parents unable and incapable of giving them the scientific care they require, though when

possible they are asked to contribute for their keep; sometimes as much as ten shillings a week has been contributed.

The nurses consist of probationers or of nurses who come for a course of three months' training in this particular branch. The funds have been raised by contributions from the lady doctors and by members of the committee; an Amusements Committee raises money through whist drives, concerts, plays, festivities and jumble sales. The Irish Public Health Council, through Dr. Coey Bigger, has given them, on the grounds of the child welfare scheme, a recoupment grant on current expenses. Queen Alexandra has written to, and was the generous donor of £50. Lord Iveagh not only gave £100, but the “Guinness babies” pay 5s. a day, which is the average cost.

The medical Committee consists of Dr. A. Barry, M.C.P.I., Dr. K. Lynn, F.R.C.S.I., Dr. K. Maguire, M.D., Dr. E. Tennant, M.D., and Dr. E. Webb, M.D., O.B.E. (lecturer for St. John's Ambulance).

These ladies seem to prefer to undertake the very worst cases, for out of 53 entries, 23 deaths are recorded in the first year. There is a tiny little mortuary with a white table and *Prie Dieu* to soften the sorrow of the mothers; beautifully embroidered linen sheets, and a picture of Christ with a dead babe in his arms, all gifts from loving and sympathetic hearts for those poor parents, whose burden is frequently so great and their paths so thorny in the struggle of life. How great must their joy be when they hear the matron's coo to their little ones, and see the weest of mortals respond to her voice; and when the day comes and the nurse proudly puts back a clean healthy baby into its mother's arm, instead of “light-weight” that was put in hers! “God bless you all; aye, doctors, matron, nurses, and kind ladies. Holy Ultan bless you all and increase your work.

EDLA WORTABET.

## OUTSIDE THE GATES.

The Countess of Selborne has been elected President of the National Council of Women of Great Britain and Ireland. She is a daughter of the third Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., and is a keen politician and strong Churchwoman. We hope the exceedingly liberal administration of the National Council under our recent President, Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, will continue. It has made for progress.

The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship has arranged a course of seven lectures on “The Economic Independence of Women in the Home and in the Labour Market,” to be given at the Women's Institute, 92, Victoria Street, S.W., at 5.30 p.m., beginning on October 26th. Apply for information to the Secretary, Evelyn House, 62, Oxford Street, London, W. 1.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)