

MATERNITY CASES IN FEVER HOSPITAL.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTRY OF HEALTH.

The Medical Correspondent of the *Times* writes in that journal:—

"Doctors throughout the country naturally hesitated to believe that the Ministry of Health had authorised the setting up of a maternity hospital in a fever hospital. They are still hesitating; but the Willesden Urban District Council has now categorically stated that:—

"'Pavilion "B" which is separate from all other pavilions of the municipal hospital, was altered in 1917-18 for the reception of maternity cases with the knowledge and approval of the Ministry of Health, half the cost of the alterations being paid by the Ministry.'

"It is added that 1,089 women have been admitted to the hospital without a case of any of the common infectious diseases having been contracted in this pavilion.

"The British Medical Association has rightly taken this matter up and has addressed a letter, as already announced in *The Times*, to the Ministry of Health asking that its position in regard to the Willesden Hospital may be made clear. So far there is no mention of any reply. Meanwhile, the Willesden doctors will meet again next Tuesday (January 17th) to discuss the matter.

"The issue, as the *British Medical Journal* points out, is national. It affects every doctor and every patient in the land. The Ministry of Health must therefore explain quite clearly where it stands. Does it, in fact, approve of these excursions into State Socialism or does it not? Is it, in fact, opposed to a State Medical Service or is it not?

"Further, does it really believe that the placing of maternity cases even near a fever hospital is wise or safe? There may have been no casualty as yet; but, as the *British Medical Journal* says, this is 'rather like an argument for building on the site of an ammunition dump because there has been no explosion there hitherto.'

"Every doctor will endorse that statement. The medical profession is not composed of men who oppose Medical Socialism because it may take away their patients. It is composed of honourable, self-sacrificing members of a learned and ancient profession—as every man who has dealt with doctors knows well."

POOR LITTLE MOTHER.

Southwark Board of Guardians last week decided to protest strongly against the action of the authorities at the General Lying-in Hospital, York Road, in transferring a dying girl from their hospital to the Guardians' institution at Newington. The patient was a married girl, age seventeen, who gave birth to a child two hours after her removal to the Guardians' institution, and died the following day. In a second case, another

woman was removed late on a Sunday night suffering from pneumonia.

Mr. Payne said the action of the hospital authorities was inhuman to the highest degree. It was a public scandal, and the Board should refuse to support the hospital and stop the annual subscription to the funds.

The chairman and the vice-chairman, who are governors of the hospital, undertook to attend the next meeting of the hospital Board with a view to obtaining a full explanation.

"THE THRESHOLD OF MOTHERHOOD."

"The Threshold of Motherhood," by R. Douglas Howat, L.R.C.P. (Edin.), L.R.C.S. (Edin.), L.R.F.P.P.S. (Glas.), is a handbook for the pregnant woman, concerning which the author says in his preface that "there are many excellent textbooks of midwifery for students, doctors and nurses, but few, if any, exist for the exclusive use of the most important person—the patient."

"The average pregnant woman is surprisingly ignorant concerning the circumstances attending her present and future state. An attempt has been made to explain the various phenomena which occur during the successive stages of a normal pregnancy and those functional disturbances which are likely to occur. It has been the writer's object to avoid all unnecessary technicalities, and any such terms which have been thought necessary to introduce for clearness of description are fully explained in the text."

The author further points out "the whole subject of midwifery may be summed up in two words—cleanliness and common sense; and these should be the watchwords of every expectant mother."

The book is published by Messrs. Maclehose, Jackson & Co., 73, West George Street, Glasgow, price 3s. 6d.

"DU CHOIX D'UNE NOURRICE."

A recent issue of the *Paris Médical* contains an account of the early nourishment of the little King of Rome in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The story (says the *Lancet*) is extracted by Dr. G. Schreiber from the writings of a colleague named Maigne, entitled "Du Choix d'une Nourrice," and published in 1836. His Majesty's nurse was selected from among 1,200 candidates. The final selection was made by a committee of six court physicians and surgeons, and the choice fell upon a "superb woman of 23 years," whose milk was four and a half months old when she began to nurse the king, and it is recorded that it was very abundant. No restraint was put upon the royal appetite, and Napoleon François Charles Joseph took the breast on occasion as often as 15 times in a night. In those days it was usual to put a child to the breast as often as he or she was thirsty, and babies were fed as often as 40 times or more in the 24 hours. The young Napoleon was not weaned until the age of 14 months and 13 days, at which age he had 14 teeth.

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