

The Midwife.

MAISON MATERNELLE DE LA MARNE.

The opening of the Friends' Memorial Hospital at Châlons-sur-Marne has been an interesting occasion. Founded in 1914 as a maternity hospital for refugees and carried on under the Friends' Relief Committee all through the war in a wing of the town workhouse, evacuated in 1918 for six months on the approach of the enemy, it made its third and last house moving on May 13th, this time into the beautiful and commodious home which has been built for it by English and American Friends. (The first baby was born in the new labour ward at 10 a.m.)

First came the unveiling of the memorial tablet—the wording of which is:—“Memorial Hospital of the Mission des Amis, opened June 17th, 1922; dedicated to international friendship; presented to the people of France by English and American Friends (Quakers) and their co-workers, who, during the agony of the world-war and the years that followed, founded and maintained the Châlons La Maison Maternelle de la Marne ‘A little child shall lead them,’ Is. xi, 6.” Then the hospital was open for inspection, and very many enthusiastic and interesting comments were overheard by the staff, especially from a group of French doctors, one of whom considered that the labour ward was even more wonderful than that of Angers, which is supposed to be the finest in France.

Very many warm and enthusiastic speeches were made, one speaker declaring that he thought this would prove an historic day for France, as the example of the right way of caring for infancy and childbirth would be followed throughout the country.

The staff is thoroughly international, and the Conseil d'Administration which has taken over the work is enthusiastic over the excellent results, both professional and general, of this combined service for the French people, of English, French, and American nurses and aides.

The Prefet of the Marne and the President of the Conseil d'Administration (on which an English Nurse midwife retains a place) gave the warmest thanks of the French Government and the people of the Marne to the English and American Friends, both for their relief work in war time and this crowning gift, the permanent memorial of it.

Mr. T. E. Harvey, who replied for the Friends, spoke of the Society of Friends being a pacifist Christian Society, who, because of its ideals, tried to help the suffering people not only of France but of Central Europe; he said that those who had worked in France had seen much of generosity and nobility among the peasants, and had learned to love and to believe in them; and he believed that the spirit of liberty and brotherhood would bring that country to even greater heights than it had hitherto held.

NURSE-MIDWIVES.

What is a Nurse-Midwife? Usually a woman who fulfils the requirement of the State as to her midwifery qualification; indeed, any woman who is not certified under the Midwives Act, 1902, who takes or uses the title of midwife is liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding £5. The term “Nurse” in this connection, tacked on to the State qualification of “certified midwife” has no definite meaning, but in the nursing world is recognised to imply that the woman has gained an elementary insight into nursing methods in the homes of the poor, and elsewhere, under the aegis of a County Nursing Association under lay control.

The correct combination is that of a Registered Nurse and a Certified Midwife, and it is quite unethical to tack on to a State qualification one which does not conform to the requirements laid down by the State. We hope that the Central Midwives Board will express its disapproval, for it is as derogatory to the status of the “certified midwife” to be associated with a quack nurse, as it would be for members of the medical profession to be associated with unqualified persons, when the thunders of the General Medical Council would be let loose, and the offender would be lucky if he were not removed from the Medical Register for “infamous conduct in a professional respect.”

Registered Nurses and Certified Midwives must protect the honour of their cloth now that they have legal status.

THE INTERNATIONAL BIRTH CONTROL CONFERENCE.

The Fifth International Neo-Malthusian and Birth Control Conference, organised by the Malthusian League, will be held in the Kingsway Hall, Kingsway, W.C., from July 11th—14th inclusive. The President of the League, and the Acting-President of the Conference, is Mr. C. V. Drysdale, O.B.E., D.Sc.(Lond), F.R.S.E.

An interesting list of speakers is announced. On the evening of Tuesday, July 11th, there will be a reception of foreign delegates by Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Wells; on the evening of Wednesday, July 12th, a public dinner to celebrate the centenary of birth control propaganda by Francis Place; and on the evening of Thursday, July 13th, a public meeting in the large Kingsway Hall, when Mr. H. G. Wells will preside. On Saturday, July 15th, there will be an automobile excursion to Dorking to visit the birthplace of the Rev. T. R. Malthus, author of the famous Essay on the Principle of Population.

Application for members' tickets for the Conference, including a reserved seat for the public meeting on July 13th (price 10s.) should be made, as soon as possible, to the Hon. Secretary, Mrs. B. I. Drysdale, 124, Victoria Street, S.W.1.

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