

# The Midwife.

## THE FUTURE OF HOSPITALS.

Mr. H. J. Waring, M.S. (Lond.), F.R.C.S. (Eng.), Surgeon to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, who delivered the Annual Oration (1922) before the Medical Society of London, took for his subject "Some Suggestions on the Future of Hospitals," which was printed in full in the *Lancet*. He states that:—

"It is now generally admitted that the medical treatment of patients in hospitals should be of the same high level or standard for all, rich or poor, and that in the past it has been difficult or often impossible for the opulent, and especially the middle classes, to obtain that standard of prompt attention and treatment which is open to the necessitous poor."

He is of opinion that accommodation for the middle classes who can pay for ordinary hospital accommodation and maintenance, and moderate fees for treatment, and for the rich upper classes who can pay for better accommodation and maintenance and ordinary fees for treatment, and putting at their disposal the benefits of certain special departments of a general hospital, such as pathology, electro-therapeutics, &c., can only be satisfactorily carried out by building a new department or hospital block in the grounds of the charitable hospital or on land immediately adjacent, and in direct connection with the parent institution.

He has had prepared the plans of such a charitable hospital, or public medical institution, which, in his opinion, would provide hospital requirements for all classes of the community.

Of special interest are Mr. Waring's remarks as to the provision of gynaecological and maternity wards, to which one floor is devoted. He writes:—

"There is a great lack in this country of hospital accommodation for upper-class maternity cases. This plan provides accommodation for seven patients, one room having two beds. A labour theatre, a waiting room, and a lavatory containing a bath for each baby are also provided. On the other side is accommodation for gynaecological patients, with clinical laboratory, kitchen, and nurses' room. . . .

"The advantages provided by the establishment of a paying department of the kind mentioned would, I think, be most appreciated in connection with maternity and surgery. There is a lamentable lack of satisfactory accommodation for maternity patients in this country; I am informed that at present the mortality in connection with maternity is little different from that which obtained in the pre-aseptic days. This is a very serious reflection on our methods. Governmental and departmental measures appear to be much to blame for our very limited and inferior accommodation in this respect;

our Government seems to be much more interested in, and devotes more time and money to the consideration of, the survival and preservation of the unfit, than that of the fit; in other words, the 10 per cent. of the population which represents the unfit receive almost everything, and the 90 per cent. of potentially fit practically nothing. A short time ago I had occasion to inspect a public mental hospital recently built and equipped at the public expense; as regards arrangement and equipment, I do not think any public hospital for medical, surgical, or obstetrical patients in this country can favourably compare with this particular hospital.

### MATERNITY ACCOMMODATION.

Most of our charity general hospitals, and especially those which have medical schools attached, are lamentably deficient in accommodation for maternity patients. The fact that medical students are still expected to learn practical obstetrics by attending women in their confinements at their homes, helps, I think, to perpetuate what ought to be an obsolete system. If our Ministry of Health would recognise this fact and provide properly equipped maternity homes with well-trained personnel, they would confer on the community at large a much greater benefit than by continually appointing special departments to investigate or deal with one particular disease."

## REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS.

The Registrar-General announces that, with the consent of the Minister of Health, he has revoked the regulation which has hitherto prohibited the registration of a birth after the lapse of seven years.

Application for late registration of birth may therefore, now be made without any limit of time. Applicants are, however, reminded that the Registrar-General will be unable to authorise registration unless sufficient evidence is produced to satisfy him as to the correctness of the particulars to be registered. It should also be pointed out that the change in no way affects the liability of parents and other qualified informants to register a birth within forty-two days of its occurrence on pain of a penalty of 40s.

Application for late registration should in all cases be made to the local Registrar of Births and Deaths. A statutory fee of 10s. is payable.

### WORD FOR THE WEEK.

"The highest loyalty to which men can subject themselves is loyalty to truth, no matter how discouraging the truth may be. But if the truth may blaze the way to our highest aspirations, how early should we seize it and spread it."

DR. JOHN R. HAYNES.

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