

The Midwife.

PLUNKET WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Miss Jentie Paterson's "Truby King" propaganda is going strong in South Africa.

After lecturing and working for five weeks in and around Cape Town, Miss J. B. N. Paterson proceeded to Johannesburg and the Rand. During the month's visit she was the guest of Mrs. J. R. Thurlow.

Mrs. Thurlow, as Nurse Griffiths, received her training under Miss Payne in the Wellington Hospital, and eventually was promoted to a Sister's post. Some time later she went to South Africa to pursue her nursing duties and became Sister and finally Matron of the Potschefstroom Hospital. Later she revisited New Zealand, but decided to return to South Africa to nurse, and there she eventually married and settled down.

Being a nurse, a New Zealander, and a strong believer in Plunket work, Miss Paterson could not have had a more restful and helpful "home" to stay in, as she writes: "I was spoiled and taken care of, and motored to and from all meetings either by Mr. or Mrs. Thurlow."

On the Rand, as in the Cape Province, Nurses were quick to see all that Plunket training implied (one has already been sent to train at the London Centre), and parents all it meant for their children, especially those whom Miss Paterson found time to advise. Breast milk was restored to a mother whose baby of 3½ months had been eight weeks weaned. Also to the mother of a 4 lb. premature, six weeks of age and five weeks weaned, who was going steadily downhill on sweetened condensed milk, with the result that she began to gain steadily within three days of the change back to human milk. At first a friend acted as foster-mother and also allowed her strong baby to stimulate the breasts of the premature's mother, who was quite able to supply all the nourishment necessary before the end of four weeks. The babe, when first seen, weighed 4 lbs., at the end of four weeks 5 lbs. 12½ ozs. Strict attention having also been paid to regulating the room and cradle heat, the infant's daily temperature never varied more than from 97°.4-98°.8. Such an object lesson has not been lost in Johannesburg—especially as the parents belong to the educated class.

A large drawing-room meeting was held in Mrs. Norman Anstey's house, to give Johannesburg ladies an opportunity of hearing about New Zealand methods. Dolls, clothes, cradle, and charts were shown, and the audience was keenly interested—so much so that afterwards many crowded round the lecturer to ask personal questions.

It is interesting to note that Mrs. Anstey first became interested in Dr. Truby King's work while touring New Zealand last year. She was so impressed with the results, and the grip the work

had, even on the men of the community, that she offered her house to the Child Welfare Society whenever she heard a "Truby King Nurse" was en route for the Rand.

LESSONS ON THE CARE OF INFANTS.

A very useful booklet for use in schools, having the above title, by Mrs. Watson, is published by Messrs. Longman, Green & Co., price 6d. It has a preface by Mr. Benjamin Broadbent, C.B.E., LL.D., M.A., J.P., ex-Mayor of Huddersfield, who has done so much to reduce infant mortality. Mr. Broadbent deplors the fact that the maternal instinct is ignored in girls' schools. He writes:—

"I suggest that this instinct of motherhood in girls, with all its attendant qualities, should be made the basis of education for them. It looks simple enough. We try to make a man, with all his virtues, out of the boy; surely we ought to try to make a woman, with all her graces, out of the girl. A girl's unconscious love of babyhood is educationally a mine of ungoten gold; such wealth of possibility we ought to use as her most valuable dowry. Why not use as an instrument of the utmost worth, the protective tenderness which longs to lavish itself upon some helpless object—that desire which exhibits itself so plainly in girls to help all weak and tender things? Have we not overlooked the fact that the mothering instinct in girls takes the place of the fighting instinct in boys? It should never be forgotten at any period of the school-life of girls that they are really girls. Surely the best way to bring out the best of girls is to take advantage of all the aptitudes and felicities of girlhood and womanhood; let these act and re-act each upon the other, the product will be the perfect and complete development of all that is best in both teachers and taught."

THE INFANT MORTALITY RATE.

It is interesting to learn from the Registrar-General's Statistical Review of England and Wales for 1922 that the deaths of infants under a year old (60,121) were equal to a rate of 77 per 1,000, which is the lowest rate ever recorded in this country. On the other hand, births during 1922 were 780,124, or 69,690 fewer than in 1921, and worked out at the rate of 20.4 per 1,000 persons living, the lowest rate recorded, except in the war years 1917, 1918, and 1919.

A QUESTION OF NATIONAL EXISTENCE.

"The saving of infant life is no longer a question of charity, it is no longer a question of social reform, it is no longer a question of economic organisation, or even a question of Man-power. It is to-day a question of national existence."—*Dr. Truby King.*

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