

spiritually and any force hostile to this is an evil which should not exist. If it does exist it must be cured and the response from our patients is whole-hearted and encouraging. They realise that prevention should be aimed at—not cure.

Again the number of In-patients has increased and we daily realise that our work would have been crippled indeed without the essential extension, for practically, even with the 21 extra beds, we have none to spare, but the problem of airing and cleaning is lightened and the anxiety of overcrowding is a thing of the dark ages.

During 1927, 1,241 mothers have been delivered in the Home—an increase of 22 patients. Every mother was safely delivered and with the exception of one poor soul, all returned in health to their families.

The babies have done splendidly and the mothers with very few exceptions, have fed them entirely. This is a glorious record and has required much effort both on the part of the mothers and the nurses, and the never failing encouragement of Dr. Oxley, who enthuses us all, and nothing great was ever gained without enthusiasm.

A NOTE ON ULTRA-VIOLET RADIATION IN THE TREATMENT OF PEMPHIGUS NEONATORUM.

The following interesting note on the above subject, by Dr. A. W. Gregorson, F.R.F.P.S., Glasgow, Deputy Superintendent, North Middlesex Hospital, Edmonton, is published in the *Lancet* of April 7th:—

Pemphigus neonatorum may be simple or may be serious, and is one of the conditions which have a tendency to linger a long time, may be for years, in connection with a maternity department. There may be a period of apparent immunity extending over months, and no case occur; then, without any obvious cause, a new outbreak takes place.

The degree of severity varies considerably; in some cases one single bleb, in other cases hand and foot are invaded. It is rare one finds the disease to end fatally. Recovery is the rule, even in patients showing extensive areas of infection. Sometimes one has observed the initial blister to occur in the region of a nerve, particularly on the upper arm, on the hand and foot. Consequently, one is prompted to ask if the condition is in the nature of a toxic neuritis, resembling herpes zoster; or is it an infection during labour; or is it brought to the bedside by the nurse-midwife, or is it air-borne?

From personal observation I have formed the opinion that pemphigus neonatorum is a toxic neuritis and constitutional in origin. The disease is found most commonly in the infants of women who are in a low state of health at the time of confinement. The blebs first make their appearance in the region of the musculo-spiral and posterior tibial nerves, sometimes after the infant's first bath. In all cases observed the umbilical cord has been beyond suspicion. Considerable investigations have been made at this hospital to determine whether the nurse-midwife has been the medium of infection, and no evidence has been found that she is.

As regards treatment, it has been found that the most successful procedure is to keep the infant dry and to avoid bathing in any form. The necessary toilet is carried out with oil and dryness maintained over the whole body. Bathing spreads the disease. Ointments, lotions, powders in various combinations have been tried successively without any very encouraging results. A series of cases have been treated by ultra-violet radiation with great success. The blebs soon dry and disappear, and the infant improves in general condition. The mercury-vapour lamp was used twice weekly, at a distance of two feet for three minutes, increasing by one minute to six minutes.

The main purpose of this short note is to recommend this form of treatment as being efficient, easy of application, cutting short the disease, and invaluable in removing a source of anxiety to the mother.

Dr. J. S. Fairbairn, M.A., F.R.C.P., Obstetric Physician to St. Thomas's Hospital, formerly Lecturer to pupil-midwives

at the General Lying-in Hospital, and Examiner to the Central Midwives Board, in the fourth edition of his Text-Book for Midwives, states that:—

"There are two forms of pemphigus, the syphilitic, and the epidemic or septic; the latter is much the more serious of the two, and the one which is liable to run in epidemics."

Dr. Fairbairn also says that:—

"The most serious skin eruption is pemphigus though happily a very rare one. However, pemphigus in the new-born is very contagious and is very often carried by the midwife, so that epidemics may follow the practice of one woman. It is probably due to an infection through the umbilicus, though its exact origin is not clear at present. Blister-like blebs form on isolated spots of the body and suppurate or break into raw places, and the child rapidly becomes very ill and usually dies. In such cases the midwife should at once get advice, and should not attend to other infants in case she should be the means of spreading the disease. This disease is singled out for special mention in the C.M.B. Rules—in regard to the child (E.21 (5)) where it is laid down that medical advice must be obtained for 'serious skin eruptions, especially those marked by the formation of watery blisters.'"

It will be seen, therefore, that there is a sharp divergence of medical opinion as to the origin, infectivity, fatality, and communication of pemphigus. If the excellent results recorded by Dr. Gregorson of treatment by ultra-violet rays are maintained, and confirmed by other authorities, one more dreaded disease will be shorn of its terrors. In the meantime nurses and midwives should not relax one whit of the vigilance and precautions they have been taught to exercise in these cases.

LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION.

At the recent annual meeting of the Leicester and Leicestershire Midwives' Association, held at the Church House, St. Martin's, Leicester, Dr. Crosfield, who was in the chair and moved the adoption of the report, which was seconded by Dr. Millard, Medical Officer of Health, alluded to the illness of the President, Miss Pell Smith, whose kindly presence was much missed.

The Association has increased in numbers during the past year, and the attendances at the lectures have been well maintained.

Mrs. Tomlinson spoke on "The Romance of Nursing," and touched on different aspects of nursing in Africa, including Uganda and in Malay, not forgetting to mention the self-sacrificing work of nurses at home in the City and County of Leicester.

A vote of thanks to the speakers was moved by Dr. Porteous, seconded by Miss Embry. The doctor, in the course of his remarks, spoke of the increased sympathy between the doctor and the midwife, and spoke appreciatively of the midwife's work. Several friends of the Association were present, and the midwives attended in good numbers, making a total of seventy present. Five new members were enrolled.

A. PATEY, *Hon. Sec.*

A HANDSOME CHEQUE.

The Countess of Carlisle and the committee of the Ice Carnival have handed a cheque for £914 5s. 6d. to the secretary of the National Training School for District Midwives, being the amount of the proceeds from the Ice Carnival which took place at the Ice Club on March 19th.

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