

The Midwife.

THE CLAPHAM MATERNITY HOSPITAL.

Lady Dixon Kimber presided at the Annual Meeting (the fortieth) of the Clapham Maternity Hospital, Jeffreys Road, Clapham, on March 26th, and referred to it as a memorial to the unflagging zeal of its founder, Dr. Annie McCall.

Well we remember those early days. The St. John's Maternity Home in the Albert Bridge Road, Battersea, was then the larger institution, with some 13 or 14 beds for in-patients in single wards, and a flourishing out-patient department of between 700 and 800 cases. It had also a successful Training School for midwives, drawing its pupils for the most part from the ranks of trained nurses—Queen's Nurses, Guy's Nurses and others coming to be trained. The Home was founded and maintained by St. John's House, Norfolk Street, Strand, and formed a valuable training ground for its private nurses in midwifery and maternity nursing, but at the fees charged it could not be made self-supporting.

When the Clapham Maternity Hospital was founded by Dr. Annie McCall, with her friend and colleague, Miss Marion Ritchie as Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, the out-patient department was in a few years' time taken over by the Clapham Maternity Hospital, and the costly, though valuable, in-patients' department closed. A tuberculin dispensary, which is the joy of Dr. McCall's heart, is now located in part of the former Maternity Home. Year in, year out, for the last 40 years Dr. McCall and Miss Ritchie have carried on the good work. The present fine Maternity Hospital at Clapham is witness to the energy which has been put into it, and the success with which it has been crowned.

This year friends, subscribers and former pupils took leave, with much sorrow, of the Matron, Miss Chippendale, who, we regret to say, is resigning after over twenty years' service in that position, on account of ill health. The opportunity was taken to present her with a cheque for £100, in some recognition of her valuable services.

QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S MATERNITY HOSPITAL.

THE FIGHT AGAINST PUERPERAL FEVER.

Queen Charlotte's Maternity Hospital has now decided to purchase a site of five acres on the Goldhawk Road, near Ravenscourt Park Station in the Borough of Hammersmith. Building operations will commence at an early date on the first section of what it is hoped will ultimately be the largest maternity hospital in the Empire.

Mr. Edwin Stanley Hall, F.R.I.B.A., has been appointed Architect, and the first section of the work to be carried out will be that of a separate isolation block (with research facilities) for patients suffering from puerperal or childbed fever, the chief single cause of maternal mortality. This will be the first instance in this country where reception will be given on a large scale to cases of this fever, and where laboratory research and the training of post-graduate students and midwives can be based upon the study of such cases.

LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE MIDWIVES ASSOCIATION.

The Annual Meeting of the Leicester and Leicestershire Midwives' Association was held on Wednesday, March 6th, at the Church House, St. Martin's, Leicester. Dr. Mackintosh, chairman, moved the adoption of the report which was seconded by Dr. Coward, who both favourably commented upon it.

Several new members have been enrolled during the

year and the lectures held monthly have been much appreciated.

Mrs. Thomas spoke on "Hidden Treasures" pointing out to the Midwives the great opportunities they had in their peculiarly intimate contact with the young mothers.

The Lady Mayoress spoke a few words to the members.

A vote of thanks to the speakers was moved by the chairman seconded by Nurse Harris.

In spite of an abnormal amount of illness in the town several friends of the Association were present and the midwives attended in good numbers.

INVALUABLE EYESIGHT.

Lord Ashfield who will preside over the Festival Dinner for the Royal Westminster Ophthalmic Hospital on May 2nd, regards the work of this and similar hospitals as specially valuable. He points out that the demands of modern life require most of us to spend the greater portion of our day within doors, either in offices where clerical work inevitably imposes a certain strain upon the eye, or in factories where the motion of machinery or, it may be, the blazing light of a furnace subjects the eyes of the workers to a continual strain. Efforts are being made in many directions to alleviate such conditions as far as possible, but even if these efforts were entirely successful, there would still be an urgent need for the eye-hospitals. The work which they have already performed leaves no doubt that anyone who suffers from his eyes can receive at these hospitals the best treatment known to modern science to-day.

And surely a blind baby is the saddest sight in the world. Yet the eye-sight of many can be cured by prompt treatment.

THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST.

Some years ago, before "Child Welfare," and Anti-Natal Clinics were even thought of, I was taking my Midwifery Training in the East End of London. Incidentally I learnt of things other than midwifery, the East End is a wonderful school.

One night (why is it never the day?) I had to turn out to attend Mrs. Brown with her sixth child. On arrival I found the room, not as usual on these occasions, full of friendly neighbours, but more than full of the smell of onions! So much so, that my eyes in quite a short time were put out of action, and I had to ask Mrs. Brown if she had had onions for supper! "Oh! no, my dear," she replied "I peels for the factory." I then enquired if they were still in the room, and to my horror heard that they were under the bed! I got her permission to drag the sack of onions out on the landing while the confinement took place. My eyes again being of use I could not help noticing the number of "memorial cards" hung around the room. Mrs. Brown saw me looking at them, and said, it seemed to me with some pride, "Yes, I've buried four!" She seemed to think the "memorial cards" gave quite a nice finish to the room, and she told me what a nice gentleman the undertaker was who had presented them.

One child had managed to survive, she was then about seven years old. I do not know how she managed it, she must have been very tenacious of life.

The baby on arrival was a fine healthy looking child, but I could not help wondering how long it would be before it, too, turned into a "memorial card."

We have advanced considerably since these days, and mothers no longer talk with pride of the babies they have buried. I think, too, the output of memorial cards cannot be what it was in the "bad old days." A. M. H.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)