

The Midwife.

THE ASSOCIATION OF MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE CENTRES.

The Annual Report (1932) of the Association of Maternity and Child Welfare Centres, including the Babies' Homes' Department and the Infant Welfare Workers' Employment Bureau (Carnegie House, 117, Piccadilly, London, W.1), is a record of remarkably successful activities in a variety of directions, including the Federation of Babies' Clubs, which are affiliated to the Association. These are at present restricted to London, but it is hoped that before long London will not be the only district where this valuable branch of Welfare service is established. These clubs report that, in spite of a difficult year, the number of mothers availing themselves of the services of the clubs is steadily increasing, and the enthusiasm and support of the members is most gratifying.

Other branches of work are: The Infant Welfare Workers' Employment Bureau, in connection with which, of the 438 vacancies registered, 223 were for institutions such as Babies' and Children's Homes, Mothers' and Babies' Hostels, Holiday Homes, etc., and posts for Health Visitors, the supply of whom largely exceeds the present demand. Many who have recently trained have been obliged to go back to ordinary nursing. There were 215 private posts available, of which 100 were filled through the Bureau.

The Tired Mothers' Holiday Fund is a very useful and much appreciated branch of the Association's work.

DIRECTORY OF MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE CENTRES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

The Directory of Maternity and Child Welfare Centres in the United Kingdom, just published by the above Association (price 2s. 6d.), is a very valuable book of reference, not only for those who work directly in connection with these centres, but others, such as district nurses, who may be glad to make them known to mothers with whom their work brings them in contact.

The Directory shows how widespread are these useful institutions, for it contains over 3,400 addresses, at many of which a considerable number of sessions are held weekly, each attended by different groups of mothers and children. That the Centres have greatly widened their scope since they were first instituted is seen by the various subsidiary activities reported, which include medical consultations for expectant and other mothers, for infants and for toddlers, as well as special clinics for those needing dental care, artificial sunlight, orthopædic work or massage. Educational classes for mothers are held at over 800 Centres.

BRADLAUGH AND BIRTH CONTROL.

At a dinner to commemorate the birth of Charles Bradlaugh, Lord Horder, the eminent physician, proposed "The Memory of Charles Bradlaugh and his services in the cause of religious, political, and social reform." He said that Bradlaugh's handling of birth control issues left scarcely anything to add even after 50 years of frequent debate and added experience. By clear thinking and lucid expression Bradlaugh made great contributions to the subject. What had been done since then? The Manchester police in December, 1930, seized copies of a book called "Parenthood" with intent to prosecute the author and publisher. It was written by a competent London doctor, and the review which stated that the book should meet the need for a good practical handbook on birth control with reliable data was quite a fair critique on the publication. It was no use blaming the law for these things. The process

of the law made possible all legal anachronisms, given sufficient stupidity on the part of the citizens who actuated those processes.

What an unconscionable time the spirit of antagonism which faced birth control took in dying! Only three years ago no one could obtain any advice on contraception at any maternity centre or hospital in the country which was in part or wholly State-aided. After considerable pressure, and faced with the terrible problem of maternal mortality, which was still rising and was now over 3,000 a year, the Ministry of Health sanctioned the giving of such advice, but only sanctioned it in the case of women suffering from organic disease and where child-bearing was likely to endanger life. The dissemination of that knowledge to the industrial classes, which Bradlaugh rightly considered to be essential, was still denied, though that knowledge was open to the well-to-do and educated.

All around us can be noticed the result of indiscriminate breeding amongst the poorer classes. Midwives and Nurses should emulate the example of Lord Horder; speak a word in season in support of birth control whenever they have an opportunity.

MIDWIFERY WORK IN HANKOW.

A Nurses' Missionary League Member writes in *Nurses Near and Far*, from Hankow:—

"My special work at present is midwifery, and it is most interesting. It takes me into the people's houses, which has always appealed to me, in England as here. I find a dirty mud hut far more interesting than a white-tiled theatre! We go to a variety of homes. There are the mat sheds, where in winter there is no fire for the baby, or just a small charcoal fire that does not heat the room, and where there are gaps and holes in the matting. I remember one which did not have a door, though it had an entrance. One is conscious of eyes at every crack or hole, and where none is, as often as not several are made. It is common for the people inside to tell those outside not to pull the house to pieces! On the other hand, there are the houses where one finds an electric kettle waiting for one and the inhabitants wearing beautiful silk garments. The latter, however, does not imply great wealth in China, where silk is so abundant.

"The Union Hospital has recovered very quickly from the flood, unlike the country hospitals, which have been destroyed by Communists and bandits. The gardens in our compound have been a blaze of colour this year, possibly thanks to the flood! Of recent years a park has sprung up on one side of our compound, supposed to be modelled after Battersea Park! It has an artificial lake with pleasure boats, an open-air swimming pool, tennis courts, tea-houses, etc., and lately they have installed the wireless loud-speaker. On holidays, the park swarms with people, and the noise of rickshas and carriages on the main road to the park might be called terrific! It is an entirely new thing for the Chinese to appreciate this kind of recreation."

"GYNÆCOLOGY EXPLAINED TO NURSES."

We have received for review a copy of "Gynæcology Explained to Nurses," by Dorothy M. Dickinson, S.R.N., Certified Midwife, Sister, Gynæcological Ward and Theatre, Charing Cross Hospital; with a Foreword by T. Bright Banister, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P. (Lond.), F.R.C.S. (Edm.), published by Faber & Faber, Ltd., price 9s. 6d. net. As this work appears worthy of a studied review, space will be found for it in our next issue.

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