

# The Midwife.

Mrs. Stanley Baldwin has received an anonymous cheque of £2,000 towards the dinner which she is arranging at the Goldsmiths' Hall on Tuesday, May 8th, in aid of the Safer Motherhood Campaign.

The Duchess of York will receive purses at a garden party at St. James's Palace on Tuesday, July 3rd, in aid of the National Council for Maternity and Child Welfare.

Princess Marie Louise presided at the sixth annual meeting of the National Council of the Mother Saving Campaign in connection with Queen Charlotte's Maternity Hospital, which was held at the hospital, Marylebone Road, and paid a tribute to the work done during the past year.

Lady Ebbisham has been elected Chairman of the East End Maternity Hospital, Commercial Road, to succeed the late Dr. Owen Lancaster, who served the hospital well for many years.

## PROGRESS AT THE ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL.

Sir Hilton Young, Minister of Health, in congratulating the annual Court of Governors of the Royal Free Hospital, Gray's Inn Road, W.C.1, on the marvellous progress of the institution in recent years, noted with special satisfaction that the mortality in the maternity wards, 2.8 per 1,000, was the lowest in London and possibly in the whole country.

The subject of maternal mortality, he said, closely occupied the attention of the Ministry of Health at the present time. The general death rate of the country showed a steady and encouraging decrease, which was strong evidence of the continued improvement in the general health conditions of the nation, and the gratifying decrease in infant mortality was one of the proud achievements of our social health services.

In the past generation infant mortality had been reduced by a half, but the figure that had proved less tractable and had lagged behind in comparison with the general and infant rates of mortality was the maternity death rate. The last few years had seen a constant development of maternity health services, and undoubtedly in course of time such services would earn their reward in the realisation of the decrease they sought to bring about. In the battle that was being strenuously waged to reduce that rate the Royal Free Hospital was in the forefront.

Lord Riddell, in his presidential survey, recalled the developments at the hospital during the year. They had completed the nurses' home, with accommodation for 250, at a cost of about £150,000. They had opened two new wards for ear, nose, and throat cases, comprising 30 beds and an operating theatre, and they had increased the paying beds to 23, the charges for which would be reasonable.

The Albert Levy Wing of the Queen Mary Building had been brought into full operation, comprising an obstetric and gynaecological out-patients' department, electro-therapeutic and massage department, central kitchen fitted with every modern convenience, and a boiler house and heating installation. Patients' dietaries had been revised to bring them into accord with modern ideas, and, above all, the institution had treated on an average 1,000 patients a day, including 100 children in the Eastman Dental Clinic. The financing of these and other developments had been difficult. Since he became president in 1925 they had raised close on £600,000—no mean achievement—apart from cost of maintenance at £90,000 per annum.

## THE EAST END MATERNITY HOSPITAL.

Miss Margaret Anderson, Matron of the East End Maternity Hospital, contributes each year a model report of her department, in the Annual Report. We are not surprised to learn that:—

"Our Training School still prospers and we have done a good year's work as our C.M.B. passes demonstrate.

"44 Midwives were trained, besides Lectures given to other nurses; 14 nurses had District experience and 21 Monthly Nurses were trained.

"The teaching in this department is heavy but most interesting and progressive, and the nurses have worked diligently and are interested in this special branch of nursing; therefore we have been able to meet many of the demands for District Midwives.

"As we said before, our aim is to send our Midwives into the world with a trained eye to detect, a quiet capability to deal with emergencies, an aseptic conscience, a perfect knowledge of the Rules under which they work, and an understanding of social work, so that they may be adequately equipped to really help the mother."

## THE FRONTIER NURSING SERVICE, U.S.A.

Mrs. Mary Breckinridge, Volunteer Director of Field Work in the Frontier Nursing Service, Wendover, Kentucky, and Hon. Editor of its "Quarterly Bulletin," writes in the Winter Issue:—

"In the February issue of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING we read that 'The Quarterly Bulletin, the organ of the Frontier Nursing Service, U.S.A., is eagerly awaited in the editorial office of this Journal.' This is good news to us. This splendid old periodical has vigorously led every international advance in the modern nursing world, and we delight in the personal friendship of its editors."

We also delight in the friendship of one who has shown the splendid initiative, resource, courage and endurance of Mrs. Breckinridge in her self-imposed task of organising and providing trained nurse-midwives in rural areas in Kentucky and elsewhere where there is inadequate medical service, to give skilled care to women in childbirth, to give nursing care to the sick of both sexes and all ages, and many other activities.

Here is what Mrs. Breckinridge says of the recent winter in the fastnesses of the Kentucky mountains:—

"After a mild December and January we in the mountains shared the terrible weather of February and early March. In fact, we have had the worst blizzard we ever remember in here. The snow was so deep that the horses couldn't travel and the nurses went to their deliveries on foot, plowing through drifts up to their waists in places. It is rare that we cannot cross the rivers, even when they are in full 'tide,' as the men can usually get us over in little flat-bottom boats, but this time the tide was full of floating blocks of ice, as has happened only two or three times before in our memory, such ice as would capsize any small boat. As the rivers went down the snow melted and rains came and raised them again so that we have had tide after tide.

"We at Wendover stood out in the fields one day watching the swirling, swollen Middle Fork. Suddenly there shot into sight one of the little flat-bottom boats, guided by two men at stern and bow. Rolled up in a litter in the bottom of the boat lay a desperately wounded man—a gunshot case. They got him safely down to our hospital at Hyden."

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