PUERPERAL MORTALITY IN WORKHOUSES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I beg to forward the enclosed return of the Lying-in Ward of the Lambeth Infirmary for publication, as the question of hospital administration is now being much discussed. It will be noticed in that return that a very large proportion of the mothers are unmarried, very many of them pregnant with their first child, so that, as far as moral influences can depress the nervous system and lower the

gestation, these women appear to be specially selected for the invasion of septic influences; furthermore, many of them are in a starving condition on being admitted, and not a few are the subjects of syphilis. Notwithstanding all these adverse conditions, we find that Poor-law institutions—for the same results will, I believe, be found in other infirmaries besides this one—compare most favourably with the general lying-in hospitals. Several of these hospitals, started with the best and purest motives, have acquired a most unenviable name for the prevalence of pyæmia, puerperal fever, and allied diseases of childbirth.

Return showing the Number of Births in the Lying-in Ward of the Lambeth Infirmary, and the Number of Women Confined therein who Died in Childbirth, or from causes connected therewith, during the last Ten Years.

Years.	No. of Births.			Mothers Married.	Mothers Unmarried.	Twins or Multiple Births.	Deaths.						Remarks.
	Male.	Female.	Total.				Puerperal Fever.	Hæmorrhage.	Convulsions.	Puerperal Peritonitis.	All other Causes.	Total.	
1871	97	100	197	45	152	1	1	...	...	...	...	1	
1872	83	84	167	38	129	7	...	...	...	...	...	...	
1873	88	85	173	46	127	3	...	...	1	...	...	1	
1874	90	87	177	35	142	...	...	...	...	1	1 <i>a</i>	2	<i>a</i> Protracted labour.
1875	91	64	155	38	117	4	2	...	...	1	...	3	
1876	81	58	139	29	110	...	...	...	...	...	2 <i>b</i>	2	<i>b</i> Puerperal mania.
1877	106	89	195	47	148	3	...	...	...	...	1 <i>c</i>	1	<i>c</i> Pneumonia after labour.
1878	96	103	199	45	154	1	...	...	...	...	1 <i>d</i>	1	<i>d</i> Premature labour; pneumonia
1879	106	108	214	54	160	2	...	...	...	1	...	1	
1880	92	99	191	32	159	4	...	1	...	...	1 <i>e</i>	2	<i>e</i> Puerperal mania.
Totals ...	930	877	1807	409	1398	25	3	1	1	3	6	14	

For my part, I do not think the reason far to seek for the enormous difference between Poor-law lying-in hospitals and the voluntary lying-in hospitals. I feel satisfied that the divided responsibility caused by the existence of a medical staff of half a dozen physicians and surgeons cannot but militate much against sound administration, and the relegation of such details of hospital management as cleanliness, ventilation of the wards, &c., cannot but be fraught with disaster to the patients. I know from personal inspection of some general hospitals, that were a workhouse infirmary found by one of the Local Government Board inspectors in as dirty and slovenly a condition as some hospitals I have seen, the probabilities are that the medical officer, steward, and

matron would be called upon to resign at once; and this, doubtless, keeps these officials up to the mark.

Should Mr. Holmes be successful in obtaining the Royal Commission he seeks, to inquire into the management of the general hospitals, the result will probably be in the direction of placing these institutions under that much-abused body, the Local Government Board, which, whatever its shortcomings may be in other respects, manages its own lying-in wards so well as not to cause them to be what some lying-in hospitals have been, charnel houses for parturient women.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

ROBERT H. LLOYD, M.D.

July, 1881.

Medical Superintendent.

Obituary.

DR. HENRY DAY.

THE profession has lost in Dr. Day of Stafford one whose name has long been familiar to it, and we record his death with sincere sorrow. He was a man of great learning, a physician whose whole heart was in his work, and one who to the last kept himself in the advanced march of medical science and practice. For a time Dr. (then Mr.) Day practised in London, in Arlington-street; but over twenty-five years ago he settled as a physician in Stafford, and became identified with that place in a special manner. He was one of the physicians to the Stafford County Infirmary, and was visiting physician to the Coton Hill Lunatic Asylum. In addition to the duties connected with these public appointments he carried on a good consulting practice, was much esteemed as a country gentleman, and well known amongst the members of his own fraternity not only as an acute, observant, and careful practitioner of the healing art, but as a hospitable and ever kind and considerate friend. In his work as an original observer, Dr. Day rendered many useful services. He contributed to medical literature a volume of medical and clinical histories, dedicated to Sir Thomas Watson, and greatly admired, as we have heard, by that admirable classical scholar; he conducted a research on ozone, including in the undertaking several new and original experiments, and he delivered an address on the Historical Steps of

Modern Medicine before the St. Andrews Graduates' Association, on taking the chair as President of that body. He made new observations of an experimental kind bearing on the cause of cerebro-spinal meningitis, and he contributed valuable essays on the nervous origin of acute rheumatic fever and on brain lesions. In all these labours he showed the possession of sound judgment, learned industry, and a graphic and classical style of expression. He was also a good microscopist, and was quite an expert in the art of injecting and mounting both physiological and pathological microscopical specimens. He took, in fact, unusual pains in this practical department of minute science, and always spoke of the pleasure with which he followed up the pursuits.

Dr. Day, through a comparatively long life, enjoyed excellent health, and, as a rule, was equally ready, on all occasions, for a humorous chat—in which punning formed a lively ingredient—a social reunion, an argument on diagnosis, or a chapter on physis. He gave no indications of bad health until the close of last year, and in a most touching letter of farewell, written a few days before his death, to his old friend Dr. Richardson—in which letter he described, with singular clearness, the history and diagnosis of his case—he observed that, one day in November last, he felt as well and as strong as when “he was twenty-five years old,” but in the evening was as near death as a man could be to live. On the day thus referred to, he was suddenly seized with excruciating pain in the abdomen, and this, followed as it was by continuous pain and entire constipation for many days, was a cause of much alarm to his friends. Under the able care of his son-in-law, Dr. Cookson of Stafford, he greatly improved, and in the spring of this