

the midwife, however well trained she may be, with such knowledge? Labour is a process in which at least two lives are dependent upon the skill and care of the accoucheur; yet in this vital matter a large proportion of the community are forced, on economic grounds, to rely upon the services of the midwife. It is our duty, therefore, to devise a scheme whereby expert help may be given to every lying-in woman in the land. Labour, after all, is not an emergency; it can be legislated for in advance. For at least thirty weeks contributions could be made by those wishing to avail themselves of such a scheme. This could be done through the Post Office, and when thirty payments of, say, one shilling, have been made, the amount could be doubled by a grant from the Exchequer and a form, made out as a crossed cheque, passed to the woman for presentation to her doctor.

This would not be a costly scheme. In fact, if everybody took advantage of it, it would cost the country roughly about £1,750,000 per annum; but, as many would not need this assistance, the cost would work out at less than one million. Compared with other schemes under consideration at the present time, this is a very modest one, more especially when one considers the enormous benefits which it would confer on the mothers of the country, and a real step would be taken in the direction of reduction of both maternal and infantile mortality. Moreover, our hospitals would benefit by the substantial reduction in maternal morbidity which is bound to ensue. Of course, this scheme would not interfere with the working of the National Health Insurance Act, but would be an adjunct thereto. It would be of great assistance to the wives of uninsured men with small incomes.—I am, etc.,

Manchester, Oct. 14th.

D. C. MACDONALD.

#### QUININE AND BLACKWATER FEVER.

SIR,—Though without any professional qualification, you may perhaps allow me to make some remarks on the real or supposed relations between quinine medication and blackwater fever, a subject treated in your current number (October 19th, p. 729). There seems little doubt that there is some connexion, but what is it? So far I have not seen noted the belief of many medical men of great experience in malarial countries that this fever is due not to overdosing with quinine, or to its entire lack, but rather to its use over a long period in insufficient and ineffective quantities. It is not always easy to obtain medical help at once, and the common erroneous belief that a few grains of quinine taken daily act as a prophylactic leads those suffering from slight "chills and fever" to take the drug in doses which have no other effect than the postponement of the real attack. If such patients took 30 or 40 grain doses at once, instead of 5 grains a day, it is possible that blackwater would rarely occur.

As those on whose authority I rely in saying so much are too far away from me to get permission to use their names, perhaps the mere unsupported suggestion may lead some of your readers to say whether their tropical experience seems to lend support to this view.—I am, etc.,

London, Oct. 13th.

MORLEY ROBERTS.

#### THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE ALCOHOL QUESTION.

SIR,—Surely the function of this Royal Commission is mainly judicial? Is it not a pity that any interests—the trade, avowed temperance reformers, or the profession of medicine—should be represented on the Commission? Would it not be much better for all such interests to lay their views before the Commission as witnesses rather than to sit on the Commission with their views already formed and publicly known—a state of affairs which can only lead to at least one minority report being produced, and possibly to no report being supported by enough commissioners to give it the weight which should be attached to the report of a Royal Commission?—I am, etc.,

Monmouth, Oct. 21st.

N. S. B. VINTER.

### Obituary.

DR. HOWARD MARSHALL, O.B.E., who died on October 9th, at the age of 58, received his medical education at Cambridge and St. Bartholomew's Hospital. He graduated M.B., B.Ch. in 1895. After holding house appointments at St. Bartholomew's and the Nottingham General Hospital, he practised for five years at Bexhill, where he was also medical officer to the Metropolitan Convalescent Home. In 1902 he went to Cirencester, as partner to the late Mr. O. H. Fowler. While conducting an extensive practice, Dr. Marshall won considerable reputation by reason of his surgical ability, and was appointed surgeon to the Cirencester Memorial Hospital; at the time of his death he was the senior member of the honorary medical staff. He associated himself actively with the extensions and improvements of the hospital from time to time, and was largely responsible for the establishment of an employers' and workers' voluntary contribution scheme in connexion with it. He was also medical officer to the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, and civil surgeon to the 4th Battalion of the Gloucester Regiment. On the outbreak of war a Red Cross Hospital came into being at Bingham Hall, and Dr. Marshall was appointed medical officer in charge of it; in 1920 he received the O.B.E. in recognition of the particularly valuable services he rendered in this way. Dr. Marshall was a member of the British Medical Association, and president of the Gloucester Branch from 1915 to 1917. He took special interest in the effort to regularize the position of civil surgeons called upon to provide attendance for military patients during the war. Throughout his life he was devoted to outdoor sports; in his student days he was distinguished as a Rugby footballer, gaining an international cap as half-back.

We regret to announce the death of Dr. JAMES MORRISON GARDINER BREMNER, O.B.E., on October 12th, at his residence in Norwich. James Bremner was born in Banffshire, and received his medical education in Aberdeen, where he graduated M.B., C.M. in 1884. Soon afterwards he went to Norwich, and for a period of more than thirty years he resided there, building up a large practice and acquiring varied and numerous associations. He early became attached to the Territorials, joining the Norfolk Regiment. In 1914 he received a commission as major, and took command of the Second East Anglian Field Ambulance; in the following autumn he was gazetted lieutenant-colonel. His personal knowledge of training, organization, and equipment enabled him as an officer in command to place in the field a unit which did very fine work. In July, 1915, he took part in the landing at Gallipoli, where he remained until the evacuation. After accompanying his unit to Mudros, and thence to Egypt, he was stationed at the Suez Canal after the push forward to Gaza. After three battles there he accompanied his ambulance as far as Ludd. In the spring of 1918 he took charge of a large convalescent home at Alexandria. Immediately after the war he resumed his medical work in Norwich, and his deep interest in Freemasonry and the local Scots Society found outlet in renewed activity. In Freemasonry he occupied a high position; in 1908 he became Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies, and in 1920 was raised to the high rank of Provincial Grand Standard Bearer. The local Scots Society will also find it difficult to replace him, for much of the success it enjoys to-day was due to his enthusiasm. A colleague writes: In his profession Dr. Bremner was an assiduous and painstaking clinician; his quiet and sympathetic directness always arrested the attention and won the confidence of his patients. He was a man whose desire it was that no ostentation or public acknowledgement should attend any act of his. Quietly and gently disposed, it may be said that sincerity was the keynote of his whole life. Among a host of friends his memory will be widely treasured for many fine qualities of personal service, far outlasting more brilliant or more blazoned achievements.