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what doctors have done for me and my family. There are two in particular whose exceptional consideration I will remember with gratitude till my dying day. Yet there is a curious circumstance here. These two were not "chosen" at all. One found me, and I found the other, by the merest accident in each case.

Perhaps what many people look for is not the right of choice, but the right of refusal to be attended by a doctor whom they feel has made a poor show. Parents who strongly object to their children's teachers often solve a similar problem by sending the children to another school.

I should think that a Hutt Valley resident, if the local scheme for health centres is adopted, will exercise this right of refusal if he is dissatisfied. What I cannot help wondering is how the patient's choice is affected by the location of the surgery, whether it is in the doctor's residence or in the health centre attached to the shopping centre.

St. Helens Hospitals

Recently the Committee of Inquiry into Maternity Services told us that the "closed" training hospitals were "obviously not offering to the majority of women the type of service they desired." A daily newspaper editorial commented by describing these hospitals as "highly efficient, but largely impersonal." I have been a patient in St. Helens hospitals of both Wellington and Christchurch, and cannot help wondering if the reluctance of women is not due to misunderstandings such as those shown by the editor.

Naturally the expectant mother who has a "real old family doctor" will prefer to have him attend her. In our day not every doctor undertakes maternity work and many a mother has a choice to make. If the report is correct she prefers an individual doctor and a private maternity home.

She is choosing a service in two or more parts. She will visit a doctor for ante-natal advice, and he will be present for the birth, provided that a more urgent case has not claimed him immediately before. She will see little of the home until she is admitted.

The St. Helens hospitals provide a complete service. Handicapped by unsuitable buildings—in Christchurch nothing more than an ancient, converted hotel—their staffs do devoted work. The ante-natal clinics are conducted by Sisters whose experience is more wide than that attainable by most doctors. These Sisters are known by name and loved by hundreds of women. The expectant mother has every attention—she does not compete for the adviser's time with a queue of assorted patients outside the door. Every aspect of her health is considered. She is given knowledge, confidence, and assistance. There is a series of exercises specially designed for maternity. These she is taught, free of charge, by specially-trained physiotherapists. They are invaluable both for her health and her figure. I have seen more than one timid young mother (too often well primed up with "old wives' tales") go from these classes with a new confidence and happiness in the approaching event.

"But you don't have a doctor at all?" friends have said to me with a sort of horror.

There is a doctor, a specialist, for the necessary examinations, and in attendance at the confinement in cases of difficulty. For the rest, it is not clear to me what extra advantage the quite

normal patient would have from the presence of a doctor rather than an experienced midwife.

Health and Happiness

A healthy young woman having a baby is not an invalid. She needs expert care to guard against the hazards of maternity, which in this country have been reduced to the lowest in the world, to a considerable extent because of medical supervision. But we look upon our maternity services wrongly if our emphasis is on the actual confinement. It is full preparation and sound after-care which make for the great event being one of joy unmingled with fear.

The point of all this is that a "closed" system is not a device for keeping the patient from her individually-chosen doctor for the benefit of nurses' training but a co-ordinated service in which all aspects of the care of the mother are interlocked. Far from being "impersonal" the staff come to know her so well that she enters hospital on the great day as she would a house of friends.

This is not a commentary on the decisions of the Committee of Inquiry, nor a criticism of its "compromise" proposals which, from their evidence, appear to be wise. Their submissions may begin a useful experiment. My object has been simply to point out a view of the existing service of training hospitals which is not sufficiently recognised—and to refute the suggestion that they are soulless institutions.

So long as most doctors and many laymen consider the choice of individual practitioners to be a cornerstone of our medical standards, these preferences cannot be ignored. But increasing numbers of people wish to choose, not a man to cure them, but a many-sided, co-ordinated health service. This is what the Hutt Valley State House tenants are asking for. The conception has been pioneered and experimented with by far-seeing medicos, abroad and in New Zealand. It is another aspect of the trend towards emphasis on the promotion of health rather than the cure of disease. In effect, this viewpoint says—give us the means to be healthy, and we shan't need to worry about what doctor we might have chosen.

Reith Lectures

THE BBC has established an annual series of broadcast lectures, to be known as the Reith Lectures. Each year some acknowledged authority in a particular field—it might be sociology, literature, history, public affairs or economics—will be invited to undertake some study or original research on a given subject and give listeners the results in some four to seven broadcasts. It is hoped that by thoughtful selection of speaker and subject the broadcasts will not only be the peak of the BBC's effort each year in the field of serious talks, but will also become a valuable national institution. Each speaker will be invited a year ahead, and the first series will be broadcast in the autumn of 1948. Sir William Haley, Director-General of the BBC, made the announcement at the opening dinner of the summer school of the Central Council for School Broadcasting. Speaking of the decision of the Governors to name the lectures after Lord Reith, he said, "In the history of British Broadcasting there is one name that stands above all others. What the people of this country owe to the vision of the man who first guided British broadcasting has yet to be adequately assessed."

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