

"The German poetess Greta Baldauf was," says the *Athenæum*, "last summer a waitress in the restaurant 'Zum Krokodil' at Baden-Baden. A notice of her poems in the literary supplement of the Munich 'Allgemeine Zeitung' in July, 1900, was the means of procuring the author of the 'Lieder des Madchens,' a more agreeable situation. A new volume of her lyrics is now advertised under the title of 'Neue Lieder eines Madchens aus dem Volke.' Mr. Bernard Shaw, in his amusing play, 'You Never Can Tell,' introduces a waiter of unusual talent. Here is a similar case in actual life; Mr. Shaw is not so far ahead of his time as he hoped, after all."

The Prince Consort of the Netherlands is to have a jointure of about £12,000 a year from the Dutch Treasury if he survives the Queen and if there has been issue of the marriage. If the Queen should die childless there will be no jointure. The Dutch Parliament has reserved the power to annul the marriage if the Queen should not give birth to a child within five years. Surely this spirited little woman will never submit to these stolid Dutchmen using her simply for the purpose of propagating an heir to the Crown of the Netherlands. Surely she is woman as well as Queen, and will never tolerate a separation from her husband from any considerations of State.

The Death-rate of Male Infants compared to that of Females.

By MRS. CARMICHAEL STOPES.

In combining the Reports of the Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, with the reports of the Census returns, we come upon some curious facts. Nature provides a majority of boys over girls in the proportion of 1,037 to 1,000. In 1891 there were 465,627 boys born to 448,497 girls (54th Rep., p. 56) or an excess of over 17,000.

According to the census returns, there is a majority of females even under one year of age, though this majority is not supported by the registration reports that record the deaths of 76,257 males, as against 59,544 females under a year old, a difference of only 16,000. But this is soon increased, and we are faced with an appalling mortality among English baby boys that is worthy of more exact statistics and of more careful consideration than it has yet received. The periods of life most fatal to English baby boys I cannot find from the returns. The tables of deaths at each month do not give sex. The proportional tables of male death rates do not make clear the proportions given in the census. We see by the various reports that after the first year the difference between the sexes does not rapidly increase during the early years of life. The practical question, then, that it behoves every one carefully to consider is, why should the first year of life be more dangerous to boys than to girls? It can hardly arise from any difference in feeding, clothing, or general treatment, which is little differentiated at that tender age. It would almost seem that the superior vitality of the girl is expressed in the statistics of extreme youth, as it is proved for the woman in the statistics of old age. I have seen it stated that women in the prime of their strength more frequently produce girls than boys, and that periods of trouble and anxiety result in an increased birth-rate

of males. The question is well worthy of the most careful observation. I am quite incapable even of discussing it. I only attempt to classify and consider statistics. At the same time I have always felt that it was possible that boys, being generally of a larger build, may suffer more seriously from their mothers' sins in the matter of tight lacing, and therefore enter the world less fitted to fight the battle with the dangers of the first year of life. That opinion is at least worthy of the conscientious consideration of mothers.

The sum total for England and Wales in 1891 were 14,052,901 males, and 14,949,624 females. The excess of females was 1,064 to 1,000.

But in Scotland it was greater, being 1,072 to 1,000, and in Ireland it was less, 1,029 to 1,000.

The Scotch Census tables are worked out much more fully than the English ones, and the reports on births, deaths, and marriages are clearer, so that one can understand the question better. While the sum total of males to females was as 1,072 to 1,000, there were in 1891 born in Scotland 64,875 boys, and 61,090 girls, an excess more than sufficient to cope with the extra infant mortality

	Deaths.					
	under 3 months.	under 6 months.	under 12 months.	under 2 years.	under 3 years.	under 4 years.
Males...	4409.....	1592.....	2784.....	3345.....	1333.....	834
Females	3348.....	1327.....	2414.....	3105.....	1285.....	794

(Appendix, pp. 32-34 Rep. Com. Births, Deaths, Marriages, Scotland.)

Now the remarkable point in regard to the two sets of tables is this, that though the excess of females is greatest in Scotland it does not commence to tell until *after the age of twenty*. In England it commences at, or immediately after, *the first year of life*. This points to some causes either in maternity or nurture, which are abnormally severe on boys, as compared to girls, in England, causes, which ought to be traced, and combated.

The majority of women in Scotland after twenty, can easily be accounted for. The "dangerous trades" of Scotland count for much; fishing and mining near home; and *going abroad* as emigrants, clerks, soldiers or sailors. Their absence from home even on the night of the census keeps them out of the list. In Scotland there is a greater proportion of widows than in England. There are fewer *great* cities relatively than in England, and therefore Scotchmen are carried off from other causes than city air. I noted that the English Report stated that "men die earlier than women both in town and country, but more so in the town than in the country. Urban life is exceptionally fatal to elderly men, hence the high excess of females in towns like London." It is just possible that what is exceptionally fatal to elderly men, may be exceptionally fatal also to infant boys, and that they need fresh air more than their sisters. That *something* is more fatal, and that it is especially fatal in England, is perfectly clear from Statistics.

Instead of being content with the old proverb—"Boys are more difficult to rear than girls"—we ought to set ourselves, Doctors, Nurses, and Mothers alike, to try to find out why these things should be so, and if it is necessary they should be. On the eve of a new Census, let us look out for the new Reports, which, it is to be hoped, may be fuller than the last and let us note them, and compare them with the last. In the meantime, let us ask if nothing can be *done*? What Pharaoh among us immolates our baby boys?

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)