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Editorial.

SHALL MIDWIVES BE ENDED OR MENDED?—I.

THIS question has been somewhat suddenly, and we cannot consider wisely, revived by proceedings in Parliament and elsewhere. As we have before explained, in these columns, we believe that the problem is being steadily solved by the progress of the laws of evolution, or to put it more plainly, as a result of the "survival of the fittest." Since Midwifery received the consideration demanded by its vast importance, and, since its study and practice, has been encouraged as a department of medical science and work—the Midwife of former days—usually a crone whose knowledge was best measured by her crass ignorance, and whose obstetric experience was largely nullified by her wider experience of alcoholic beverages—has year by year diminished in the land. Coincidentally, on the one hand, her place has been taken by the parish doctor, or by Nurses who have been more or less trained in obstetric duties; and, on the other, the puerperal death rate has fallen in a most extraordinary degree. We are well aware that it is urged by some that this latter fact is due less to improvements in

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