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The Hospital World.

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Editorial.

MIDWIFERY LEGISLATION.

THE Midwives' Bill, which is at present before the House of Commons, is set down for its second reading on May 6th. It is stated that it is practically the same Bill that was read and considered by the House of Lords last year; but its promoters have, for reasons best known to themselves, deferred its publication until now—a course which is not calculated to make one believe that they consider their proposals beyond dispute. While we do not imagine that the Bill will go any further this Session, it deserves a few words of comment. It is argued that legislation is necessary for the protection of poor women in labour and for the improvement of Midwives. We entirely fail to understand how the measure can bring about the latter result. But it is certain that it will have most detrimental, if not dangerous, results so far as the public are concerned. A Midwife, as we have said before in these columns, is an anachronism—a strange survival of the unfit. If left to herself she would suffer a slow and beneficent process of extinction. If placed in a false position by the proposed legislation, she might continue to do harm, for some time to come. In the days of Moses, Midwives were doubtless useful, because they knew as much as anybody else concerning their work. At the end of the nineteenth century their existence is questionable, because they are com-

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