

only 46 per 1,000. An eloquent fact. Where the mother was unable to feed the infant, sterilised unmodified milk was prescribed; though there was variation from this rule when indicated by the condition of the child. The ridiculousness of adulterating milk of unknown composition is self-evident, and it is of the utmost importance to know the proportion of fat contained in the milk used. In a table showing the composition of 45 samples of so-called Paris "milk," not one came up to standard, and of a hundred samples taken in London 68 were skimmed.

The Lectures are illustrated by 111 diagrams in colour, the majority being feeding charts; these are of such a size and simplicity that the weight curve of infants under various conditions and on different diets is dramatically shown. A card, which serves as a book-mark, gives the thermometric equivalents, and the approximate relations between the metric system and the English measures. The book is one to be studied by all midwives and maternity nurses, in whose province it lies as yet to diet the infant. The translator has done his task well, though occasionally he offends us by his literalness; some of the charm of the style, too, is lost; to those, however, who read French with difficulty it is warmly to be commended. It will certainly weaken our prejudices, and spur us to more scientific, though no less sympathetic, handling of the infant, and if we do not subscribe to all Budin's methods, we shall recognise him as a master, and respect his methodical, careful, and original work.

M.O.H.

The Office of Midwife.

Under the above title Dr. Stanley B. Atkinson, member of the Central Midwives' Board, and barrister-at-law, in his book, published by Ballière, Tindall, and Cox, has gathered together much interesting and useful information, concerning midwives and midwifery matters.

The first chapter deals with "The Evolution of the Midwife," and shows how from very early times the birth of babies has been presided over by matrons skilled in the affairs of women.

In the Middle Ages women—and later men—were licensed to practice the art of midwifery in the various dioceses by the Bishops or their Chancellors. Regular medical practitioners were, at that time, similarly recognised. "From time to time local inquiries were instituted among the parish ministers as to the name and game of any unlicensed person or persons who might be irregularly following the calling of a midwife. A small fee was payable, valued by present day reckoning at about a guinea."

The writer states that "until the latter half of the seventeenth century men were refused admission to birth chambers, unless attending as surgeons to superintend abnormal or mismanaged labours. Dr. Percivall Willingby, of Derby, desiring to assist his daughter, who practised as a

midwife, in a confinement which had commenced normally, but which proved to be a breech presentation, was compelled by professional etiquette so to hide his irregular presence that he crawled to and from the bedside on all fours in a darkened room."

When the Old Pretender was born, Mary, the Queen of James II., was attended by the Royal Midwives, Mrs. Wilkins and Madame de Labadie, each of whom received 500 guineas for her services.

It is interesting to learn that so long ago as 1687 an attempt was made to organise midwives. Elizabeth Cellier, who published "A Scheme for the Foundation of a Royal Hospital, and raising a revenue of £5,000 or £6,000 a year by and for the Maintenance of a Corporation of Skilful Midwives," states that in 1687 King James promised "to unite the Midwives into a Corporation by His Royal Charter, and also to found a Cradle-Hospital to breed up exposed children, to prevent the many Murders and the Executions which attended them."

In 1739 the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow required "Midwives to pass an examination and have a licence before being admitted to practice." But "with the assumption of midwifery as a manly occupation the Bishops' former control seems to have waned. Thereafter a state of anarchy developed in the discipline of the calling of Midwifery."

Dr. Atkinson traces the history of Midwives and Midwifery down to the passing of the Midwives' Act in 1902.

The latter chapters of the book deal with this Act, and the Rules framed in connection with it. Interesting Sections are those which treat of "Still Born Children," and "The Midwife in the Coroner's Court." We note with interest the author's opinion that Midwives should combine in protecting themselves in a Midwives' Defence Union.

The book is one to be procured and studied.

Midwives in Country Districts.

At the Annual Meeting of the Norfolk Nursing Federation, at which the Countess of Alhmarle, President, took the chair, the Annual Report stated that the better training now given, and the status of midwife secured by the Central Midwives' Board examinations, tend to make the nurses dissatisfied with cottage work, and the consequence is that cottage nurses are becoming daily more difficult to secure. The other disquieting feature is that on an average 25 per cent. of the candidates fail to pass the examination of the Central Midwives' Board, and the failure does not take place until some £30 has been expended on training. After 1910 the nurses who fail will be of little, if any, use to the federation, and, therefore, the society will stand to lose an average of £50 to £60 a year on failures.

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