

A Sickly Infant's Value.

In classical times, and to this day in savage lands, says *The Christian Life* a puny baby would mercilessly be put to death. Christianity made this unlawful. What has the world gained by the prohibition? We answer, Some of its most valuable lives. Thus the philosopher, Isaac Newton, was a prematurely born child, whose size was so diminutive, and whose constitution appeared so hopelessly feeble, that some women who soon after his birth were sent for medicine, scarcely expected to find the babe alive when they returned. Yet this little life, which seemed at first a scarcely visible spark, presently became a vigorous flame, and continued to burn during more than three-quarters of a century. The life of Gibbon seemed during his infancy so precarious, that his father gave the family name of Edward to other sons, in order that the appellation might not be lost to the family by the expected death of the eldest son. Yet, like Pope (also delicate from infancy), he approached sixty years. Addison and Johnson were both baptised on the day of their birth. Yet the former, "weak and unlikely to live" when born, lasted to forty-seven; and the latter—"born almost dead, and for some time unable to cry"—long survived the Psalmist's three score years and ten.

The summary is most interesting, as showing the importance of making every effort to save sickly infants, a duty of which the modern midwife is fully cognisant, and, we believe, almost without exception, scrupulously fulfils. We do not quite know what our contemporary implies in the words "savage lands," but some nations usually regarded as uncivilised are extremely careful of child life, and the women very devoted to babies even when they are not their own.

A Useful Manual for Midwives.

The short *Manual for Monthly Nurses*, by Dr. C. J. Cullingworth, F.R.C.P., while primarily intended for that class of worker, is also one which should be in the hands of midwives. It is published by Messrs. J. and A. Churchill, of 7, Great Marlborough Street, W., and the price is 1s. 6d. Under the regulations of the Central Midwives' Board, a midwife is "responsible for the cleanliness and should give full directions for securing the comfort and proper dieting of the mother and child during the lying-in period which shall be held . . . in a normal case to mean the time occupied by the labour, and a period of ten days thereafter." It is, therefore, essential that she should know how these conditions should be secured.

The book under consideration deals with the ventilation, temperature, furniture, and sanitary arrangements of the lying-in room, and the usual nursing duties. The method of passing a catheter is minutely described, and midwives who were

trained in years gone by will do well to study the method now advocated, which varies considerably from that formerly practised. The diet of the sick, the serving of food, the administration of medicines, suppositories, hypodermic injections, etc., are dealt with, and the observation of the patient. The taking of a pulse, the condition of which in a midwifery patient is of so much importance, as well as the taking of the temperature and observations on the urine and bowels, are also included in the scope of the book. Another most important point dealt with is the propagation of puerperal fever. The rest of the book includes a description of the signs and symptoms of pregnancy, the process of natural labour, the management of the newly-born child, and of the mother after labour. It is a reliable handbook, which may safely be recommended to those who need one on this important subject.

Correspondence.

A PRACTICAL SUGGESTION.

To the Editor of "*The Midwife*."

DEAR MADAM,—On all sides we hear of the need for midwives in rural districts, and at the same time of the inability of many of such districts to provide a midwife with a living wage. I wonder if the daughters of the country clergy have ever thought of coming to the assistance of their poorer neighbours in this matter. In every country town, and most villages of any size, there is a vicarage, and in many vicarages there are several grown-up daughters with no special object in life, but a general desire usually to do good in the parish, without being qualified in any particular direction, a considerable portion of whose time is spent at garden parties, tennis meetings, and so forth. Supposing that where there are several daughters one of them qualified as a certified midwife, and announced her willingness to attend maternity cases, she would be doing a most useful bit of work, and, as she would be living at home she would not have to consider the question of board and lodging. But while recognising that the parish does not provide a sufficient amount of work to keep a midwife fully employed, she need not work on an altruistic basis. She should receive fees for the cases she attends, the best method probably being through a club organised for the purpose of collecting the fees. Such fees would be a welcome addition to the allowances of most clergymen's daughters, which, as a rule, are infinitesimal, and at the same time they would have the satisfaction of knowing they had acquired knowledge which would always be useful to them in after life, and that they were doing most useful work in connection with national health. I commend the suggestion to the attention of your readers.

I am, dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

A CLERGYMAN'S DAUGHTER AND CERTIFIED
MIDWIFE.

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