

old greasy matted wrapper or nightgown, a buff broadsword, belt of the same complexion, napkins wrapped round his arms, and a woman's apron before him to keep his dress from being bedaubed. At the same time, to make him appear of consequence, he had on his head a large tie periwig." Smellie apologised, saying he had only expected a midwife, whereupon the worthy proceeded in strong language to denounce them as gossips and incompetents. Later, they each begged the other to attend the case, and finally a midwife was called, who safely delivered the woman the next morning!

It is curious to read of one Dr. C., who visited all midwives and left printed notes of his abode—professional etiquette was less strict in those days. We read of another doctor who abused the midwives, "right or wrong, whenever he was called, and was reciprocally abused by them." In one case visited by Smellie the nurse had bound and pinned the child so tightly that it was black in the face; she urged in her excuse that she had been told that London nurses dressed babies so to give them "fine shapes." He temperately told her of the danger, and said it was the fashion to dress them "very loose, to prevent spoiling their natural shape, which was much better and handsomer than artificial ones"—a doctrine which still needs preaching. Incident after incident shows how tactful and wise Smellie was in his treatment of midwives. The situation was delicate and called for great discretion; he made himself their adviser, friend, and teacher; did much to make them realise their limitations and ignorance, not so much by words as by deeds. Much of his teaching is sound to-day; he stands out in a generation when meddling midwifery was in vogue, as marvellously patient and reasonable in his interference. Over and over again we read he gave a sleeping draught, and left the case to nature. From these cases, he naively adds, he "got much credit." In his early days he had a case where violent hæmorrhage was brought on by too hasty delivery. He censures himself for the same, and adds: "I had not yet attained that calm, steady, deliberate method of procedure which is to be acquired only by practice and experience."

M. O. H.

The rate of infant mortality in England and Wales last year did not exceed 118 per 1,000, was far the lowest rate on record, and showed a decrease of 20.3 per cent. upon the mean rate in the ten preceding years.

The East End Mothers' Lying-in Home.

No one can be acquainted with the East End of London without being impressed with the bitter poverty which exists there, and the uncomplaining and at times heroic way in which it is borne. On none does its burden press more heavily than on the women, and it becomes not only a duty but a privilege to extend a helping hand to them when, by the pain and peril of childbirth, they are for a short time incapacitated for work in the ranks of those who are fighting for bare existence. At such times the East End Mothers Home, 394, Commercial Road, E., affords a haven of refuge, and a visit to it must convince anyone of the value of its work and its claim for generous support. In her Report to the Committee of Management, which is incorporated in that to be presented to the subscribers and donors at the Annual Meeting on May 20th, the Resident Lady Superintendent, Miss Margaret Anderson, draws attention to the value of the Samaritan Fund "which enables the Home to prepare weakly mothers for their confinement by feeding them up during the last week of pregnancy, and to provide them, after their confinement is over, with the necessaries of life, when they commence to renew their struggle for existence. The mothers' work is generally too severe for them, and their hours of labour excessively long, whilst they are not provided with a sufficient amount of nourishing food—their principal articles of food being bread, tea, and sometimes beer. Another evil is that the mother often nurses the last baby nearly up to the time of her confinement. With mothers weakened from one or more of these causes, it is not surprising that we have a hard fight for the parent's life at many a bedside. For the same reasons, premature birth, and ante-partum hæmorrhage are common, and death of the fetus in utero often occurs some time before birth. Even when the mother is emaciated the babies are often fat and beautiful when born; then soon after they go home they begin to lose ground, because the mother is unable to supply them with a sufficient amount of natural food, and cannot afford to purchase cow's milk."

A useful department of the work is the School for Mothers in connection with which a weekly tea is provided for former patients and their babies. The attendance has increased during the present year from an average of 15 to 16 to one of between 70 and 80.

The mission of the Home is preventive, educative, humane; let us be thankful for it.

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