

# The Midwife.

## BREAST FEEDING.

### THE VALUE OF THE TEST-FEED.

Doctors Pritchard, Carter and Pitt, contribute a Paper to the *Lancet* of September 2nd, read before the Society of Infants' Consultations. It is largely statistical, and the results of

The teaching of the importance of accurately discovering the amount of milk the infant is actually taking from the breast is of value to those who have the care of babies whose weight curve is unsatisfactory. The question arises: "Is this due to under-feeding or over-feeding?" The giving of "test-feeds" decides the question. If the breast-milk is insufficient—and many of the

"test-feeds" prove it to be so—supplementary artificial food must be given to gradually make up the deficiency. One very little recognised cause of constipation is deficient food. It is manifestly unintelligent to treat such cases with drugs. Every infant suffering from this common ailment should first take a "test-feed." If it is below the average amount for an infant of its size, age, and condition it should have then the gradual addition of artificial food to make up the amount, which will permanently cure the constipation, often wrongly ascribed to other conditions.

In other cases the amount taken may be excessive, when the vitality of the nursling is taken into consideration. One deduction from the observations appears paradoxical. "It would appear that those infants who are



BABY-SCALE IN USE AT THE GENERAL LYING-IN HOSPITAL, S.W.

the investigations are summarised in eight clear and convincing tables. The writers hope that the publication of the results will stimulate others to pursue similar lines of enquiry. Already, "test-feeds" are given in many maternity hospitals, and undoubtedly this method of conducting breast-feeding on scientific lines will become more and more the practice in institutions dealing with nurslings.

brought up in institutions, and receive a large amount of breast-milk, increase in weight rapidly than those who attend infant consultations as out-patients. On the other hand, among this latter class of infants, it would appear that those who receive larger quantities of milk, instead of putting on more weight per week put on a smaller amount." In order to explain this, the authors advance that the milk may be

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