

mother, who has just died from plague, a week after her husband, who succumbed to the disease after a few days' illness, though attacked when in perfect health and strength. On the second bed is a tangled mass of old clothes and quilts, but there is a movement among them, which is found to be caused by the little baby, only two days old, left an orphan on the hands of her uncle, who, with his family, occupies the other part of the house.

A few hours after the mother's death the burial takes place, the male relatives following the bier to the grave, while the women left in the house hang out the dead woman's bedding in the sun, that it may air for a short time before being taken back into use. Then they prepare the morning meal, wondering meanwhile how they are to manage with the extra burden of these little orphan children. The boy will be able to do some field work or drive the buffaloes to graze along the roadside; and the girl will soon be old enough to help in the cooking and other housework; but it will be a great tax on their resources to be obliged to make a marriage arrangement for her as well as for their own girls. As for the baby, no one wants to be bothered by it, especially as it is a girl, but now and then, when it reminds them of its wants by crying, a few drops of milk are given to it. Perhaps the poor little creature's cries annoy the uncle, for he begins to feel that he cannot endure the additional trouble and expense involved in rearing so small a baby, and when night comes he puts the little bundle outside the door in the yard, close by the water-pots, and hopes that the cold and wet of an unusually severe winter night may relieve him of this unwelcome burden. However, next morning, when the bundle is examined, there is still a feeble movement in it, though the child has scarcely strength to cry. The uncle still perseveres in trying to rid himself of this additional care, and tells the women that he is going out to dig a little grave, and will put the baby in it without waiting for her to die. But while he is away a happy thought strikes his wife. The hospital is close at hand, and she remembers hearing that the doctor Miss Sahiba once before took charge of a baby whose parents were dead, so perhaps she will take this one, which will be better than burying her alive. So the women bring the baby to the hospital, and the doctor, hearing the story, gladly takes the little one in. . . . The last scene is very short. In it there is another bundle, but this time a clean one, for the baby, after careful washing and disinfection, has been wrapped in warm woollen garments, and now is placed on the hearth by a bright wood fire, in the hope that

some warmth may be coaxed back into the starved body. The doctor and her Indian helpers consult together as to how best to bring back vitality to the tiny frame, but it has already gone through too much, and before long the spark of life which is flickering so feebly dies out, and the "spirit returns to Him who gave it."

E. G. S.

WOMEN IN THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE.

This month's *Englishwoman* is an admirable number, and "Women in the Public Health Service," by Maude Meredith, is very clear and incisive. She touches on the exclusion of women in the administration of hospitals, and writes on the work of School Nurses, District Nurses, and Sanitary Inspectors. On Inspectors of Midwives she makes the following pertinent observations:—

INSPECTORS OF MIDWIVES.

The man midwife is a comparatively recent innovation in this country, and is almost unknown in many parts of the Continent. Madame Romanoff writing in 1868, points out that in Russia a medical man is rarely called in in maternity cases, but that, in spite of this, fatal cases are of far less frequent occurrence in Russia than in England. She also tells us that ladies practising midwifery have much the same social status as doctors, and receive a high rate of remuneration both for private cases and when employed under Government. The idea of employing doctors in such cases only became general during the last century, the feeling against the presence of a man being extremely strong. But, as the science of surgery progressed, it became clear that midwives were lagging far behind the rest of the medical profession in knowledge and skill, and, in spite of their efforts to secure facilities for training, and the championship of some of the more enlightened and chivalrous medical practitioners, the doors of every place where adequate training could be obtained were closed to them. Naturally, therefore, women began to overcome their natural reluctance to employ a man, and to prefer to entrust themselves to a skilled surgeon rather than to the more or less amateurish practitioners of their own sex.*

An article in "Tait's Magazine," in June, 1841, sums up the position very fairly.

The "accoucheur" (says the writer) is a profession nearly altogether wrested out of the hands of women, for which Nature has surely fitted them, if opinion permitted education to finish Nature's work. But women are held in the bonds of ignorance, then pronounced of deficient capacity, or blamed for wanting the knowledge they are sternly prevented from acquiring.

* See *Medical Women*, by Dr. Jex Blake.

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