

## Editorials.

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### MIDWIFERY AS THEY HAVE IT IN BRITAIN.

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Two articles, one by Dr. Horrocks, Senior Obstetric Physician to Guy's Hospital, and one by a less known writer in Aberdeen, appeared in the *British Medical Journal* for March 10th. These articles would seem to show that the art of midwifery has not advanced much in the Old Land during the past sixty years or so. Dr. Horrocks' article is on "Midwifery of the Present Day." He says: "One must never use the forceps to shorten the sufferings of labor (of course I am speaking of normal cases). You cannot terminate labor before the parts are ready without doing some damage." Dr. Horrocks gives us no idea of what he considers a normal labor. The parts are often ready for delivery long before the child is born, and the skilful use of the forceps preserves rather than injures them. Furthermore, we consider the relief of pain to be one of the greatest privileges, as well as a duty of the physician. Again, "My advice to you is not to give it, i.e., chloroform, at all if you can possibly help it. It is unnatural for a woman to be unconscious when the child is born. The reflex stimuli, or afferent impulses, are interfered with, and the resulting parturient forces are, to some degree, at all events, impaired." The old prejudices, which Sir James Young Simpson fought so hard to overcome in his day, are not dead yet, it seems. Must we repeat the argument that on the occasion of the first birth the Lord threw Adam into a deep sleep?

We are not to follow down the uterus with the hand. We are not to express the placenta—leave it all to nature. We must not use Crede's method for the prevention of ophthalmia. We are not to examine our patients before labor, unless they be sufficiently well informed to ask us to do so. Surely Dr. Horrocks must be an anti-vaccinationist also! Again, "At Guy's Hospital, for many years the women whom we attend—more than 3000 per annum—are not examined at all when