

A full examination and report by the patient's family doctor should *precede any other*, whether it is by the firm's chosen consultant or by some other specialist recommended by the family doctor.

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Book Reviews

English midwives, their history and prospects. Reprint of 1872 edition. JAMES HOBSON AVELING, M.D. London. Hugh K. Elliott Limited. 1967. Pp. 182. Price £7 10s.

This book is a collectors and historians piece. It is a reprint and exact reproduction of the original 1872 edition with an introduction and biographical sketch of the author by John L. Thornton, F.L.A., Consultant Librarian of the Royal College of Gynaecologists and of St Bartholomews Hospital. This is printed in modern style which accentuates the fact that the book is otherwise a facsimile copy.

This volume is something of an eye opener to the present generation as to the state of obstetrics in this country less than 100 years ago. When Aveling wrote his main objective was revealed in the last chapter when he pleads for the proper training and licensing of midwives and makes a number of suggestions, some of which have since been adopted.

Little is known of early English midwives. Margaret Cobbe who delivered Elizabeth Wardville, queen to Edward IV, of a prince later Edward V, is the first mentioned. The last is Mrs Margaret Stephen who delivered Queen Charlotte wife of George III of her children and published a book for the *Domestic Midwife* in 1795.

To those interested in the history of obstetrics and indeed of medicine in general this book makes most interesting reading. It brings very sharply into perspective the great advances of the last century over the millenia before and gives a sense of pride in the achievement of the era of rational scientific progress.

Fresh water pollution control in Europe. Council of Europe. 1966. Directorate of Information. Pp. 205.

While man increases upon earth the amount of fresh water available for his use remains much the same. Man is profligate in his use of water for industrial processes and for the 'disposal' of both human and industrial wastes. The contamination of natural waters that has eliminated salmon from Thames and Tees, turned the Rhine into an open sewer and brought biological death to the Lake of Zurich, is a matter of concern to the Council of Europe which, in this report gives a comprehensive appreciation of the problem by a specially appointed working party.

The problems affecting Europe, and experience gained in pollution control elsewhere, are summarized together with accounts of pollution measurement, prevention and treatment. Biologists, chemists, soil scientists and others, as well as medical experts all contributed and an important section deals with the legal aspects of pollution of watercourses which are political boundaries between countries or states.

Though there are, as would be expected, many expressions of pious hope that governments will take proper action, effectively and soon, the report also contains