

*The DANGER and IMMODESTY
of the present too general Custom of
unnecessarily employing MEN-MID-
WIVES, with an introductory Trea-
tise on the Milk.*

IN the introduction, the author observes, that the custom of repelling the milk, called backeing it, is extremely prejudicial to the health of the patient, and frequently endangers her life. The milk, which is nothing more than blanched blood, and which is deposited in the breast as food for the child, when it is not suffered to be drawn off, is absorbed by what are called Lymphatic vessels, and, after its change, conveyed into the blood, by which the vessels are overchargèd, and the blood rendered of an improper consistence; the consequence of which is a fever, called the milk fever; which is the more dangerous, as the situation of the patient renders her unable to bear the shock. If it happens that the milk is not absorbed so fast as fresh supplies are furnished from the blood, which is frequently the case when the patient is young and healthy, the breasts are painfully extended, and an inflammation ensues.

If a child is put to the breast in twelve or sixteen hours after its birth, it will suck eagerly; but, after three or four days, when it may be absolute-

tely necessary to the life of the mother, it is twenty to one that the child will not suck at all. If another child is applied, it may happen that the thick milk has clogged the vessels, and that the nipples are shrunk into the breast; in which case dreadful symptoms soon appear, and death inevitably follows.

It is acknowledged, that some women are not strong enough to suckle the infant the usual time; but it is insisted, that every woman should give suck for the first four weeks at least, and that, whatever be her constitution, she will injure her health by not doing it.

The reasons that are urged against the general use of men-midwives are in substance as follows:

1. It is probable, that, in thirty years extensive practice, not a single case would happen in which a woman would not be able to afford all the assistance that should be necessary.

2. The familiarities to which men-midwives are admitted during pregnancy, wear off the delicate modesty which is the first barrier to a lady's honour.

3. During such familiarities, a man has it in his power, says this author, "so to bewilder a woman's reason, as to make her lose sight of every principle of virtue, and not be able to refuse whatever he shall chuse to desire."—"I believe, (says he) that few women confine the doctor's familiarities to the times of real labour; and he must be more than man, or less than man, who, roving luxuriously through all the hidden charms of beauty, can help being inflamed by passion. He may proceed on certainties; he has an unerring tell-tale under his inspection, which gives him an infallible cue when he may safely throw aside the mask, fearless of any repulse."

4. Men-midwives are not so safe as women. Their very knowledge of anatomy frequently leads them to do mischief; and there is not one case in ten thousand in which it can enable them to do good. By their knowledge of anatomy they are able to bring on labour pains, and to force the birth. They are under continual temptation to make this use of their knowledge, as it shortens their attendance, and sooner dismisses them to another labour; but it is always at the expence of the patient, who is never safe but when Nature is permitted to do her own work.

The writer mentions some facts to support his principles. "Any person," says he, may buy the trial of Doctor Morley, where they will see that he was convicted, and fined a thousand pounds, for seducing Mrs. Biker. The poor woman accused the Doctor, on her death-bed, and told the whole transaction. The Doctor pleaded to his friends "the strength of the temptation, the frailty of Nature, and the impossibility of any man's resisting such powerful charms." He quitted his business; the ladies, however, approved his conduct,—it RECOMMENDED HIM TO THEIR FAVOUR, and he was more employed than ever! Dr. — was forced to feign madness to escape the rage of an injured husband, for having frightened his wife to death. She happened to be a virtuous, though NOT a MODEST, woman.—Count STRUENZY, too, was a man-midwife. Would he ever have dared to lift his eye, or breathe his infamous passion, to a * * * * *, if he had not been encouraged and familiarized by the freedoms admitted by the profession of a man-midwife? Certainly no! Whoever reads the newspapers of three years back, will find many paragraphs informing us of prosecutions of men-midwives for crim. con."

This pamphlet is ill written; it is full of verbose declamation, barbarous phrases, and false grammar. The author talks of a jumblement of ignorance and vice. He says, men-midwives have chose to be silent, and that an advocate for the practice which he decries has been hard drove. There is, also, some reason to suspect that he has exaggerated his account of abuses in this branch of medical practice, because the book appears to have been written with an interested view, by a list of about twenty women, who are said to be eminent as midwives, with the places of their abode, most of which are in lanes and courts in mean and obscure parts of the town.

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