submit to such the propriety of their endeavouring to utilise their appointments for the advancement of our knowledge on those interesting and important points to which we have referred.

VI.—INTRODUCTORY NOTES ON LYING-IN INSTITUTIONS, TOGETHER WITH A PROPOSAL FOR ORGANIZING AN INSTITUTION FOR TRAINING MIDWIVES AND MIDWIFERY NURSES. *By FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.* London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1871.

THIS is an admirable book, unassuming in title, excellent in matter, and breathing that spirit of beneficent wisdom, of philanthropy tempered with prudence and knowledge, so characteristic of its authoress. It is dedicated, without permission, "To the shade of Socrates' mother." The implied compliment is obviously intended, however, rather for the mother than the midwife, for, as far as we are aware, there is no hint in history that Phænareté was eminently skilled in her calling as a midwife. Coming as it does so soon after the work of Dr Matthews Duncan, which was noticed at some length in these pages, and intended, like the latter, as an inquiry into the "to be or not to be" of Maternity Hospitals, it looks at the question in a somewhat different light, though the two enquiries do not substantially differ in their conclusions. Accepting as approximately correct the estimate of the Registrar-General, that the total mortality of lying-in women delivered at home in England is 5.1 per 1000, Miss Nightingale gives a statistical glance at the death rates in several British Maternity Institutions, and finds that in these the death rate compares very unfavourably with that of home deliveries. Then, taking a wider sweep, she finds from the elaborate statistics of Le Fort—on which, however, she perhaps places too much reliance—that lamentable as are the death rates in some British institutions, they are small in comparison with those which obtain in foreign hospitals. In fact, the wonder only is that Maternity Hospitals—a class of institutions capable of doing yeoman service in the cause both of science and philanthropy—have survived the obloquy which they have incurred from the enormous mortality of the worst of their class. Miss Nightingale next sets herself to inquire into the causes of these high death rates. Here she adopts, or at least quotes, the opinions of Le Fort, that the mortality in Lying-in Hospitals depends neither on the social condition of the patients, the moral conditions under which they are delivered, the frequency of obstetrical operations, nor on ordi-

nary hospital influences. This paradoxical-looking proposition may be true enough, if it be simply meant that in a badly constructed and badly conducted institution the influences above enumerated count for little compared with defiance of sanitary laws, crowding of cases promiscuously in the same ward or room, placing midwifery wards in general hospitals, &c. But it is undoubtedly true that in a well-conducted maternity hospital most of the deaths are due to the want of stamina on the part of the mothers; and even with regard to puerperal fever there is strong *a priori* reason for believing that it will attack the ill-fed, forlorn and care-depressed, when it would pass by the healthy and buoyant in spirit. The admission of medical students from hospitals and anatomical schools is put down by Miss Nightingale as a source of danger. There is, indeed, much the same objection to this practice as there is to a professor or demonstrator of anatomy acting as a surgeon, or a general practitioner with considerable surgical practice engaging in midwifery. It might be made a rule in these institutions, that students attending a dissecting room, or surgical clinical clerks or dressers, should be debarred from attending them. In any case the officers of these hospitals would do well to inculcate on all medical students the absolute necessity of taking special precautions to prevent possible danger from this source.

A very important part of Miss Nightingale's inquiry was to ascertain the effect of construction and management on the death rate. She contrasts the arrangements of the Paris Maternité, the building being originally a monastery, and the internal administration of which has been very faulty, with those of some hospitals at home in which improved construction and enlightened management have reduced the death rate to something like the general standard.

In the latter part of the work the authoress gives her own ideal of a lying-in institution, both in regard to construction and management, and she has grafted on her model hospital a scheme for training midwives and midwifery nurses. Though exception might be taken to one or two minor arrangements, her scheme on the whole is admirable, and shows her thorough practical acquaintance not only with general principles, but with their application to the minutest details.

With regard to the question of leaving midwifery entirely to midwives, much could be said, especially from the standpoint of sentiment, in favour of the proposal;

but the question has two sides. In a few eloquent sentences in an appendix, Miss Nightingale points out the advantages of midwifery as a profession for educated women. She very pertinently remarks—and coming from such a quarter the sarcasm must fall with a keen edge—“Is there not a much better thing than making women into medical *men*, and that is making them into medical *women*.” There are, in our opinion, two considerations which Miss Nightingale has perhaps made too little of in her valuable suggestions. First, Have the generality of *gentlewomen* the necessary physical stamina for the more difficult operations of midwifery, or even for the wear and tear of ordinary obstetric practice? Second, Have educated women so much confidence in the decision of character, promptitude in emergency, and fertility of resource of each other, that they would prefer, in a case of difficulty, one of their own sex to a male accoucheur?

It is certain that this little work will exercise a marked and beneficial influence on this important class of institutions, and will stimulate their directors and medical officers to avail themselves of every means to render them worthy of public confidence as useful charities.

VII.—LECTURES ON SURGERY. By JAMES SPENCE, F.R.S.E., *Professor of Surgery in the University of Edinburgh*. Parts III. and IV. Edinburgh: A. & C. Black. 1871.

WE noticed the first two parts of Mr Spence's Lectures on Surgery, at the time of their publication. The perusal of the last two parts of those lectures has given us much more pleasure than of the first. In the present volumes, Mr Spence seems to speak from the fulness of his clinical experience, as if fresh from the bedside of his patients, while in the former parts it was as if he wrote in his library, where he did not seem to be at home.

The space at our disposal, will not permit us to do more than speak in general terms of the practical excellence of those concluding parts of Mr Spence's lectures. His directions as to the performance of all possible surgical operations are minute and admirable. The illustrations, both in the shape of lithographic plates, wood-cuts, and clinical records of cases, are numerous and excellent. We have much pleasure in recommending this compendious summing up of Mr Spence's large experience, alike to the student and the surgeon, who may be in search respectively of instruction and advice.