

"confine" as applied to the doctor? Surely the child is the confining cause, and Nature, doctor, and midwife are the releasing agents. This seems to be a real abuse of language, especially when there is a word like "deliver" ready and willing for Dr. Roberts's pen. Otherwise the policeman will be on the warpath, and writs of habeas corpus will flit round the medical doorplates.

** We rather question "E. M. S.'s" correctness in his derivation of the verb "to confine." On his side he has a standard authority, who compares it to the Middle English "Our Lady's bands or bonds" used in the sense of "enceinte," but there appears to be no historical proof of any relation between the two terms. The substantive "confinement" and the verb "to be confined" cannot be found in English literature earlier than the close of the eighteenth century. They seem to be illustrations of that tendency to euphemism in matters supposed to be indecent or indelicate, which characterises our modern womanhood, and which made its appearance in the last century. "Labour" or "childbirth" were indelicate terms, but a person so affected was "confined" to her bed or apartment. So the word "confined" or "confinement" replaced the earlier and more explicit term; and finally, as all such objectionable euphemisms do, dominated the adopted term to the exclusion of the original meaning. For instance, John Abernethy as lately as 1804 speaks of a young lady patient of his as "recovering slowly after her confinement"—a sentence which now could bear but one meaning, but Abernethy merely used the word as implying confinement to the patient's room by ordinary illness. A dozen other words could be mentioned which the same fate has befallen; for example, "belly" has been replaced by "stomach," which in its turn gives way in young lady's parlance to "chest." The substantive and verb "confinement" and "confine" have (unfortunately) been adopted during the present century into medical literature, and must now be considered, not in the light of their original derivation, but of their present meaning, that is, "confinement" must be taken as equivalent to the French "accouchement" (which has a like euphemistic origin), while to the verb "confine" may be given an active sense—the one our correspondent dislikes—exactly as the verb "accoucher" has an active as well as a passive meaning in French, translatable in English "bring to bed." So, as the "accouchement" "confines" the patient to her room, the doctor who attends her may in like euphemism be said "to confine" her, that is, he is the active cause + Nature of her delivery, which modern delicacy preferred to call her "confinement"—a term now in its turn becoming indelicate. At all events, the verb active "to confine" is not used by Dr. Roberts for the first time. It is to a certain extent useful, and is no more objectionable than the substantive or verb which "E. M. S." accepts, of which it is, after all, only the inevitable development and natural outgrowth; language, like trees, being in constant process of growth and increase, both active and passive verbs being daily invented from substantives for convenience, being adopted into the language for a like reason, and although incapable of defence on strict philological lines, becoming as much a part of our speech as words which Shakespeare knew and used.

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BOOKS, Etc., RECEIVED.

- Manual of the Domestic Hygiene of the Child. By Julius Uffelmann, M.D. Translated by Harriet Ransom Milinowski. Edited by Mary Putnam Jacobi, M.D. London and New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1891.
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- Memoires et Bulletins de la Société de Médecine et de Chirurgie de Bordeaux. 1er et 2e Fascicules, 1890. Paris: G. Masson. 1890.
- Atlas of Clinical Medicine. By Byrom Bramwell, M.D. Vol. I, Part I. Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable. 1891.
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