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BMJ

SATURDAY 15 JULY 1989



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EDITOR'S CHOICE

BMJ

Echoing Mary Queen of Scots, a former president of the Royal College of Physicians once said: "When you open my chest at necropsy you will see the words 'Remember paediatrics' engraved on my heart." This week's *BMJ* illustrates as usual what an important role paediatrics occupies in medicine. Roy Meadow's statement in a recent ABC of Child Abuse that between 2% and 10% of babies currently labelled as dying from the sudden infant death syndrome have probably been smothered by their mothers aroused some public, and private, anger—particularly as (against the *BMJ*'s advice) it was highlighted on some BBC programmes. But that is no reason not to discuss in a scientific journal the pros and cons of the issue, any more than

we should fail to debate the origins of suicide on the grounds that this would hurt the surviving relatives. And Roy Meadow does provide a cogent answer to his critics of the cot death theory (p 179). On other pages Dr Edith Lau defends the particular controls used in the Hong Kong SIDS paper (p 183) and Dr R D Wilkins questions the reliance of the anal reflex dilatation test in the BBC2 play/debate on child abuse (p 209). Finally, do spare the time to read the second of John Gabbay's marvellous articles on the French revolution; elsewhere there may be a lot of guff being produced about this year's quatorze Juillet, but he shows just how powerful an effect the events of 1789 and beyond had on medicine in the civilised world (p 166).