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became so enviable that many poor young girls contrived to become pregnant, and then overlaid or 'drop't' the infant before seeking employment. Doctors and accoucheurs kept a 'nurse-book' and the standard rate of pay was ten to twelve shillings weekly with all found. Thus the high rate of infant mortality was in part the source, and in part the effect, of the ample supply of wet nurses. This sad state of affairs stimulated Archbishop Tillotson, Addison, Swift and many others to exhort ladies of fashion to breast feed for the mutual benefit of mother and child.

In France, characteristically, wet nurses were highly organized from the twelfth century onwards (Drake, 1935) and by 1715 four employment bureaux existed in Paris for the registration of nurses who were required to give their name, age and details of the age and condition of their own baby. *Recommandaresses* were in charge, and for a time there were many abuses, but a new law in 1762 forbade nurses from taking charge of an infant

unless her own was older than 9 months. The new legislation also provided for regular medical inspection of the nurses, and the compulsory provision of a separate cradle to prevent overlaying the nursling. Fees were fixed by law and the nurses were protected by the threat of imprisonment for those who failed to pay them (though this was repealed after the Revolution in 1792).

It seems not unlikely that had such a realistic approach to the problem been adopted in England, the lot of the average infant in the eighteenth century would have been considerably improved. The whole problem of the official recognition of wet nurses in France and in England has a close parallel in the different methods of treatment of prostitutes in the two countries. Whereas in France both problems have been recognized and at least partly solved, in Britain, and particularly in Scotland, there has always been a tendency to pretend that they do not exist.

(References will be appended to Part V.)

PROFESSOR LUIGI SPOLVERINI

Professor Luigi Spolverini, President of the Italian Society of Paediatrics, will be 80 years old on August 29, 1953. His many contributions to paediatric literature—some 150 in number, spread over 53 years—have covered a wide range of subjects and have brought him renown far beyond the boundaries of his own land. His interests have ranged from the composition of breast milk to

thyroid dysfunction, from rheumatic heart disease to the reduction of infant mortality. He is perhaps most widely known for his part in the organization of the campaign against poliomyelitis. Many countries have honoured him, and in 1934 he was elected an honorary member of the Section of Paediatrics of the Royal Society of Medicine.

The Editors of the *Archives of Disease in Childhood* are sure that its readers will join them in offering Professor Spolverini their best wishes on his eightieth birthday.