

## Book Reviews

physicians such as Tarnier, Pierre Budin, and others; and how French society of the *fin de siècle* understood and received these incubators. He then discusses the nuances of technology transfer and transformation as the incubator made its way across the Atlantic, some ten to twenty years after its invention and acceptance in France. Baker spends considerable time illustrating how this particular process of technology transfer was influenced by other inventions that were widely heralded in the popular press and which caught the imagination of the American and French public.

One of the most interesting chapters of the book, 'Propaganda for the premies', discusses the many uses of the premature infant incubator, from life-saving machine employed in a hospital, to venues of entertainment at world fairs, expositions, and amusement parks such as Coney Island. And while "premie" is probably a more recognizable term to modern-day physicians than it would have been to those early twentieth-century ones he is writing about, Baker ably documents how teams of physicians and showmen developed premature-baby shows—complete with medical attendants, nurses, and babies in incubators—ranging from Barnum-esque displays of entertainment to earnest attempts at educating the American public on the scientific contributions being made by this new technology. Other chapters explore how physicians of different specialties and viewpoints—chiefly, obstetricians and paediatricians—developed markedly different views of the premature infant and its aftercare. A final essay explores the eclipse of the incubator in the United States as paediatricians and public health workers of the first two decades of the twentieth century turned from treatment of the premature infant to prevention strategies, such as education efforts. In France, as Baker points out, the stresses of World War I further splintered a similar redirection of energies from the treatment of prematurity to its prevention.

In his conclusion, Dr Baker asks if the infant incubator was a technology that "misfired".

Aside from the shocking visual image this metaphor conjures, Baker concludes that this is not the story of a technology that was ignored by an unappreciated or apathetic audience. On the contrary, as *The machine in the nursery* demonstrates, the incubator attracted the attention of some of the best paediatricians and obstetricians of the day.

**Howard Markel,**  
University of Michigan Medical School

**Janet Golden,** *A social history of wet nursing in America: from breast to bottle*, Cambridge History of Medicine series, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. xiii, 215, £40.00, \$54.95 (0-521-49544-X).

This book sets out to record the history of wet-nursing in the United States from colonial times to the twentieth century. It also documents why Americans ultimately rejected this method of infant nutrition, based on the assumption that "what 'science' produced was superior to what 'nature' provided" (p. 1). Yet as Golden insists, these events should not be seen as a dichotomy between wet-nursing and artificial infant feeding. Instead, studying such a process requires a broad interpretive framework that incorporates the social class divisions between wet-nurses and their employers, the changes over time in how Americans perceived and valued their children, the steadily increasing influence and authority of medical science and the role of the physician in prescribing child-rearing practices, and the many problems of wet-nursing that arose during the nineteenth century but remained culturally embedded in infant nutrition discourse well into the twentieth century.

The book's first section offers an exploration of wet-nursing in ante-bellum America. Golden discusses the infant-feeding practices used during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with attention to the intertwined discourse on religious and medical views of mothering as it pertained to wet-nursing. The narrative

## Book Reviews

proceeds with a discussion of how both popular and medical views of wet-nursing evolved within a context of urbanism, changing family demographics, and the rise of the middle-class during the first half of the nineteenth century.

The second section of *A social history of wet nursing in America* explores this curious enterprise in the post-Civil War years. The author devotes considerable effort to describing the modernization of the urban wet-nursing market and its many different sectors. Golden further discusses the backgrounds of those wet-nurses who worked in middle- and upper-class American homes as well as how this line of work affected their subsequent lives. Considerable attention is also paid to wet-nurses working at foundling hospitals and nursing homes using a rich array of hospital case records and welfare agency reports.

The book's final section discusses the many different participants in the wet-nursing marketplace from 1870 to 1910 with an emphasis on the perceptions of mothers who employed wet-nurses, wet-nurses themselves, and paediatricians. As Golden correctly notes, the emergence of paediatrics as a medical specialty during this period is "inextricably linked" to the science of infant feeding. Despite this acknowledgement, however, the author does not succeed in incorporating the many connections and discordances wet-nursing had with those physicians advocating breast feeding and the powerful introduction of a safe, convenient, and inexpensive but artificial means of infant feeding. A more nuanced examination of this complex relationship of doctors, mothers, the science of nutrition, and the public's faith in that science along with her discussion of the acceptance of human and artificial infant formulas would have strengthened this innovative study. Issues of race and ethnicity are mentioned but not explored in significant depth.

Curiously, relatively few examples from the popular media are applied to Golden's discussion of the experience mothers had with hiring wet-nurses, the experiences of wet nurses themselves, and the paediatrician's view

of these practices. To be sure, she does dredge out some early twentieth-century references to these debates in a variety of rarely cited child-care reference books, paediatric textbooks, and a smattering of popular baby-care or women's magazines, but the popular media on which she draws is far richer than *A social history of wet nursing* suggests. Indeed, there was a wide variety of American commentators on wet-nursing and the "fitness" of a woman based on her selection of infant feeding techniques ranging from Theodore Dreiser and H L Mencken to President Theodore Roosevelt.

But most importantly, Janet Golden has written a solid scholarly book on a rarely studied topic in the history of American medicine and women. In a clear prose the author succeeds in uncovering many of the complicated interactions of medicine, society, class, and work that contributed to the definition of motherhood and the practice of wet-nursing from the colonial era to the early twentieth century.

**Howard Markel,**

University of Michigan Medical School

**Socrates Litsios, *The tomorrow of malaria*, Wellington, NZ, Pacific Press, 1996, pp. 181 (0-9583418-3-4).**

*The tomorrow of malaria* by Socrates Litsios provides a short and immensely readable overview of the past, present and future of malaria. With its stimulating and provocative title, we are instantly reminded that, while malaria has been with us for thousands of years, the disease remains and will remain a critical global problem for future generations. The aims of the book are clearly laid out in the introduction. The author shows that by drawing on an historical perspective and by looking back at the successes and failures of campaigns to control and eradicate malaria in the past we will more readily understand the current and future situations. In particular, Litsios emphasizes that the rich epidemiological studies and the development of ideas on