

OBSTETRIC NURSING.

— BY OBSTETRICA, M.R.B.N.A. —

PART II.—INFANTILE.

CHAPTER I.—INTRODUCTORY.

(Continued from page 188.)

At their completion, this Course of Lectures will be published as one of the Series of "Nursing Record Text Books and Manuals."

THE chair must be placed close to, but not in front of, the fire; the one you sit on should be drawn towards the mantel-piece, which will prevent your face from being scorched by the fire, and your temper from the perturbation that might ensue therefrom. In addition to the two chairs, you will require a third, if there is no table available to put such things on as we shall require for our use. All Obstetric Nurses know that it is usual to provide a very "smart" baby basket as part of the *layette*, but on this occasion, and for some time to come, we shall decline that ornamental article, and use one of a more humble and useful description. The one I use—a personal possession—is a small tray basket, at the bottom of which is placed one of the doyleys that have, at divers times, been worked for and given to me for that purpose. On this we place a small tin box of vaseline that we can renew when necessary; a little pin cushion to hold the very few pins we require, including two or three safeties, and a small pair of sharp-pointed scissors. Besides these we have a small bag to match the doyley, which holds a needle case, thimble, cotton, some pieces of linen rag, and a "dust bag"—that is, some powder tied up in a piece of old book muslin. There is a lovely powder box in the basket, but for the present we are going to admire it only, as we do not use "powder puffs" to begin with.

What sort of powder shall we use? A great deal goes to this matter, for the indiscriminate use of toilet or face powders, as they are sometimes called, is much to be deprecated on account of the possibility of their containing injurious mineral ingredients. There is more carefulness shown in this matter than there used to be, but in my early days of practice I saw bad results to infants from the want of attention to this matter. Why do we use powder at all? Simply for its desiccating properties. A newly-born infant's skin is extremely tender, and in the flexure of the joints of the limbs it is difficult to wipe the

skin perfectly dry, and we use powder to the wet surfaces to sop up the moisture and thoroughly dry them, and thereby prevent chafing. There are few things better for this purpose, and certainly none safer, than very finely powdered starch. I recommend the use of the well-known Glenfield starch, and prepare it in this wise: Take, say, a quarter or half a pound packet, place it on a sheet of clean demy paper and put another over it, and pass a heavy rolling-pin over and over it; then put the powder into a clean canister, ready for use; tie up as much as you require into the piece of old book muslin I mentioned, and it will come out as fine as possible—not floury; we do not want a flour, but starch, in a state of fine division, and we shall find this simple preparation most useful during the early days of infantile life. Perfumes are quite unnecessary, though I do not mean to say there is any harm in them; the only scent I care for for our use is a few bags of sweet lavender, put into the drawer with baby's clothes.

What needles shall we use for our sewing? Large are safer, and therefore better, than small—say 3's. The cotton should be strong; Brook's glaze thread, Nos. 16 or 18, I find as good as any. Baby's clothes are on the towel-horse close to our hand; they consist of shirt, flannels, night-dress, square, and last, but by no means least in importance, the belly band, which should be invariably made of new flannel, the finest Welsh being preferable to any other. As to its length, the width of the flannel is a good guide; with respect to depth we want to be more accurate. I find six inches about right; we turn up a hem of two inches at the bottom, which reduces the depth to four inches. For first use, and for about a week afterwards, I prefer the binders to be unmade, *i.e.*, having the edges raw. We shall require three or four napkins, one soft diaper towel, and two soft cotton Turkish towels; you roll up the binder to its full length and place it on the basket, with a piece of linen rag ready for use.

Every Obstetric Nurse must wear a belt during labour, as I have told you in a former paper, and secured to this belt by a silk cord a pair of rounded scissors, such as we use for separating, and I shall show how useful they may be to you now. Our next care is to get baby's bath ready. And now we enter upon what I may almost call the "water worries" of this portion of our duty. Those of my sister workers (and I fear their number is few) who like the writer have had

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