

It is wise to rest afterwards for two hours and then dress leisurely. The pregnant woman has sometimes peculiar fancies for certain food; let her indulge them if not deleterious to health. Popular superstition has attributed birth marks and deformities to these; Hunter, however, investigated over two thousand cases, questioning the mother before labour as to her idiosyncrasies in this respect, and never once did he discover a coincidence between them and the appearance of the child.

Clothing should be light, loose, and warm; anything that compresses the chest and abdomen or flattens nipples, should be avoided. Garters and high heels should of course be tabooed. At Sparta and Athens in the old days, one of the duties of the magistrates was to inspect the clothes of the pregnant woman, to approve or condemn!

Exercise should be moderate; never carried to the point of fatigue. Walking is perhaps the best. Let the patient take a short rest before and after the mid-day meal. If the abdominal muscles are flabby it is good to do some simple exercises to strengthen them—e.g., let the patient lie flat on her back, fold the arms on the chest, then rise to the sitting posture without drawing up legs or raising heels; or again, let her lie flat and straight, clasp hands under head, put legs close together, and then raise them slowly till they are at right angles to the body, lowering them gently till they nearly reach the ground; repeat exercise and rest. These movements may at first cause a little stiffness, but this soon wears off.

All jumping, straining, hanging pictures, reaching from high shelves, and lifting of heavy weights should be avoided. Long and fatiguing journeys are inadvisable; severe sea-sickness has sometimes led to a miscarriage. Where possible, the last three months of pregnancy should be rest months. The observations of Bachimont of over 4,000 cases led him to conclude that the birth weight of the child showed a marked increase when the mothers took this rest. The standing position causes the uterus to descend; it is an established fact that premature labour is less frequent where the pelvis is contracted, the reason of this is possibly that the uterus remains in the abdomen.

If the woman has previously had premature labours or miscarriages she should rest at the time when in the ordinary course of events the menstrual period would have occurred.

Owing to the increased work thrown upon the lungs, an abundance of fresh air is more than ever necessary. The window should be open day and night; over-heated rooms, churches, and places of amusements are best avoided. Deep breathing exercises for a few minutes, morning and evening, help to expand the lungs. These are best taken near an open window in a dressing-gown. To exercise upper part of chest, stand erect, hands on hips, and feet together. Exhale deeply to empty lungs as far as possible, then take through the nose a long slow inhalation, filling upper part of lungs, and expanding chest between the shoulders. Hold breath for five seconds and exhale slowly.

To exercise sides and lower part of the chest, keep the same position. Take long deep breath, filling

lower part of chest and expanding lower ribs; avoid raising shoulders. Hold breath for some seconds, then breathe out slowly.

A midwife does well to advise her patient to pay a visit to the dentist early in pregnancy, it will save much pain if carious teeth are stopped or removed; the rules of the C.M.B. give directions as to when a doctor should be consulted, it is also just as well to impress it upon the patient. There are many who regard, for example, the swelling of hands and feet as incident to pregnancy.

The influence of the mother on the unborn child is a vast and complex subject. It has been urged that since there are no nerves in the umbilical cord maternal impressions cannot be transmitted to the foetus. Be that as it may, the pregnant woman should be a happy woman, with beautiful surroundings; she should have pleasant occupation, be guarded from petty worries, anxieties, shocks and over-excitement, and as Goethe advises one and all, let no day pass without reading, seeing, or hearing some beautiful thing. M. O. H.

A DEFENCE UNION FOR MIDWIVES.

We understand that an open discussion is to take place at the Midwives' Institute, 12, Buckingham Street, Strand, W.C. on Friday, February 15th, at 7.30, on the subject of a Defence Union for Midwives. The question is one of vital importance to all certified midwives, and we hope that there will be a large attendance, so that there may be a really good debate on the question.

THE ROYAL MATERNITY CHARITY OF LONDON.

The Royal Maternity Charity of London, 31, Finsbury Square, E.C., which provides midwife-nurses, medical attendance, and medicines gratis for poor married women in their own homes, on a recommendation letter from a subscriber, is celebrating its third jubilee this year, having been founded in 1757, and a Festival Dinner is to take place on Tuesday, February 19th, at the Albion Hotel, 172, Aldersgate Street, E.C., when the Archdeacon of London will preside. The Charity is heavily in debt, and it is hoped that the special effort now being made may result in the extinction of this debt. A useful branch of its work is its Samaritan Fund, as some of the cases attended are in a lamentable condition of destitution. Cases are recorded in which a bundle of rags, or a bag of shavings do duty for a bed, in which not an atom of food or firing is found in the place, and the poor woman, about to become a mother, has no provision for the infant, and is herself almost destitute of clothing.

CONGRATULATIONS TO "THE MIDWIFE."

We take this opportunity of thanking our numerous readers who have, by letter and otherwise, offered their congratulations and expressed their pleasure on the inauguration of *The Midwife*. We shall, at all times, be pleased to receive from midwives any suggestions which they consider would, if carried out, increase its usefulness. It depends largely on midwives themselves how useful our new supplement may be made to them.

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