

The Midwife.

Pruritus in Pregnancy.

A French physician has recently drawn attention to the frequency of pruritus among pregnant women, and that it is often so aggravated as to entail loss of rest and sleep, and to induce pronounced nervous irritability. In some cases the cause is without doubt the presence of more or less well marked discharge, but he has found sugar in the urine of all the pregnant women who have complained of discomfort and irritation of this kind. He therefore prohibits all sugars or sweets, and prescribes for them Vichy water as a drink. A local application of hot water, with 10 grams of chloral, is made four times a day, the parts being afterwards treated with an ointment of ichthyol 10 grams, and benzoin. A few days later a powder made up of zinc oxide, bismuth, and talc is ordered, and if there is any leucorrhœa a morning and evening douche containing 20 grams of sodium borate is prescribed.

As a matter of fact, in this country carbolic acid ointment is generally used in these cases with much benefit.

A Handy Sterilisation of Forceps.

Captain V. T. Carruthers, in a correspondence in the *Lancet* on Antisepsis in Midwifery Practice, gives the following account of his own experience of sterilising midwifery instruments:—

"I began," he writes, "by causing a local tinsmith to make a small, light steriliser of thinnest tin. It was just large enough to hold my forceps. I carried it easily in my bag and used it frequently with satisfaction. It then occurred to me to try a plan which would enable me to use a smaller spirit lamp, carry less spirit, and at the same time save some of the 15 or 20 minutes necessary for my steriliser to reach boiling point. I accordingly tilted the steriliser so that one end was several inches lower than the other, poured two or three ounces of hot water into it, and placed a single small spirit lamp under the lower end. The water quickly boiled and filled the closed steriliser with boiling hot steam. Afterwards, I gave up the steriliser and used a thin tin douche can of the same dimensions as the steriliser, and having a lid but no spout. It was used in the same way—i.e., by having a few ounces

of water boiled in the bottom of the tin. Wire supports to hold the can erect, or sharply inclined, can be easily made and attached. This device, besides rapidly sterilising forceps and gloves, supplied the great desideratum of a sterile douche can in place of the septic household jug. Of course, the instruments have to be well cleansed from organic or greasy contamination before trusting them to steam disinfection. I have been told, but do not know if it is true, that the addition of a little formalin to the water increases the antiseptic power of the steam. I have also tried the expedient of connecting the spout of a douche can, by means of a few inches of rubber tube, to the spout of a small kettle on a spirit-lamp. In a glass douche reservoir a thermometer (well wrapped in lint) registered 210 degs. Fahr. in a few minutes after the kettle began to boil. The reservoir was kept closed by a folded handkerchief. This plan might prove useful to those who prefer to sterilise the forceps before going to their case. For the instrument, wrapped in cloth, can be sterilised without being wetted. Any dampness that may hang about the cloth can be dried off in front of the fire without unwrapping the forceps."

The Inspectors of Midwives' Association.

The recently formed Inspectors of Midwives' Association held a meeting on Saturday last at the Midwives' Institute. The number of lady inspectors of midwives, appointed by county or borough councils, is steadily increasing, and their work is recognised as a powerful factor in the administration of the Act. The objects of the Association include the consideration and discussion of the best methods of bringing more uniformity into the administration of the Act, and of obtaining trustworthy and prompt information from the midwives themselves. One of the chief subjects of discussion at Saturday's meeting was the new Midwives' Bill which passed the House of Lords last session, and which will be before the House of Commons during the autumn session, the Association pledging itself to endeavour to obtain the amendment or omission of certain clauses which they deem prejudicial to the working of the Act. Dr. Macroray, senior inspector for London, was elected President.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)