

# The Midwife.

## COMPLICATIONS DURING PREGNANCY.

The complications to be watched for during pregnancy are:—

1. *Albuminuria*, which may be due to:—  
(1) Toxæmia of Pregnancy, (2) Cardiac disease, (3) Nephritis. Albuminuria of pregnancy seldom manifests itself before the twenty-eighth week, and is much more common in primigravida than in multiparæ. Cases differ greatly in severity and in some the only symptom is a moderate amount of albumin in the urine; but there may be, and often is, marked swelling and œdema of the legs and other dependent parts. It should be treated as soon as recognised or it may terminate in—

2. *Eclampsia*:—Convulsive fits which occur almost solely in unrecognised and untreated cases of albuminuria of pregnancy. The premonitory signs of eclampsia are: appearance of albumin in the urine, which may be high coloured and scanty; œdema of ankles, legs and perhaps face, abdomen and vulva, accompanied by certain symptoms, such as headache, vomiting, disturbances of vision, dizziness, drowsiness and high tension pulse.

3. *Pernicious Vomiting* (Hyperemesis of pregnancy) due to toxæmia. Vomiting may become almost incessant; the patient will vomit any hour of the day or night, independently of any apparent cause, such as taking food. She becomes rapidly emaciated, and unless labour is induced may even die. Sometimes the foetus will die, and the sickness will suddenly stop.

4. *Chorea* (St. Vitus' dance) not infrequently met with as a complication of pregnancy. There is nearly always a previous history of chorea, and often of chorea and rheumatism combined. It is more common in a first than in a subsequent pregnancy, and nearly always appears during the first six months of pregnancy. Miscarriage may result, or the patient may become exhausted by the violence of the movements, and induction of labour may be required.

5. *Insanity of Pregnancy*, when it appears, does so, as a rule, after the sixth month; is more frequent in primigravida, and is, as a rule, melancholic in type. The patient is very depressed and sleeps badly. In some cases there is a marked tendency to suicide. Recovery

usually takes place soon after delivery. Insanity of pregnancy is more likely to occur in single women.

6. *Antepartum Hæmorrhage* may be due to (1) abortion or miscarriage, a term applied to the premature expulsion of the ovum before the child is recognised as viable. The causes may be disease of the mother, shock or fall, disease of the placenta or membranes, use of drugs or mechanical causes. (2) Accidental hæmorrhage, which may be due to a disease of the mother that favours bleeding, or to a shock or blow causing separation of a normally situated placenta. (3) Unavoidable hæmorrhage or placenta prævia, the causes of which are purely theoretical.

ELIZABETH ISLIP.

## ADVANCE IN OBSTETRICS.

Dr. A. Laphorn Smith, of Montreal, speaking at a meeting of the American Gynæcological Society, said that any obstetrician with a large practice would, if asked what had been the greatest advance in that department of medicine in the last half century, unhesitatingly mention asepsis and the practical abolition of puerperal fever. Also the advent of the trained nurse in the domain of obstetrics.

It will be a comfort to nurses and midwives at whose door any septic development in a patient is generally laid to learn that Dr. Laphorn Smith says that, though all doctors and nurses feel it a personal disgrace to have a case of puerperal sepsis, he is convinced that in many of the cases in which he has been called in they have been absolutely blameless. While judging ourselves sternly in this matter it is certain that there are many avenues through which septic infection may be conveyed to a patient. To take only one instance, the ordinary flock bed. Could anything make it hygienic, and is it not often impregnated with filth?

## A MIDWIFE'S ALLEGED NEGLECT.

Mr. Charles J. M'Cormack, on behalf of the Local Government Board for Ireland, will hold an inquiry on oath respecting the complaint of neglect of duty alleged against the midwife of the Tipperary Dispensary District, by the husband of a patient.

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