

The Midwife.

THE DIFFICULTY OF TEDIOUS LABOURS.

The patient, aged 38, had one daughter, born 18½ years ago. The pregnancy was quite normal. Three and a half weeks over the full time the patient began with feeble pains every ten minutes. She went on having these feeble pains more or less for three days and three nights, bad enough to prevent her from sleeping but not bad enough to do any good, because at the end of the third day the cervix was only dilated to the size of a five-shilling piece. The doctor decided to put the patient under chloroform, which he did, and with his hand stretched the cervix with each pain for three hours. Forceps were then put on, and the baby was born thirty minutes after. Presentation was quite normal first vertex, but there was not a drop of liquor amnii. The after-birth came away forty minutes after the second stage, and the mother made an uninterrupted recovery. As the mother suffered from chronic constipation, she expressed a wish not to be even asked to nurse her baby, as she said she made a hopeless muddle in trying to feed the last one. The great difficulty was in getting the baby to breathe or cry.

After the usual vigorous measures had been tried, the baby started a weak flutter of respiration, but made no attempt to cry. As soon as I could, I gave him a hot bath. He measured 22 inches, weighed 7½ lb., but had not a bit of flesh on his poor little body. I did not dress him, but rolled him in a warm blanket, put him in his cot, and surrounded him with hot bottles. Four hours after he was born, I trickled down his throat a teaspoonful of warm boiled water; he made no attempt to suck. I continued to give water every four hours. His finger nails and his lips were black, and I thought his circulation would never get established.

When he was twenty-four hours old, meconium was passed. I continued the warm-water feeds, with a few drops of milk and sugar of milk added. He passed urine when he was forty-eight hours old. Now when he was six hours old he came out in a thick rash of raised spots from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet. The height of this rash seemed to be reached on the third day; then it began to fade, and the skin came off in casts, just as if the

child had had scarlet fever. A skin specialist and a child specialist saw the baby, but they did not order any treatment, and the baby lost ½ lb. the first three days. He cried well on the fourth day, and when he was on his proper feeds of milk, cream, sugar of milk, and boiled water he gained at the rate of 1½ oz. each day for ten days, and had put on 2 lb. at the end of the first four weeks, and was thoroughly strong, healthy, and normal in every way.

I hope this will be an encouragement to nurses not to be depressed when a weakly new-born baby comes under their care, as I know from long years of experience how depressed a monthly nurse feels at the sight of a thin, feeble, new-born baby.

A FULLY TRAINED AND A MONTHLY NURSE.

CAN THE UNDELIVERED FŒTUS CRY?

The following interesting remarks appeared in last week's *British Medical Journal* :—

There has recently been some discussion in French and Belgian medical papers about the nature of the *vagitus uterinus*.* Is it the foetus or the uterus which causes the remarkable phenomenon occasionally heard before the foetus is delivered? Velpeau once said that even if he had heard them he would not believe in them—that is to say, he would not ascribe them to the foetus. Allard, on the other hand, has published an observation in the *Normandie Medicale* which leads him to believe that the *vagitus* is uttered by the foetus. Let it be remembered, however, that the forceps were used. It was a seventh labour in this instance, and on the three previous occasions the forceps had been applied, apparently on account of inertia. After a first attempt, which proved unsuccessful, he allowed the patient to rest before introducing the instrument once more. Suddenly he heard stifled cries, just like those of a new-born infant under the bedclothes, but the child was still undelivered. At the same time the nurse who was holding the patient's leg cried out, "On voit bien qu'il s'ennuie, il pleure!" and the mother drew herself up and exclaimed, "What's making that noise?" The husband,

* Editorial article in *Journ. d'accouchements et revu méd. et de chir. prat.*, Liège, May 26th, 1912.

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