

scarlatinal, for instance, and by a blocking of the "tubuli," lead to the absorption of albumen into the blood. One of the results of the checking of the renal functions is dropsical effusion; and in the malady we are now discussing anasarca has been considered a symptom of the existence of albumen in the urine; the *position* of these effusions is a matter of much importance, as I wish to point out to women engaged in our portion of work. It has been observed that these "swellings" attack the face, particularly under the eyes, and the *upper extremities*, and in these cases it is far more prudent for a patient to take medical advice than "doctor" herself, and as a Nurse urge this course upon the lady.

You must not confound these aforesaid effusions with the frequent oedema of the *lower extremities* and feet, for this is more often the effect of the gravid uterus upon the internal iliac veins; and these swellings are not always painful, but always uncomfortable, and render moving about very irksome; they disappear after delivery, and lead to no bad result.

We will now turn our thoughts to the effects that result from the altered blood state of pregnancy, always bearing in our minds the "albumen" that so often depraves it; and we have already taken note of its visible and invisible signs, more especially as the sequelæ of kidney derangement.

But there is another aspect of this dyscrasia more serious still—its effect upon the nervous system of pregnant women, which, as we all know, is in a state of the highest tension, sensitive to every influence, affected by every emotion, and one of the most depressing of those emotions is a feeling of fear as to the coming trial. In some women this dread is merged in the thought of motherhood, which swallows up all other fears; but in women of feebler frames or lower organisation it is not so, and a dread takes possession of them.

In a previous paper I pointed out that the sympathetic nervous system dominated the sexual life of women, and that the *vasa motor* nerves directed the nutrient stream of arterial blood whenever and wherever it was wanted. All involuntary muscular acts, all emotions, all fears are subject to its sway. The nerves of special sense owe their nutrition to it. Can we not imagine, then, that if from any cause the blood stream is not *pure*, how these and all other organs would be likely to suffer? Do we not know how often in pregnant women taste and hearing, as well as *appetite*, are affected? Some are deaf, and, more singular still, some suffer from aphonia, loss of voice, and, in one instance that came under my care, loss of the faculty of speech.

It is not so long ago that a young man came in a state of breathless excitement to tell me his wife (who was very near her time) had been struck dumb. "Some husbands might envy you, Davis," I said, as a sort of "feeler" to test the sincerity of the scare. "Do please come, ma'am," was all I could get out of him. I went back with him, and surely enough the woman lay on the bed, looking all right and in no pain, but speechless. She was an intelligent woman, so we got one of the children's slates for her to write down answers to questions on. "It is not loss of *voice*," she wrote; "I have lost my speech, and I can't even *say* words to *myself*." There was nothing to be done then, but I comforted her by assuring her I thought it would all come right in the end. I called the next day. The patient had had a good night and was up and about, but we had to go on with the slate. A few days afterwards I was again sent for: labour had set in, and all went well. As soon as her child was born she recovered her speech. "What have I got?" she asked me. "A son, and your tongue back. I half believe you have been 'foxing.'" The speechlessness disappeared as by a miracle, and no other bad results came of her pregnancy that I was aware of.

(To be continued.)

THE MIDWIVES REGISTRATION BILL.

By ROBERT REID RENTOUL, M.D.,
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THIS Bill has been again introduced into Parliament, and is down for second reading this month. We are told it has been framed for the purpose of protecting poor lying-in women; and that these may have the services of "skilled" and "registered" Midwives. But if this Bill pass, great evils may result. The Bill has been drafted more in the interests of Midwives than of "poor women"; it has been promoted by the Midwives' Institute. In order to show that it is a very one-sided measure I will call attention to some of the clauses.

Thus, although Clause 2 says the Medical Council shall frame and approve rules for regulating the education, &c., of Midwives, it is to be noted this Council is refused the power of enforcing obedience to these rules by the various training schools; and with the result that the latter will refuse to adopt them. Why does the Bill not provide that such rules shall—when approved by the Privy Council—be of the same force and effect as if they had been enacted in this Act?

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