

Then it is said (but not often by expectant mothers) that beautiful bundles of baby clothes and "nourishments" are more easily obtained if a hospital doctor is your attendant.

The layman (or sometimes the laywoman) who in the past gave maternity letters had something to do with making the student, or so-called doctor, popular. Anyway, male students are at the present time in great favour, and it is a fashion that is likely to survive until the next generation of mothers arrive, with their knowledge of home nursing and infant care.

They may still prefer a doctor, but they will require the person into whose hands is given their newborn child, and their own future health, to possess at least as much knowledge of hygiene as they do. Probably we shall then have changed student or midwife into student and midwife.

#### TWO INTERESTING QUESTIONS.

Two very interesting questions were dealt with in a recent issue by correspondents of the *Lancet*. The first by Dr. James Oliver, F.R.S., Edin., and the second by Dr. D. D. Lee.

##### "TWINS" OR SUPERFETATION.

Dr. Oliver writes:—"In consequence of the maternity benefit connected with the National Insurance Act the daily press has brought to the notice of the general public a question of the greatest scientific interest, as within the last twelve months apparently, two mothers have each respectively given birth to two children, with in one case an interval of five weeks and in the other an interval of six weeks between the children. The problem which attracts scientific attention and calls for solution is: Are the children thus born to be regarded as twins or not? We know that true twins may exhibit at birth a marked disparity both in size and development, but it is impossible to believe that two ova impregnated at the same time and lodged in the same uterine cavity can be so influenced that one completes its uterine development and growth and is expelled from its maternal abode thirty-five or forty-two days after its fellow. It is quite possible that two ova may be shed and impregnated at different times during the same intermenstrual period, but the offspring thus begotten will be born at practically the same time. The question which now confronts us is: Is true superfetation possible? That is, is it possible for an ovum to be fertilised thirty-five or more days after the process of gestation has asserted itself in a previously fertilised ovum? As ovulation occurs whilst menstruation is held in abeyance by lactation, there is no apparent reason why ovulation may not occasionally occur during gestation, and under such circumstances superfetation is possible, and the mother who

gives birth to two children which are born after a greater interval than twenty-eight days is clearly entitled to the maternity benefit for each."

##### VAGITUS UTERINUS.

Dr. D. D. Lee reports an undoubted case of vagitus uterinus which occurred in his practice. He writes:—"There could be no possible doubt about it as it was heard as distinctly by the nurse as by me. The cry was quite loud. The case was a breech occurring in a primipara. The labour was allowed to pursue a natural course without interference until sufficient of the breech was delivered to allow me to grasp it with both hands to make traction on it so as to hurry the head through the pelvis. It was during this manoeuvre that the cry occurred. I did not have any of my hand in the vagina then except my two fore-fingers, as they secured purchase round the iliac crests of the child; in that way perhaps air was allowed to enter. The child was born alive, and I did not think it necessary to rush matters at the expense of the integrity of the mother's tissues. Even the perineum was not injured.

The causes that seemed to me to operate for its production, allowing for the necessity of air, were the pressure of the head on the cord and the stimulation of cold air on the child's breech."

#### CHARGES AGAINST A CERTIFIED MIDWIFE.

Elizabeth Kennedy, certified midwife, of St. Katherine's Road, Notting Hill who was in practice at the passing of the Midwives Act, was charged on remand, before Mr. Paul Taylor, at Marylebone Police Court, with the murder of Mrs. Annie Ethel Maddison a young married woman, by performing an illegal operation upon her. Further charges were also preferred against her in connection with two other women—Ethel Hemmings and Agnes Rolls—in September and October last; and Minnie Short, cook, of 34, Colville Road, Bayswater, was charged with aiding and abetting her.

The Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr. Percival Clarke, barrister-at-law, prosecuted, and the accused woman was defended by her solicitor, Mr. Freke Palmer.

Detective-inspector Sanders who arrested Short, said that when charged she inquired whether the others had to go also, and on the way to the station said that she did not force Ethel Hemmings to do anything. She went of her own free will.

Detective Sergeant Ferrier said that when charged that prisoner stated that the two girls, and another also, were going to do away with themselves if she had not helped them. They were both over age and knew what they were doing. Mrs. Kennedy did not force them. They were the only two she had taken to Mrs. Kennedy, and she only gave her £1.

The prisoners were remanded.

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