

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

(a) DEFINE THE TERMS COLOSTRUM, MECONIUM, ECTOPIC GESTATION. (b) BY WHAT MEANS DOES THE FŒTUS RECEIVE NOURISHMENT?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Elizabeth Douglas, Maternity Hospital, Belfast Union, Belfast.

PRIZE PAPER.

Colostrum is the fluid which comes from the breasts during the first forty-eight hours after delivery. There is more water and proteids and less sugar and fat in colostrum than in human milk when properly established. Colostrum acts as an aperient to the newborn child.

Meconium.—The motions of the infant for the first two days are called meconium, from the resemblance of the stool to thick poppy juice. Meconium is composed of mucus from the small intestine mixed with bile and desquamated epithelial cells. In two or three days the motions become of the usual yellow colour.

Ectopic gestation, or extra-uterine pregnancy, means the arrest of the ovum at some point before it reaches the uterine cavity; it may be ovarian, abdominal, tubal, or, if the sac formed by the tubes ruptures into the broad ligament, the ovum develops between the folds of the broad ligament, or there may be pregnancy in an abnormal uterus, such as the rudimentary horn of a uterus unicornis.

The fœtus receives its nourishment from the placenta.

When the ovum enters the uterus it sinks into the mucous membrane and becomes attached to it. The mucous membrane between the ovum and uterus is called the decidua serotina, and eventually becomes the seat of the placenta. The position of the placenta is fairly well marked by the second month, and by the end of the third it has assumed its well-known formation.

The placenta consists essentially of two vascular membranes, one foetal, the other being maternal. These membranes are so closely interwoven together that without any actual communication between the two vascular systems interchange of gases and of nutritive and excretory material can take place between them.

The umbilical cord or funis is the connecting link between the placenta and the fœtus. It runs from the centre of the placenta to the umbilicus of the fœtus, and carries the three vessels by means of which blood is carried to and from the fœtus. Two umbilical arteries carry deoxygenated blood from the fœtus to the

placenta, and one umbilical vein carries re-oxygenated blood from the placenta to the fœtus. These blood vessels are surrounded by a tissue called Wharton's jelly, and the entire cord is invested by a covering of the amnion.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors are accorded honourable mention:—Miss Maude Cullen, Miss Dora Vine, Miss C. McLennan, Miss Simpson, and Miss C. Moore.

Miss Dora Vine says: "It is advisable to smear the infant's buttocks with vaseline to prevent the meconium adhering, and so causing the delicate skin to be chafed through attempts to remove it. Meconium present on the examining finger in a vertex presentation is an indication for prompt delivery, as it means that the infant is in danger of asphyxia."

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

What special care should be given to a child with measles? What precautions should be taken with reference to the room?

NURSING DISCIPLINE.

It is much to be regretted that certain members of the medical staff of the Victoria Hospital, Blackpool, have thought fit to resign over a question of nursing management, and there is little doubt that their association with members of the nursing staff in making a complaint to the Committee concerning the quality of the food, without intimating their intention to the Matron, placed them in a false position from the first. As the senior service in connection with a hospital, we consider that it is the duty of the medical staff to maintain strict discipline in the ranks of the nursing service, and this cannot be done by ignoring the senior nursing officer. The medical officers in question insisted upon the Committee reinstating two Sisters it had called upon to resign. This, of course, was not possible if the Matron was to remain in office.

Dr. Molloy, Chairman of the Medical Board, and Dr. Richardson are standing by the Board of Management, and have undertaken to carry out the medical duties required until a permanent medical staff is appointed. Other doctors are also giving their services. It appears, therefore, that the efficiency at the hospital will remain unimpaired.

A liberal and varied diet for patients and nurses is of the first importance in every hospital, and the Committee of the Blackpool Hospital must willingly sanction sufficient expenditure to provide it.

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