

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

DESCRIBE IN DETAIL THE MANAGEMENT OF TWIN LABOUR AFTER THE BIRTH OF THE FIRST CHILD, AND GIVE REASONS FOR ALL YOU DO.

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss E. O. Walford, Layer de la Haye, Colchester.

PRIZE PAPER.

In twin labour, after the birth of the first child, a second ligature must be applied to the cord in case there is only one placenta and the circulation communicates, in which case the blood from the placenta might ooze away and cause the death of the second child.

Next make an examination to discover the presentation: malpresentations are common with the second of twins, and if the examination discloses a presentation other than the "uncomplicated head or breech," medical aid must be summoned. If the presentation is normal, and the woman is not having pains, she should be allowed to rest for a time.

In twin pregnancies, there is as a rule only one placenta, which usually follows the birth of both infants. Sometimes, however, there are two, both of which are generally expelled after the birth of the second child. If, at the end of half to one hour after the birth of the first child, the placenta does not follow, the membranes must be ruptured to bring on the birth of the second child and the delivery of the placenta, which if left in the uterus would decompose and lead to sapræmia, septicæmia, and the probable death of the patient. The child is delivered as in a single pregnancy.

On the other hand, if there are two placentæ, and the first child is followed by its placenta, the woman—if she is not having labour pains—should be washed and made clean and comfortable, and nothing should be done to bring about the birth of the second child till the pains begin again.

As twins are often premature, it is possible in this case (*i.e.*, when there are two placentæ and the first follows the first child) that the second child may not be born for days or even weeks.

In twin pregnancy, even if labour is not premature, the infants will be smaller than normal, so preparation must be made as for premature babies.

The over-distension of the uterus may cause primary or secondary inertia, which should be treated mainly by rest if the case is otherwise normal.

Post-partum hæmorrhage must also be carefully guarded against, as it is specially liable

to occur, owing to: (1) the over-distension of the uterus; (2) the prolonged labour; (3) the large placental site.

Involution of the uterus will probably take longer than usual owing to the over-distension, and to the large placental site, and it should be aided by careful massage. Ergot will probably also be ordered.

The feeding of two infants instead of one must be considered. If both are strong, they must each be fed first in turns; if one is weaker, that one should always be fed first; if it is impossible for both to be breast-fed, the stronger must be weaned, as it will be the less likely of the two to suffer from being deprived of its natural food.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss S. Simpson, Miss P. Johnson, Miss M. Tomlinson, Miss J. Atkins, Mrs. Farthing.

Miss S. Simpson writes:—After the birth of the first child I should tie its cord in two places, cutting between. Then make out the lie of the second child, watching carefully for the appearance of any uterine bleeding. If things were normal I should wait half an hour for the uterus to rest and the labour to resume.

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

How would you prepare the following for the surgeon's use:—Gauze sponges, silkworm gut, gum elastic catheters, serum syringes, and rubber gloves?

MILITARY MEDICAL MANUAL.

The University of London Press has published an exhaustive and up-to-date series of "Military Medical Manuals," already known in France. The series covers the whole field of war surgery and medicine; and the volumes already issued deal with such topics as "Treatment of Fractures" (R. Leriche), "Syphilis and the Army" (G. Thiebierge), "The After-Effects of Wounds" (Aug. Broca), "Typhoid Fevers and Paratyphoid Fevers" (H. Vincent and L. Muratet), "Artificial Limbs" (Broca and Ducroquet), and "The Psycho-neuroses of War" (Roussy and Lhermitte). Each volume has been written by a leading authority as the result, in most cases, of extensive first-hand experience in the field, and is accompanied by specially prepared drawings. The price is 6s. net.

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