

## OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

WHAT STEPS WOULD YOU TAKE AS MIDWIFE IN A COUNTRY TOWN TO SAFEGUARD THE HEALTH OF EXPECTANT MOTHERS WHO HAVE BOOKED YOU TO ATTEND THEM WHEN THEIR BABIES ARE BORN?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss E. Muddiman, St. Luke's Hospital, Halifax.

### PRIZE PAPER.

In all cases when it is not the first pregnancy inquire as to the course of previous pregnancies, confinements, and puerperia; if any abnormality or complication occurred, advise to consult a doctor.

Endeavour to gain the confidence of the patient. Visit the home, with her consent, to discover if there are any insanitary conditions which can be put right; also advise as to personal and general arrangements for the confinement.

Note if patient is working too hard, having proper and sufficient food, or if she needs assistance. Where possible persuade her to attend ante-natal centre.

If patient is nervous, reassure her; explain that the majority of pregnancies are unaccompanied by any danger, and nature is fully capable of bringing them to a perfectly easy and successful termination.

When there have been previous miscarriages, advise rest at the time of menstrual flow.

*Diet.*—Usual diet, if sensible; probably a larger quantity after quickening has occurred. Meat only once daily. Avoid rich dishes and highly seasoned food. Patient should take both raw and cooked fruit, brown bread, and green vegetables, &c.; drink plenty of water. Stimulants are unnecessary.

*Dress.*—A pregnant woman should be loosely clad; suitable clothing should be worn, both as regards texture and warmth. Woollen underclothing is advisable, skirts and petticoats suspended from the shoulders; abandon corsets. For lax abdominal wall an abdominal belt may be worn. Garters are injurious, as they cause swollen veins. If patient has enlarged veins, bandage legs and instruct her to keep up feet when resting.

*Exercise.*—Athletic and strenuous exercises should be avoided, but patient must have plenty of fresh air and should take walking exercise daily.

Stooping, reaching, and lifting heavy weights must be avoided. Theatres and evening entertainments in crowded rooms should also be avoided, as they involve fatigue, late hours, and a hot and stuffy atmosphere.

*Rest.*—Recommend early hours. A pregnant woman should have long refreshing nights, and not rise too early in the morning. If possible, a rest should be taken in the afternoon, when she should lie down with her feet raised.

*Baths.*—A warm bath should be taken daily, special attention being given to breasts and vulva.

*Breasts.*—Nipples should be washed daily, and a little eau-de-Cologne or spirit applied to harden the tender skin, and so avoid cracked nipples later. If flattened, nipples can be drawn out with some simple apparatus or with the fingers, and a shield should be worn over breasts to prevent pressure.

*Regulation of Bowels.*—Constipation is common during pregnancy. Advise fruit and vegetables as part of the diet, and, if necessary, a mild vegetable aperient must be taken. Strong purgatives should be avoided.

*Morning Sickness.*—This can be checked, if not excessive, by taking a little food before rising. The patient should stay in bed until the feeling of nausea has passed. If very troublesome a doctor must be consulted.

*Urine* should be tested every fortnight after the sixth month. If scanty, or albumen is present, a doctor should be consulted.

*Teeth* must be taken care of, as there is a tendency to decay.

*Headache.*—When persistent a doctor should be consulted.

The pregnant woman must be advised to seek the advice of a registered medical practitioner in all illness, abnormality, or complication, such as: Deformity or stunted growth; loss of blood; abortion or threatened abortion; excessive sickness; puffiness of hands or face; fits or convulsions; dangerous varicose veins; purulent discharge; sores of the genitals.

### HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Mrs. Firth Scott, Miss H. Ballard, Miss M. Robinson, Miss P. Thomson, Miss B. Macdonald, Miss Mary Gillam, Miss Jessie White.

Mrs. Firth Scott writes: "If one can persuade a pregnant woman to leave off corsets it is much better. The corset presses the growing child against the intestines, and these compress the nerves of the spine, causing sickness and other bad effects."

### QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

Detail the preparation and administration of (a) a starch and opium enema; (b) a stomach wash-out; (c) a bowel wash-out.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)