

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

IN SUPERVISION OF THE PATIENT DURING PREGNANCY, WHAT POINTS WOULD YOU OBSERVE AS INDICATING SOME ABNORMALITY OR SOURCE OF DANGER?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize to Miss Henrietta Ballard, Bermondsey Hospital, Rotherhithe.

PRIZE PAPER.

Ante-natal Supervision.—Too much importance cannot be attached to the supervision of pregnant women, as illness and dangers to mother and child may be lessened and probably prevented.

Deformity of bones of long limbs, hunch-back, or hip disease, with shortening, will have some effect on the formation of the bony pelvis, and external and internal measurements should be taken and patient sent for medical advice, as an earlier termination of labour, or Cæsarian Section being performed, may save much pain and danger to mother and child.

Toxæmia of pregnancy may be detected by *albumen* in urine, œdema of feet, hands, and face, dimness of vision, twitchings, and later by fits or convulsions. By treating patient by rest in bed on milk diet and regular attention to bowels, the later eclamptic condition may be avoided, which is very fatal to parent and child.

Chorea and Mental Disturbances may also be present, especially in multiple pregnancy. Rest, often away from relatives, usually gives benefit until birth of child.

Persistent Vomiting may end fatally, and if no relief is gained, from rest and light diet, medical advice must be sought.

Misplacement of uterus will usually show itself early in pregnancy by pain in back and retention of urine. The bladder usually is misplaced well up to or above umbilicus, and unless medical manipulation is forthcoming the result will be miscarriage.

Hæmorrhage may be due to *threatening miscarriage*. Immediate rest may prevent an inevitable abortion.

Accidental hæmorrhage may be concealed, and can only be detected by general condition of patient, resembling internal hæmorrhage, and a hard, woody uterus, with inability to feel parts of child. If the bleeding can be revealed in time before pressure is put on child or much loss, its life might be saved by the induction of labour, and at any rate the maternal danger would be much lessened.

Unavoidable hæmorrhage due to placenta prævia is an emergency requiring immediate medical aid, as the foetus frequently is dead

and maternal mortality high. Often this condition manifests itself by irregular bleeding after seven months' pregnancy.

Purulent Discharge from the vagina suggests infection from the gonococci, and unless the passage is cleansed and the infant's eyes well cleansed immediately after birth, blindness may result from ophthalmia neonatorum.

Sores of the Vulva suggest syphilis, and the mother should seek advice and treatment immediately to prevent the foetus dying in utero, as frequently happens, or it may be born alive and congenital syphilis manifest itself later in skin eruptions, marasmus condition, or disease of bones, &c.

Varicose Veins may become very enlarged and burst, causing death of mother, during birth of child's head at vulva. Rest in bed for a few weeks will greatly aid these conditions.

Fits during pregnancy may be due to hysteria, epilepsy, albuminuria, or eclampsia. A history of every patient should therefore be obtained early, so that the existing condition may be treated during the important time of pregnancy.

Cancer of Cervix must not be lost sight of as a cause of irregular bleeding, therefore medical advice in the earliest stage is essential.

A Lump in the Breast is of the same vital importance, and may by early removal prevent carcinoma of that organ.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss Theodora Harris, Miss May Ramsey, Miss N. Taylor, Miss M. James, Miss E. Goodall, and Miss J. D. I. Waugh, whose paper arrived too late to compete for the prize.

Miss Theodora Harris writes:—"It is essential that all pregnant women should be under trained supervision, in order that any abnormality or danger signal may be noted and dealt with in its early stages. Lack of this supervision has undoubtedly cost some women their lives, and some their babies, and in other cases has caused a great deal of preventable suffering. In all cases a full history of the patient should be taken, including family history, previous pregnancies and confinements, still-births, miscarriages, &c.; also the husband's health and the health of any children."

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

Describe (a) the possible causes of, (b) the treatment and nursing of, a case of cellulitis of the hand.

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