

The Midwife.

"Pregnancy—A Natural Function"

By A. E. Hopkins.

ALTHOUGH IT IS GRATIFYING to know that the maternal mortality rate is decreasing year by year, there is still much to be done in this vital branch of health service.

Unfortunately many women survive the trials of pregnancy only to become invalids, partial or complete, or at the best suffer impaired health because of it.

It cannot be denied that the bringing of a child into the world is the fulfilment of a woman's reason for existence, and without doubt it was never intended that women should suffer unnecessarily whilst performing this vital function.

Various scientific reasons have been put forward why motherhood should be accompanied by hazards and risks, but doctors and nurses know that child-bearing should not be one of the most dangerous of functional happenings, although the physical condition of the patients often severely handicap them in their work.

Every female child will, in the course of time, possibly become a mother, and in accordance with the care of her health and upbringing during her childhood days, so will she reach her adult stage fortified or otherwise, to fulfil her duty to the following generation.

However, children are being born every hour, so it is with the mother of today that we are more directly concerned at the moment.

For men and women to have a clean bill of health before entering the parental state is an ideal worth striving for, but during this striving period realities have to be faced.

The value of a medical examination before marriage lies in the possibility that any defect that may cause trouble during pregnancy may be detected and corrected. For example, decayed teeth can be a source of infection and it is recorded that cases of still-birth have been traced to this physical defect. Where diseased teeth and gums exist the blood stream is often in a condition of pollution, with detrimental effects on the unborn child.

The health of the woman is so important during child bearing, that any care given in this direction repays the trouble taken a hundredfold.

The greatest asset to a prospective mother is a normal healthy body and mind at the time of conception, and with continued care during the months of pregnancy a great deal of distress can be avoided.

The manner in which a woman lives, eats and exercises during her months of development decides, in practically all cases, whether she will enjoy a healthy natural delivery without serious after effects on the one hand, or distress and more or less serious consequences on the other.

The food eaten by the expectant mother plays a very large part in maintaining a good standard of health. It should be rich in natural salts and vitamins, with sufficient



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