

I consulted the authorities and found many recommending this method. I read carefully their directions and as carefully followed them, although the definitions and directions of its advocates were not at all uniform.

Still these cases occurred far too frequently, and I was not satisfied, and therefore searched earnestly for a cause.

I had long observed that cases of accouchement which had been completed before my arrival were rarely complicated with this accident. I watched and noted these cases for years, only to find that there was almost entire immunity, except where midwives had interfered. I also observed the practice of confreres who never employed expression, and found that they were nearly exempt from this trouble.

These facts led me to consider this matter independent of authority. The whole parturient act is intended to be, and nearly always is, a purely physiological act in all its stages, and therefore requires no assistance.

However, just as soon as the process deviates from the normal course, then the natural conditions are at fault, and there is more or less of a pathological condition. Then we have cause to interfere, and then only.

Midwifery is meddlesome when we do, or attempt to do, what may be done just as well or better without our assistance.

Let us suppose the first stage to be accomplished by nature's process, and the second stage terminated in the same manner, and the third stage follows. Now, why should anything artificial be introduced? Why should there be a Dublin method, or why should Credé's practice be followed, when the uterus can accomplish its work in this stage as well as in the two former stages? There is no cause, unless the conditions are altered.

When the second stage of labor has been accomplished, this—perhaps the most exhaustive work of all—leaves the uterus wearied, and rest is required for an accumulation of power. After a period of repose of variable length, corresponding to the amount of exhaustion or the recuperative power of the patient, a feeble contraction occurs, then a stronger one, as power returns, thus progressing until, portion by portion, the placenta is gradually separated and finally expelled.

During the period of rest coagulation has time to take place in the uterine sinuses. During this time the hand of the accoucheur rests upon the uterus and performs the duty of a watchman, and informs us continually of the uterine condition.

There is no necessity for rubbing or pressing the uterus to stimulate it to contract until it has had time to recover its ability to do so. Then if the power is there but not developed, such manoeuvres may call forth the latent power. Of course, after sufficient time has elapsed for rest, and then if contractions do not occur, even when stimulated, there is then an abnormal condition, and it must be dealt with.

When the uterus is able it will labor to detach the placenta which has hitherto acted as a tampon until nature's tourniquet is prepared.

Whenever the power is able to expel the placental tampon, it is also able to prevent hæmorrhage. Nature's plan is to produce these two results simultaneously; and if the placenta be removed before the contractile power is able to close the sinuses, then there will be hæmorrhage.

A period of rest, and time for contractions to expel the placenta unaided, is the natural process in the third stage.

The expression method is to aid every contraction in detaching the placenta by concentric pressure with the hand; and what is the result?

The two forces thus applied—the one natural, the other artificial—expel the placenta much earlier than if the natural force alone was engaged.

The placental tampon is removed by the double force, but the simple force of nature is too often, for want of time, inadequate to close the sinuses, and the artificial is now of no use.

The tampon is removed and the tourniquet is not ready.

Here the mechanical axiom will illustrate my meaning:

"Whatever is gained in power is lost in time; and, conversely, whatever is gained in time is lost in power."

But power is infinitely more precious than time.

The Credé method is said to save time, and it is too often employed for that purpose if the time of the obstetrician is limited.