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THE CLAIMS OF THE UNBORN.

BIRTH is not the beginning of life. Before the birth of the tiny, frail and helpless infant, many months have passed during which has been built up, bit by bit—cell by cell—this almost perfected, yet diminutive human creature. During all these months—the days and hours and moments of each month—this little unborn one, the frailest, frailest because the most complicated and delicate, of all created things, is at the mercy of the expectant mother, and is subject to, and influenced by, her every act. This is a serious and a solemn thing for mothers, yea and for fathers too, to contemplate.

None of the many recorded accounts of the marked and often terrible effects upon the child of a shock or sudden fright to the prospective mother need be quoted here to illustrate the effects of motherhood upon childhood, or of the intimate gestational relationship between mother and child. All have seen or heard of one or more of them; of accounts of a strong mental impression upon the mother leaving its lasting impress upon the unborn infant and effecting, through all its after life, the structure of its parts or tissues, even to its very bone-work. If a shock or a fright to the mother can leave such strongly marked effects as are frequently known and recorded, and which are alas too common, will not much slighter mother-acts cause and leave proportion-

ate mother-marks? Will not every act, mental or physical, of the developing parent influence in a measure the offspring? All who are familiar with heredity and the processes and development of life, will doubtless answer yes.

But few parents comprehend their great responsibilities during the antenatal period of their little ones. Fond mothers, who will make almost any sacrifice for the happiness of those of their children who are old enough to get on fairly with but little of a mother's care, who for their children will deny themselves rest, recreation, food, hardly give a thought in this behalf to their little ones as yet unborn. A mother, who, while nursing, will be scrupulously careful in her habits, diet, &c., for fear of affecting injuriously the milk soon to be drawn by her cherished baby, will hardly have thought of denying herself anything or its account for the months just preceding its birth, when her blood, by which it was nourished, was at least as easily affected, and as injuriously, as is her milk later on.

Husbands and fathers too are often quite too indifferent in regard to the partners of their life at this particular period. The wife and mother is too often permitted to be over-worked and worried with household duties and cares, with perhaps many children to attend to and the housework of a large family to do, when help should be pro-