

have thought of the possibility of sudden death from the injection of morphia into a vein. Might not some of the deaths which have followed the hypodermic use of morphia be referred to this cause? To avoid such a serious risk, we should keep from parts freely covered by superficial veins, and insert the syringe perpendicularly to the surface, and not in a slanting direction under the skin, so as to avoid running the needle along the longitudinal axis of a vein.

REDCAR, December, 1870.

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## Midwifery.

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### CAUSE OF THE OCCURRENCE OF LABOR AT THE CLOSE OF THE NINTH MONTH OF UTERO-GESTATION.

Prof. Alexander R. Simpson, in his introductory lecture (*Edinburgh Med. Journal*, Dec., 1870), gives the following explanation of this: "Since the true nature of the decidual membrane came to be fairly understood, it was natural to seek in the changes which it undergoes for an explanation of the cause of the occurrence of labor at the close of the ninth month of utero-gestation. The search has not been fruitless. For it has been found that in the natural course of development, the decidual membrane at this period has undergone a degree of fatty degeneration which has brought it to the last stage of its existence, when it would either require to be melted down and absorbed, or be thrown off as a foreign substance. The same change occurs in it at an earlier date, if through some disease, an end be put to the life of the fetus, and in such a case expulsion of the dead child does not take place until the time has been given for the degeneration to occur in the decidua, which leads to its being loosened from the uterine parietes and reduced to the condition of a foreign body. The observation of this phenomenon has led by a beautiful induction to the employment of the simplest, safest, and surest means of bringing on labor, by imitating the process of nature and producing an artificial separation of the membrane from the interior of the uterus in those cases where, to save the life of the child and to lessen the mother's risk, it is found needful to induce the labor prematurely.—*Med. News and Library.*