

Midwifery.

VIENNA GENERAL HOSPITAL.

(Service of PROF. SPAETH.)

VIABILITY OF PREMATURE CHILDREN.

A pair of male twins was recently brought into the lecture-room of Prof. Spaeth, and formed the text of some remarks upon this subject. One of the children presented several malformations, such as hydrocephalus, harelip, cleft palate, club feet, umbilical hernia, etc.

The other was born alive, normally formed, and weighed 900 grammes. If the weight of a fully-developed, new-born child is taken at 3,000 grammes, 1,500 grammes will be the weight of a child at the end of the seventh lunar month. A weight of 900 grammes corresponds to a foetus in the second half of the sixth lunar month, and, according to the generally received opinion, the child was not viable, since the end of the seventh lunar month is the accepted time of viability.

Prof. Spaeth, however, supported by his rich experience, affirmed that children even in the sixth lunar month could be kept alive, if special care was taken in their treatment. The slight amount of bodily heat which these children produce renders it necessary, in the first place, to guard against the dissipation of that agent. For this purpose, careful wrapping in cotton-wool is excellent.

The delicacy of the digestive organs must be noted, and only such milk selected for nutriment as contains a small amount of casein, the constituent of milk most difficult of digestion. Experience teaches that the longer a nurse suckles, so much richer in casein does her milk become.

It is, therefore, necessary to select for a wet-nurse a young woman who has been very recently delivered. Another requisite is that the wet-nurse must have long nipples; since the child itself is too weak to suck and to swallow, the nipple must extend deep into the mouth, so that the milk runs, so to speak, directly into the stomach.

That it is possible to raise a child so poorly developed, Prof. Spaeth proves by the relation of a case in his own private practice. The child was born in the sixth month. The

parents were wealthy and every detail of the costly experiment was scrupulously carried out. The child, a boy, is now five years old, in perfect health and bodily vigour. Indeed, in this respect, he surpasses his brothers and sisters, who came into the world at the end of the usual period. Moreover, that the mortality among premature children is very great is easily comprehensible when the great mortality of children, generally, during the first year of life, is taken into consideration.—*Medical News.*

Correspondence.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN JOURNAL OF MEDICAL SCIENCE.

CLINICAL EXAMINATIONS.

SIR,—In reading your report of the proceedings of the Medical Council at its last session, I observe that you have published one of the motions as it appeared in the columns of the daily press. I refer to that one in reference to "clinical lectures" at the Toronto General Hospital. If you had substituted the word *examinations* for "lectures" you would have been exactly right.

The Council has no direct power to establish a course of clinical lectures at the Hospital; but by carrying into effect the motion for examinations it will in a very great measure assist the Hospital authorities, and those medical gentlemen engaged in clinical teaching there, to secure a thorough course of clinical lectures.

At the suggestion of some of our most active teachers, and with this object especially in view I was led to bring in the resolution. It is not a matter of disappointment that immediate action was not taken by the Council, for this is a subject requiring more than passing consideration. The members generally were strongly in favour of the scheme and deferred it until next session in order to enquire more closely into the practicability; and the readiness with which the motion was accepted leads me to believe that suggestions from members of the profession as to how these examinations may be held will receive attentive consideration.

Yours truly,

J. H. BURNS.

Toronto, July, 1882.