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OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY.

By DR. LAPHORN SMITH, Lecturer on Gynecology in Bishop's College.

After having read all the articles which have appeared in the journals during the past three months, on the subject of obstetrics, the general impression left on the mind is that most of the writers are in favor of allowing nature to carry on normal labors with as little interference as possible. The value of the bag of waters as a help in labor, and not a hindrance, is becoming more generally recognized. When all accoucheurs (especially young ones) come to understand that labor is a process which, above all others, requires time, and which is not to be terminated arbitrarily during whatever stage at which the doctor happens to be sent for, then the gynecologists will have to mourn a serious shortage in the crop of lacerated cervixes. True, it is very annoying to the busy practitioner, who is sent for in the middle of the first stage of labor, to have to remain away from his office and his other patients for many hours until the parts are ready for the passage of the child. And it is still harder for the soft-hearted young doctor to sit quietly by while the primipara is continually asking if he can

do nothing for her. What is he to do? When he hints that he will go away for a few hours and come back in good time, the husband and friends remind him of different first confinements they know of which were terminated in two hours from the beginning of the pains, and they tell him how they had had to call in another doctor, who had just arrived in time to save the woman's life, and how severely the doctor who had left her had been criticized for his conduct. Under the influence of such threats, in the beginning of my practice I have remained all night with a screaming primipara, whose labor only began at 8 o'clock p.m., until 7 next morning, when, wearied and disgusted, I dragged the head through the incompletely dilated os and ruptured perineum just 13 hours before labor should have terminated. But I will never do it again.

Not long ago I asked a well known professor of obstetrics how long he thought was the proper time for a first confinement to take. He promptly replied not less than 24 hours. Taking this hint, I tell all primiparæ when they engage me not to become alarmed and excited; that the very shortest time which a normal first labor should take is 24 hours, and that although I will come in occasionally to see that everything is going on well, I will only