

THE HYGIENE OF CHILDBEARING

mother until about the middle of pregnancy. This superstition would have little importance if it were not that some people draw very serious conclusions from it. Women who wish to avoid motherhood often reason that if, as they believe, the child is not alive before quickening, then to produce an abortion early can be no great wrong. But abortion is murder, and the law regards it as such, whether performed early or late.

CONVULSIONS, OR ECLAMPSIA

A Grave Condition.—Most child-bearing women know that convulsions in a woman at about the time of childbirth are very dangerous, but comparatively few know that they can usually be foreseen, and, by proper treatment, prevented. This condition is known to the profession as Puerperal Eclampsia, and may occur either shortly before, during, or shortly after confinement. The woman is suddenly seized with a violent convulsion, becoming unconscious at the same time. The convulsion lasts from three to five minutes, and following it the patient lies in a heavy, snoring sleep. After a time she may recover consciousness, or she may pass into another convulsion; and this may be repeated until death occurs.

Treatment.—Of course a doctor should be obtained as quickly as possible. While awaiting his arrival, the treatment should be limited to preventing the patient from injuring herself. The tongue may be severely bitten, and even the fingers may get between the teeth and be injured. To protect the tongue the handle of a