

THE HYGIENE OF CHILDBEARING

of work to be done, and the oftener the pains come the sooner she will be through. Some women, however, feel so ill and weak that they prefer to lie down. In this case it should be permitted.

During the first stage the patient should not bear down, or strain. She would only be wasting her strength. Ignorant bystanders often urge her to do so, but she should remember that the womb is not yet open, and that she cannot expel the child no matter how hard she tries. She should save her strength for the second stage, when the womb is open and when straining and forcing may do good. In fact nature follows this plan. In the first stage the patient feels no inclination to bear down; but in the second stage the inclination to bear down is so strong that she cannot help it.

SELF DELIVERY

It sometimes happens that the infant is born before the arrival of the doctor. When this seems to be in danger of happening the patient should do everything possible to delay the delivery. She should lie down, avoid all straining, or bearing down, should not pull on anything with her hands, and when a pain occurs should not hold her breath, but should breathe in a quick panting manner. The moment she holds her breath she will bear down, and this is to be avoided at all costs. By following these suggestions she may succeed in delaying the delivery so much that she will not be torn; for in self-delivery extensive tears are very apt to occur.