

done for them instead of doing them themselves, makes women more sensible to pain and less capable of exertion, it would not be surprising to learn that such a complex process as labor, depending as it does upon the nervous and muscular system, should be affected injuriously thereby; such indeed has been the writers experience. The process of dilatation of the os uteri which among savage and slightly civilized women goes on quietly and without sufficient pain to prevent them from attending to their occupation, becomes in the highly civilized a long and agonizing process, owing to their increased sensibility with diminished contractility. Their muscles make a great outcry but do very little work. Owing to defective nutrition the amniotic membrane breaks very often at the very beginning of labor, so that the waters escape and dilatation must take place by the direct pressure of the child's head instead of by the beautifully equalized pressure of the bag of waters. The pressure of the child's head being greater at certain points than at others the stretched cervix is lacerated. In the writers opinion laceration of the cervix could not possibly occur if dilatation were performed by the bag of waters, and if neither fingers nor instruments were introduced within it. If the bag of waters were strong enough to remain intact until the perineum is also dilated, as he has seen it occur among the lower classes in Canada, rupture of the perineum would not happen either. The writer does not think that the importance of preserving the amniotic membrane until dilatation is complete is sufficiently understood, there are even text books which recommend wilfully rupturing the membranes before dilatation is finished. The rupture of the membranes really retards labor, tempts the attendant to make many injurious examinations, followed at last by the application of the forceps very often before dilatation of the cervix is complete, because the woman is exhausted, and causing rupture of the cervix. Then the

head is dragged through the perineum without allowing as much as a tenth part of the time which nature requires for its stretching. Then, again, civilization makes the parturient woman remain for from ten to twenty days on her back with the discharges accumulating in the pelvis, or leaking through the fallopian tubes into the peritoneal cavity, instead of having her up and about all the time with the uterus well drained, as in savage woman among whom puerperal salpingitis, ovaitis and fixation of the uterus by local peritonitis are unknown. Apart from the injudicious rupturing of the membranes labor is prolonged in the civilized woman owing to the badly nourished condition of the muscular tissues of the uterus and abdominal wall.

In yet another way is civilization making labor more laborious. According to the law of the survival of the fittest, a woman with a pelvis narrower than the average, if left to nature, would probably perish in her first confinement, so that that breed of women would at once die out. By the intervention of art, women with small pelvises are preserved to give birth to many children of which some will be females with pelvises even smaller than their mothers'. It is true the removal of the uterus, as recommended by Lawson Tait, now that it can be done with so much safety, would put a stop to such vicious breeding.

On the other hand, civilization, while it is making the pelvises of women smaller, is making the heads of male infants larger; for, in the struggle for existence, the man with the big head, and not the one with the strong arms, wins the battle of life. As every new idea that enters a man's head occupies brain space, it is tolerably certain that the average circumference of the male head is increasing. As male children inherit the qualities of their fathers to a greater or less degree, some of the big-headed man's offspring will be born with larger heads than their father had at his birth.