

and enlarged, contains sufficient blood vessels to supply the demands of the new organism. After a time more is required, and during the third month the placenta is formed. This is a flat, spongelike mass, growing on the inner wall of the uterus, filled with blood vessels through which the blood of the mother freely circulates. One end of the umbilical cord is attached to it, so that the blood of the child also flows into it. The two fluids never mingle, however, being separated by a thin membrane, the walls of the blood vessels.

Oxygen, the gas in the air which sustains life, and nourishment already prepared by the mother, pass through this thin dividing membrane, are absorbed by the blood of the child and carried back through the umbilical cord.

When the child has been expelled from the uterus, the placenta, having served its purpose, follows. It is commonly called the after-birth. It is about eight, or nine, inches long, six, or seven, wide, and weighs about a pound and a quarter.

The vagina, or front passage, through which the child enters the world, is a canal about five, or six, inches long, leading directly to the uterus, whose mouth opens into the upper end. The walls are very elastic and stretch to permit so large a body to pass through it.