

THE SYSTEMATIC AND CONTINUOUS USE OF ART IN ALL CASES AND STAGES OF LABOR.

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No other event in life calls forth more anxiety or is attended with greater suffering than the act of childbirth. It surpasses all else in interest to the individual, family, society, nation and the world. Had Noah perished in his transit from intra to extra-uterine life the history of our race could have been written on a postal card. One would naturally suppose, then, that the advent of a human being with such potentialities would be an inspiration sufficient to enlist the best of his art and the closest attention on the part of the obstetrician. However, if any one doing a fair obstetric practice asks his patients how they have been treated, will he not get some such answer as the following: "The doctor made an examination and if I were getting along pretty fast he stayed, but if not he would go and come." "What relief did he try to render?" "None at all." This indolent and cruel routine into which midwifery practice has so universally fallen, is aptly illustrated by such cases as the following: The patient was afflicted with biliary trouble, and at times suffered a good deal of pain during expulsion of the calculi. During these attacks her physician was all attention and fairly exhausted his resources in trying to secure relief, but during her long and intensely painful labor cases the same physician would simply come and go without giving a single thought to her sufferings. When appealed to for some measure of the relief he secured during the passage of the gall-stones, his illogical and brutally inhuman reply was: "It isn't good to meddle with labor cases. Better leave them to nature." A moment's reflection would have convinced him that the expulsion of the calculi was as purely a physical process as that of the foetus. If it were his duty to make the one as painless a process as possible, why not the other? The experience of our best obstetrical practitioners and teachers make the fact an indisputable one, that there is less danger to the foetus, and of *post-partem* hemorrhage or other injury to the mother, when her sufferings are mitigated and her normal powers retained, than when allowed to be driven to distraction by pain and completely exhausted from want of rest. Of course, we daily run across men who seem to cherish a sort of superstitious dread of some occult danger lurking in all applications of art in obstetric practice. In fact, what pagan delusion has been taught so persistently or followed with such fanatical zeal as the bug-a-boo, "meddlesome midwifery," or "leaving to nature." How oblivious all such delusions are to the fact that true art never meddles with the functions of nature—for nature neither tolerates meddling or