

LIABILITY TO MALPRESENTATION OF THE FŒTUS DURING LABOUR.

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The following cases open up a wide field for inquiry. During the summer of 1872, I was asked by Mrs. M. to attend her in her confinement, which she expected in a few months. She told me that she had already had eight children, all at full time, and that four of the eight had been either breech or footling-presentations—two of each, she thought. About the time she had mentioned I was sent for, and, on making an examination, I found the os half dilated and a breech presenting. All went well, and in half an hour she was delivered of a large male child. On thinking over this case, I remembered that, when a student, I had been sent out from the Maternity Hospital, in which I was taking out my practical midwifery, to attend a woman who, I found on my arrival at her house, had had a breech-presentation in her previous confinement. She was confined soon after my arrival, and, as before, had a breech presentation.

The object of these observations is to induce others to contribute to the solution of the question, Is a woman who has had a breech or footling-presentation at one labour more liable to the same at her subsequent labours than any other woman of the community? It will be seen that I leave shoulder and all cross-presentations out of the question, as they have been more closely investigated, and definite though not similar causes have been assigned for them, as form of the pelvis, obliquity of the spinal column, irregular action of the abdominal muscles and position of the placenta, etc. We confine ourselves to the reversing of the ovid. Churchill gives the number of breech cases in 197,318 deliveries, as 3,325, or one in $59\frac{1}{2}$; and the number of footling or knee-presentations in 192,174 deliveries, as 1,831, or one in about 105; so that there must be something more than chance in one woman having three breech, and two footling-presentations in nine deliveries, and another having two successive breech-presentations. Statisticians have given us the percentage of every sort of presentation. Most obstetric writers tell us of the forceps having been used, or the perforator several times with, or the Cæsarean section even having been performed, more than once in the same woman; but none, so far as I am aware, have mentioned the fact of a woman having had an abnormal presentation of the foetus in more than one labour. If those of our brethern who have a large obstetric practice will give us the benefit of their experience, we shall soon know whether to answer the above question in the negative or in the affirmative.—*British Med. Jo rnal*.