

Even apart from this examination by the physician, each nurse who makes a specialty of obstetrical work should know at least the meaning of pelvic contraction, and be able to judge roughly whether any pelvis is normal or abnormal. Any of you who have observed at all closely, have noted the effect of the pelvis on the way in which the child is carried during pregnancy; and all should know the old dictum that a pendulous abdomen in a first pregnancy means a contracted pelvis, or at least disproportion between the fetal head and the pelvis. Ability to hear and count the fetal heart, an accomplishment requiring only a little training and practise, may often save the life of a child that would otherwise be sacrificed. Further, a rough estimation of the size of the outlet of the pelvis, which can be made during the preparation for examination, may determine the possibility or probability of laceration of the perineum and the necessity for preparing instruments and material for repair.

You will hear and read a great deal about threatened eclampsia, about albumen in the urine and about the diminution of urica, and of the necessity for advising the physician should these conditions arise. Now this is all very well, but we are apt to forget that these three conditions are evidences, often imperfect evidences, of a general toxæmic condition which may be manifested first in headache, nausea, vomiting, swelling of the feet, or alteration in the character of the pulse, symptoms obvious to those who have had the most meagre training. It seems unnecessary to remind you that the pregnant woman is peculiarly liable to disorders of metabolism from the fact that she is ingesting, digesting, and excreting for two individuals; and that more important than active treatment is prophylaxis, in which you may do your part by insisting on good food, aiding good digestion and free diuresis and catharsis. The bowels may be stimulated by fruits, while as a diuretic nothing is better than the drinking of large quantities of water. Many conditions, all closely allied, such as toothache, salivation, heartburn, pruritis, for which there is no specific remedy, are all favourably influenced by those factors which go to make up the general health.

Apart from these special conditions it may be wise to say a word about hæmorrhage, which early in the pregnancy suggests the possibility of impending abortion, and in the later months the possibility of placenta prævia. It is always a grave symptom and one that calls for immediate attention. In rare instances women menstruate during their pregnancy, but these are important only on account of their rarity.

With regard to the conduct of the nurse during the labor two points have seemed worthy of mention, firstly, a familiarity with the anatomy of labor, and, secondly, that bearing down is of no avail if the cervix