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## Original Communications.

### NOTE ON SHORTNESS OF THE UMBILICAL CORD AS A CAUSE OF DYSTOCIA.

By A. LAPHORN SMITH, Lecturer on Gynecology, Bishops College.

The following remarks have been suggested to me by my having noticed at two labors occurring on the same day, a very long and a very short cord, which I now show you. The longer one measured when fresh just fifty inches, while the shorter one measured less than twelve. The only trouble which the short cord case gave me was that the placenta was retained for half an hour, which I attribute to the fact that whenever the cord is pulled upon either by the accoucher or by such an accident as its being too short, irregular contractions are set up in the middle or lower segments of the uterus, thereby causing more or less a condition known as hour-glass contractions. The labor, the patient's third one, was remarkably rapid, occupying in all only two or three hours, and was terminated naturally with the exception that I introduced my hand within the os in order to remove the placenta. The long cord, strange to say, caused more trouble, for after leaving the head on the perineum for several hours, the patient being a primipara, I applied

the forceps and as soon as the head was delivered I felt for a possible turn of the cord around the child's neck and found one. While undoing this, by slipping it over the child's head, I found that there were two other turns which I also unwound. By this time the child was quite black and the cord was pulseless. I practised artificial respiration for nearly half an hour before it breathed well.

Both of these conditions are recognized as offering considerable danger to both mother and child. Shortness of the cord, either absolute or owing to its being wound around the child's neck, may retard labor while the head is at the superior strait, while it is in the cavity of the basin or while it is passing the inferior strait. And even after the head has passed, according to Cazeaux, it may arrest the progress of the shoulders. The latter author cites a case of his own in which delivery was terminated two hours after the expulsion of the head only after section of the cord had been resorted to, the fetus being dead. Dalmotte relates a similar observation.

Labor will generally terminate itself spontaneously, however, in one of three ways: Either the uterus will be forced down by the expulsive efforts of the mother, so as to bring the placenta near enough to the vulva to allow the delivery