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THE INFLUENCE OF MALARIA AND QUININE UPON PREGNANCY AND PARTURITION.

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In the western peninsula of Ontario, notwithstanding extensive drainage, the erection of dikes, and other sanitary improvements, the various forms of morbid phenomena induced by malaria are still largely prevalent, and constitute probably the largest class of disease that medical practitioners have to contend with in that district, in consequence of which quinine is freely prescribed. To a medical man practising in such a locality there constantly arises some very important and unfortunately moot questions concerning the effect of both malaria and quinine upon the pregnant and parturient state. Of the few published observations on these points no two reporters apparently agree. In the hope of being able to come to some definite conclusions concerning these disputed questions, I have endeavoured, for some time past, to interrogate with reference to this particular subject all cases of pregnancy coming under my notice. Although my experience has necessarily been limited, I have thought it sufficient to arrive at certain deductions.

In the first place, are pregnant women liable to suffer from intermittent fever, or other manifestation of malarial toxæmia, or does the state of pregnancy confer upon them a condition of immunity from the action of this poison?

Crédé (Monatsch. fur Geburtsh., Band xv, S. 1, 1886)* states that in Leipsic during the years 1856 to 1859 there was almost absolutely no case of ague in a pregnant woman. Griesinger (Virchow's Handb. der Spec. Path. and Ther. Infectious Krankh, 1856)† found that during the prevalence of a quartan fever in Prague only two out of 8,639 pregnant and parturient women were attacked. On the other hand, Loov‡ states that it is very common for pregnant women to have intermittent fever. Playfair§ says that the occurrence of hypertrophied spleens in infants has been often observed in malarious districts, and consequently believes that the disease must frequently occur in intra-uterine life. Goth, of Klanisburgh (Zeitsch fur Geb. und Gyn. Band vj. s. 17, 1881)* asserts that in a severe outbreak of malarial fever, 46 out of 881 pregnant women were affected. My own notes agree more nearly with the latter observers referred to. Of two hundred and twenty-eight (228) cases of pregnancy investigated by me, thirty-six, or 15·8 per cent., exhibited some form of malarial poisoning.

These investigations were made among women chiefly in the lower walks of life, who consequently were exposed to the various vicissitudes of the laboring classes, together with unsanitary surroundings—conditions that probably would render them more or less predisposed to those pathogenic organisms which there is much evi-

* Quoted in *Brit. Med. Jour.*, July 18th, 1885.

† Ibid.

‡ Quoted in *Am. Jour. Med. Sc.*, Jan., 1886

§ System of Midwifery, p. 224.