

THE MANAGEMENT OF NORMAL LABOUR.

BY

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Mr. President, and members of the Franklin County Medical Society.

First I desire to thank you most sincerely for your kind invitation to read a paper before you this afternoon.

Your request that I should discuss the "Management of Normal Labour" filled me with apprehension as to the success of my undertaking, for it is difficult to bring anything new before you in connection with this subject, while in the endeavour to make it interesting I may bore you with unnecessary detail.

Eutocia is defined as natural parturition, and is applied to labours which terminate without artificial aid and without injury to mother or child. Thus, strictly speaking, eutocia must be extremely rare, as injuries to the birth canal occur in a large proportion of women who are delivered of healthy children without artificial aid.

Ordinarily, normal labour means spontaneous delivery of a living child, which has presented in a vertex position, with the occiput rotating anteriorly.

Fortunately normal parturition takes place in an overwhelming proportion of cases. Sellheim states that normal labour occurs in 95 per cent. of all cases which come to term. This may be the case in Germany, but in this country the percentage of normal labours is not quite so high.

In this age of hurry and hustle, of ease and luxury, of chloroform and obstetric forceps, natural delivery is perhaps of not as frequent occurrence as nature originally intended.

To insure natural delivery, the pregnant woman should come under the physician's care early in pregnancy. This subject has been dealt with by my predecessors and I will not further enter into it.

In private practice, parturition should be conducted with the minimum disturbance of domestic routine. The essentials are privacy, absolute cleanliness of the patient and all that comes in contact with her, and no interference with nature's course. All these may be obtained with intelligence and foresight without entailing a serious strain on the family exchequer.