

THE HYGIENE OF CHILDBEARING

its most prominent part is now somewhat lower than before. Sometimes more pressure upon the bladder is felt, causing more frequent desire to urinate.

The value of this sign is greatly lessened by the fact that it is often absent, and occasionally it occurs three or four weeks before labor.

The Safe Side.—The young mother near the end of her first pregnancy is often puzzled to know whether she is in labor or not. On the one hand false pains may cause her to send for her doctor before she is really in labor; on the other hand true pains are sometimes so mild that she may wait too long before sending and the infant may be born before the doctor's arrival. It is best to be on the safe side. Sending too early can do no great harm but sending too late may be dangerous to both mother and child. In self-delivery the mother is liable to be torn much more seriously than if she had proper assistance, and the child may fail to breathe because there is no one present to give it proper care.

False Pains.—Many women in the last months of pregnancy are troubled with false pains. They are so much like true pains that the patient cannot tell the difference, and even the doctor, after making an examination, may still be puzzled. They usually come on in the evening when the patient is tired, and disappear during the night as she becomes rested. True pains are usually accompanied by a discharge from the vagina of mucus, sometimes streaked with blood. This, whether streaked with blood or not, is called the "Show," and may be quite profuse, or it may be little more than the natural mois-