

CHINESE MIDWIFERY.

The following is a condensation from a recent translation of a Chinese work on obstetrics.

The translator, Dr. Atwood, was for many years a medical missionary in China. He has endeavored to preserve, so far as possible, the concise and idiomatic form of the Chinese thought. In this paper, only those portions which have especial reference to midwifery proper, will be considered.

The author commences by saying: Conception is not a misfortune, but difficult labor is a cause of lamentation. It cannot be mended by lamenting, so they refer it to Heaven. Does Heaven hate men? Certainly not. Men die only in consequence or on account of their own conduct. This book is written, therefore, on account of difficult labor. If one will read it intently and carefully, and practice conscientiously, all confinement will be easy, and man's calamity will be ended and Heaven's virtue be harmonized.

For the period before confinement, during confinement, and after birth, directions for guarding are within. Do not be unwilling to take pains, for though it is a matter of ordinary occurrence, even in common domestic life, yet if proper precaution is not exercised, sickness is always liable to occur. It is better to take precaution than to take medicine in sickness.

This book although it is for all to read, more especially should be understood by the wealthy and prosperous. Ladies of the inner apartment, continually living delicately in ease and luxury, eating delicacies, become weak and thin; moreover their dispositions become proud and they will not listen to advice. When such as these come to their confinement, they are unable to endure it well.

Heaven and earth's great virtue is creation. The virtue of creation is the same everywhere. The most important created thing is man. Pregnancy from the most ancient time is the origin of creation; therefore it is called birth. The cause of birth is the self-existence of Heaven and earth. So that the eyes see, the ears hear, the hand grasps, and the foot walks with the greatest ease, without instruction and involuntarily. But at present we everywhere hear of difficult birth. This is the result of man's own faults. They forget the self-existent principle of Heaven. Is it to be supposed that Heaven, in regard

to the matter of birth, would destroy man only? Certainly not. When it is thought that man is the most spiritual, how should he be in respect to other living things? Among other things there are no difficult labors. Trees and plants have their set times for growing. Oviparous animals have their exact time for coming forth. Is it to be supposed that they have to be forced? They are self-existent, self-producing, and do not need instruction. How is it that man is not the same? Suppose a child in eating meat, swallows a bone which sticks in his throat. It will not come out for a hundred prescriptions. The whole family are in terror. An old woman sees it and says, "that is nothing." She has him lie down and when hungry drink gruel; in three days it comes out of its own accord and there is nothing the matter. Do you see the reason? The bone in the throat is an affair of man's own doing. Even in this that Heaven itself causes much more than the ordinary, most wonderful, principle of self-existence, is evident. In its own origin parturition is easy. Persons themselves have made it difficult. It is an ordinary affair, but we look upon it as strange phenomenon. If doubt of this were removed and men acted on this principle, in a hundred cases there would not be an accident. At the same time much medicine need not be used. Speaking till the mouth is thirsty and lips dry, for the purpose of informing all people—when it is well known—all will believe after a number of years, and the whole country will be free from difficult birth. Will the good results extend to this district alone? Only wait obediently the commands of Heaven. Let not men for their own affairs derange, but let creation await its own appointed period of birth. That is all.

Never mind whether the labor comes early or late; never be inclined to force matters. Recollect this is Heaven's self-existent principle. When the time comes the foetus itself is able to get out. Then what is the need of your using force? If perhaps the child's strength is exhausted, so that when it comes to the gates of birth it cannot come out, if perchance there should be such a case, carefully use a little force to assist, and instantly it will come down, just as when a melon is ripe it drops off. When the breath and blood are separated, and the whole body, bones and sinews, for an instant relaxes, just as the water running in the trough needs no assistance, the birth is effected. Perhaps

one says in merely voiding fæces, no force is required. Is not force necessary in parturition? If one is constipated, force is necessary. The fœtus is able to move and turn. It is necessary to wait for it to come out of itself. Not only should one not use force, but pains should be taken to abstain from force. The child sitting erect in the womb, at the moment of birth the head turns down and the body turns downward also. If the space within the abdomen is small, no matter how much strength one has, he cannot help any. He should await the child's gradually turning itself. When it approaches the gate of birth with the head downward and feet up, when version is complete, it will come out. If force is used by the mother when the child is not yet turned, one expulsive pain and the foot appears. It is regarded a wonder, but old women have a beautiful name for it, viz., "foot-resting-on-lotus-blossom birth." If while the fœtus is turning, the version is not complete, the mother uses force, by one expulsive movement the fœtus is forced horizontally in the pelvis, and the hand comes out first. This is called the "asking-salt birth." When the version is complete, and the parts not yet relaxed, if one uses expulsive force too early, the head is pressed either to right or left, upon the pelvic bone, and will not come out. Is the fœtus able of itself to crawl out? I can scarcely believe it is. Have any of the ancients said this? The sayings of the ancients are only in general terms. They cannot apply themselves minutely to every occasion. We who come after them considering their sayings, only observe "melon ripe, stone drops." These four words, and you may know that the child of itself can crawl out.

Observe the four words "pull crops, assist growing" and you have the same mistake as taking the false labor pains for true labor pains.

As in egg hatching, when the time is full the chick will break its shell and come out. Do these have any drastic medicine or midwifery skill?

The ancients said if a birth was delayed to the great length of time of from three to four years and took place, if the fœtus was not inclined to come out, could any one force it out; and if inclined to come out, could any one keep it in?

When the hand presents first, this is called transverse presentation; when the foot first appears, this is called reverse

birth. The resource in these cases is, to quickly place the mother on her back. Rub a little salt in the palm of the hand or foot of the child, or a little sweet oil, and carefully replace the foetus, and it will turn itself and be born. Do not allow it to be out long. If the hand or foot be out long, the child is injured and it is difficult to replace it. Let drastic medicines to cause delivery not be used. If the hand or foot presents, this is not a case for medicine. By no means listen to the talk of evil-minded midwives about using knives and cutting off the hand. If the hand is cut, the child suffers within and kills the mother also.

If the cord is twisted around the child's neck in turning, this is called anxious labor. The resource is, cause the mother to rest on the back, carefully push the foetus up, and using the finger, feel for the cord and slip it over the shoulder, and at the first expulsive pain it will be born. When the child is born, let some one with both hands press upon the abdomen, and let the mother do the same, to cause the after-birth to descend. If the after-birth does not come down, do not allow the mother to be alarmed. Take some smoking paper and smoke the nostrils an instant. If it does not then come down, sever the cord, wash the child, wrap the end around with something soft, and hang a stone upon it, tying it carefully and loosely, then afterwards sever. This cord is very tender, and if not severed then, there is danger of the blood flowing back into the after-birth, and rising into the heart again, injuring the mother. If the bones are not relaxed, and force is used too soon, it may not come down in many days. After taking medicine into the stomach, close the eyes and rest quietly an instant, and the medicine enters the vagina and then can be beneficial; otherwise it will be useless, for if the eyes are open the medicine goes the course of the "yang." If shut, it goes the course of the "ying." Although night is in the power of the "ying," if you do not close the eyes it is still in the power of the "yang." Although daytime is under control of the "yang," if the eyes are once closed, you are under the power of the "ying."

One may say according to your talk, there should be no case of hard labor among the human race. We answer there are cases where the foetus will not mature, or being weak she has fear of approaching labor. The poison of fever injures the

fœtus, or if cohabitation has been excessive, or if much spice and pepper and fried meat have been eaten, the fever poison may then injure the fœtus, and besides these the injuries from falls and violence, all conduce to hard labor. These may cause the death of the fœtus before birth. Outside these cases there are no difficult labors. Beside these in time of cold, icy weather, when fire is scarce in the homes of the poor, the blood is cold and sluggish and does not tend to lead out. The injury in these cases is because of the too great hurry in seating the woman over the pan. It were better far to keep her clothes on and sleep awhile before delivery. Then she would not have this misfortune. In any case of difficult labor or confinement in the cold, if the child on coming into the world does not cry or appears dead, quickly wrap it up in clothes and saturate paper in sesame oil, and gradually burn the navel cord apart. The warmth thus enters the bowels and soon the child cries and then revives. If the navel is at once cut off, the child dies.

On the approach of confinement, when the mind is anxious and there is much pain in the bowels, to the point of extreme exhaustion, the mouth has lost its taste, let her eat anything she desires only not eat too much fat. If she has no desire to eat, let some broth or chicken or duck be made, skim the oil off, and when clear, let her drink occasionally of it, thus increasing her strength. Since the food is life, why should one go without eating for a day.

It should be known that birth sometimes takes place at seven or eight moons, and also that the fœtus is sometimes carried a year, and even two or three years. Las Ty is said, in ancient chronicles, to have been carried as a fœtus for the extraordinary period of eighty years.

SEVEN CAUSES OF DIFFICULT LABOR :

I.—The first cause is inactivity. In conception the blood nourishes the fœtus and the breath sustains it. The mother should exercise to keep the breath and blood in circulation, and thus keep the foetal circulation in motion. If one sits or reclines the circulation and respiration are sluggish, and the fœtus is not lively. This is often the cause of difficult labor.

II.—The second cause relates to the fœtus, whether nourished or thin. The nourishment taken by the mother nourishes the fœtus. If the mother indulges in hearty food, the fœtus will

grow large and the birth will be difficult. The poor, who have only plain food, have easy labor.

III.—The third cause is cohabitation. It was anciently the custom, when conception took place, for the man and wife to occupy separate bedrooms. When the passions are aroused, it causes fever, and at the third moon or previously, it may cause abortion. After the third moon this cohabitation also causes the after-birth to grow thick, and so causes difficult labor. The irritation of the uterus also causes injury to the foetus, so that the child is born weak and sickly, with humors breaking out upon the skin, which are hard to cure.

IV.—Fourth cause, anxiety. People of to-day who have so great a desire for posterity and yet have no skill to care for the foetus. They either consult conjurers, or pray to the gods, or listen to the tale of accidents in other's confinement, and so have continual anxiety. Thus respiration and circulation are obstructed, and the confinement becomes difficult.

V.—The fifth cause is weakness. As when the person is young and weak and unable to endure the pain, and so bends up the body and lops around, the child cannot come out. Also women in middle life who have borne many children and have become weak, have difficult labor.

VI.—Because of confusion there is a class of midwives that do not distinguish between true and false labor, and at the very first pain they undertake to bring on delivery. The parturient mother has no decision of mind, and listens to them until there is either a horizontal or a foot presentation. The cause of this is the parturient woman's frustration.

VII.—Exhaustion. The parturient woman uses force too soon before the child is inclined to come out. When the child is ready to come out, the mother is exhausted. This causes obstruction of delivery. The parts become dry and the labor is difficult. The remedy in such cases is to nourish the blood by giving such medicine as *Bas-ta-wan-chuan-tang*, a most excellent tonic.

After delivery, lie on the bed, but let her be braced up, straight upright, and not lie down. Let the knees be flexed upon the body and let her drink a winecupful of fresh male-child's urine, and keep the eyes closed but not sleep for fear

that in her sleep blood and breath will flow upward and cause swooning. Do not, however, call loudly to arouse her for fear of frightening her. After confinement guard against draughts of air, and whether there is pain or not, give the patient fresh warm urine mixed with alcohol, half and half, one winecupful three times daily, for three days, and if there is no important lesion, no other remedy need be taken.

After confinement, take a small iron weight, or small cobble stone, and heat it red-hot and immerse it in a dish of vinegar and allow her to inhale the fumes, for the purpose of preventing the flow of blood to the head, and also to restore the strength and to counteract the bad odors of the room. This may be done three or four times a day for three days; or if there be congestion to the head, causing syncope, take a bundle of scallion sprouts, or if it be in winter, use the roots, chop them fine, put them in a small-mouthed bottle, take a bowl of hot vinegar and pour it in and cork it, raise up the patient, place the bottle below her nose, at a little distance from her, and let her inhale it.

One should eat what they have been accustomed to. The first three days take chicken broth, skimming off the oil and drinking when clear. Do not eat the flesh. For the first ten days do not eat pork. During the first month do not eat lard, for fear of obstructing circulation. There is no need of abstaining from any other kind of food. Eggs may have the property of renewing the blood and should be eaten hard-boiled. If the yolks are eaten soft they are injurious; by no means eat them. Duck's eggs should never be eaten. Oil should be dispensed with in the cooking of food. Let the food also be without seasoning. Unseasoned food is according to nature nourishing to the strength, but highly-seasoned food is not so. If one asks why is plain food better, I answer, if strong wine is taken, and heavily seasoned food eaten, it causes the milk to dry up; however, do not go to the extreme practice of those in other countries of giving diluted gruel of millet and vegetables.

Sometimes after confinement the patient suddenly has fever, the face is red, the eyes are dark red, the lips are parched and the thirst is great. She is restless night and day. This is called anæmia. Let tang-knei-pu-houch-tang be given, to restore the blood. This last-named remedy is known in America as *aralea edulis*.