

THE  
WIFE AND MOTHER'S GUIDE;

OR, A

*Few Plain Rules*

FOR

PREGNANT WOMEN.

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BY

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TO  
J. T. CONQUEST, M.D. F.L.S.

&c. &c. &c.

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DEAR SIR,

IN venturing to dedicate this little work to you, I greatly fear so humble a tribute (to distinction like your own) may be rather considered a mark of presumption in the writer, than respectful esteem to that eminence before which it is laid, as a slight, but most deferential oblation. But still I know that those who are possessed of the greatest claims to the admiration and respect of mankind are the least exigent in demanding all that they deserve; so this feeling emboldens me to grace with your name the few following and unpretending pages, on a subject of which you are confessedly one of our greatest living masters.

I remain, dear sir,

With profound respect,

Your obliged obedient servant,

ROBERT HILLS.

1, City Terrace, City Road,  
London.

## PREFACE.

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THE frequent observance in my professional pursuits of instances where the young female is about soon to become a mother, quite ignorant of all that relates to her condition, and the welfare of the new being that is to claim her solicitude and protection, has induced me to offer these few pages for the perusal of those I have the pleasure of professionally attending, hoping the time is not far distant when, amidst the usual instructions in female accomplishments, parents will not lose sight of that necessary knowledge for young women, of the duties they were born to fulfil in domestic life.

## PREGNANCY.

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THE time this interesting condition takes place is generally estimated in a vague unsatisfactory manner. By some females, from immediately after the last observance of their accustomed periodical illness; and by others, from when it ought to take place on the following month, but is suppressed. And many reckon from their quickening, which is considered to occur twenty weeks before child-birth; but this cannot be always depended on—it is no positive criterion.

The opinion generally received among members of the medical profession is, that conception usually occurs in the fortnight after the last return of the monthly health; from which time the parent nourishes it in her womb, until the tenth lunar month,—that is, two hundred and eighty days,—forty weeks,—or nine calendar months and one week.

It is to be remembered, that there are various circumstances which may take place to cause the womb prematurely to part with its contents during this period. If they are expelled before the sixth month of pregnancy, the product is denominated an abortion, or miscarriage. If after this, and before the proper time, “premature labour.” It cannot be too forcibly impressed upon the minds of pregnant women, to avoid, if possible, either of these incidents, which are more injurious in their effects, and fatal in their consequences, than can be imagined; and when once they have happened, are prone to occur again, and with difficulty can be prevented. From being attended with more or less loss of blood, they endanger and destroy the constitution, by bringing on a debility and weakness which may last through life. In my own practice I have seen individuals of the

most robust and healthful constitutions, brought down to the verge of the grave, by repeated attacks of this kind.

The greater number of cases seem to occur between the eighth and twelfth weeks, when the accustomed monthly illness is expected. It may then be attended with but little loss of blood, and without the female's knowledge; the discharge being referred to the proper return of the monthly secretion. Also quickening (when the womb rises further up in the abdomen to enable it to increase in size, according to the growth of its contents), and the sixth and seventh months, are periods when there is a disposition for its occurrence.

The most prone to suffer are women in robust and rude health, and those likewise who are of a weak and languid temperament. And among the circumstances which are stated as having a tendency to usher in this mischief, may be enumerated—over exertion, dancing, running, jumping, lifting heavy weights, falls, blows, bursts of anger, deformities, frights, colic, great pain, many diseases, and purgative medicines, &c.

The pregnant female whose life has been spent in gaiety and luxury, must reflect upon her condition, and lead a life of tranquillity and peace, or her expectations will be doomed to disappointment, and her fruit brought to untimely decay.

*Signs of Pregnancy.*—The first circumstance that attracts the attention of the wife, and causes her to suspect her condition, is a cessation of the menstrual illness; but this may arise from a variety of independent causes—as sudden and violent emotions of the mind, debility, change of air and scene, cold applied to the feet, &c. This is followed by flushes of heat and cold, and uneasy sensations about the body, with often a disposition to fainting, restlessness and yawning, and a longing for substances that before probably were disliked: should she be nursing, the milk becomes vitiated, disagrees, and is refused by the infant. She may also be afflicted with a periodical discharge for the first four months of pregnancy; it is distinguished by its coagulating. In about a month there is heartburn, morning sickness, severe nausea, and perhaps a little wasting of the frame. The lively disposition will often become sad, and the depressed enjoy the highest flow of spirits. The breasts become enlarged, swollen, and affected with shooting pains, and dark discolouration around the nipples. After the expiration of four months, the sickness usually disappears, and the only suffering generally is from increase of size, with a feverish habit of body.

These symptoms do not all occur to every one; but if the female is young, the breasts frequently shoot and become painful; she has morning sickness,

is not regular, and gradually increases in size : there will be but little doubt of her being in that condition which consolidates with affection the marriage tie, and renders happier domestic life.

*What is to be done during Pregnancy?*—Among the various remarks that can be offered under this head, we may state that the dress should be light, loose, easy, and warm ; that exercise should be taken in moderation, so as not to cause fatigue ; and repose and quietude enjoined. That food should be light, nourishing, and moderately indulged in, there being a great tendency to fulness and irritability of the stomach. That the alvine secretions should be kept regular, which not only induces health, but promotes a speedy convalescence or getting up after delivery ; and that all spirituous drinks should be guarded against as much as possible. Should dragging pain be experienced, or the child distend the abdomen at one part more than another, it will be advisable to wear a bandage for support—it is of great service and much comfort ; as also will swelling of the legs be relieved by this means, and the recumbent position.

*Abortion, or Miscarriage.*—The symptoms denoting to the female that her pregnant state is about to be prematurely terminated, are more or less severe, according to her advancement. It is ushered in, generally, with loss of appetite, lassitude, pain in the back, loins, and hips, a flabby state of the breasts, a feeling of coldness in the abdomen, with something within, which corresponds to the movement of a solid or weighty substance, and a sense of bearing down, with pain.

As soon as a few of these symptoms appear, recourse must be had to the horizontal position, for days or even weeks, dependent upon their severity, upon a bed or sofa. Exercise should be particularly avoided, and the mind kept perfectly tranquil and easy. The room should be light and airy, and drinks of a cooling, refreshing nature, given cold (hot things having a tendency to aggravate the complaint). Should much discharge be developed, cold vinegar and water may be applied over the lower part of the abdomen. The danger is more or less according to its continuance, and the strength of the patient.

*Parturition, or child-birth.*—When the duration of pregnancy or child-bearing has expired, and pains in the back and hips have been felt for several days, particularly at night, and are now experienced every few minutes, shooting forwards, downwards, and becoming more rapid and severe, accompanied with a peculiar feeling of constriction, forcing and sinking of the child, known by a diminution of the bulk of the abdomen, with a watery show ; in most cases the labour is fast approaching, and the sooner

the medical man is present the better. Delicacy and fear should not prevent the sufferer sending for his timely aid; for the alleviation of useless suffering he has frequently the power of promoting, with advice, kind sympathy, and assurance that all will end well and speedily, must materially assist in tranquillizing the mind of herself and friends, lessen pain, expedite delivery, and remove the fear attendant upon this moment of severe trial. Should the birth take place before the accoucheur arrives, she need not become alarmed, or allow it to be separated from her; if it is moved a little on one side, no harm or injury can accrue for some time. (I mention this from having been hastily called to several cases, where the little stranger has been nearly destroyed from want of care in properly securing the remnant of the navel-string).

The patient will find great relief in remaining as quiet as possible during labour, and be consoled with the cheering remembrance that women in the ordinary and natural way scarcely ever lose their lives in child-bed. And the cases which do meet with an unhappy termination, can generally be ascribed to mismanagement, defects in the constitution, or prior disease. And even when imminent danger is impending, the judicious interposition of medical skill may preserve, in a vast majority of cases, both mother and child. In illustration of this truth, I could call to mind numberless instances which fell under my care, when engaged for two years, with the late lamented Dr. Ryan, in preparing for publication a large work on Midwifery.

## THE LYING-IN ROOM.

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*The Bed.*—I would not advise the bed to be turned up, the lower half upon the upper (the usual practice in London), which causes the patient to be moved more than is absolutely necessary after delivery, occasioning perhaps unfavourable symptoms : I would have the bed properly made, that is, in the usual manner, and let the clean clothes be carefully folded back towards the head. The patient should lie on her left side, at the lower part, as near the right hand side as possible, with a sheet and blanket, or counterpane, loosely thrown over her. Under the hips should be placed a sheet, four times doubled ; under this a blanket folded in a similar manner, and under this a red or brown sheep-skin, a piece of canvas, or basil leather, the latter being first on the bed or mattress : these will be found quite sufficient for every thing. The dress should be the simple night garment, as any thing tight retards labour and breathing, and prevents the abdominal muscles assisting the propulsive efforts. Some sewing thread and a sharp pair of scissors should be at hand, also some lard, cold cream, or pomatum, some napkins, a broad calico bandage for the mother, and a piece of new flannel, called a receiver, to wrap the infant in (this is sometimes lined with soft linen or calico).

*The Patient* may walk about till the bearing down is very great, or the waters escape, when she should get to bed, and make expulsive efforts with each return of pain, the knees being bent, the feet pressed against the footboard or post, and the chest inclined forwards. She may also have something to grasp in her hands, as a towel or cord fastened to the bed-post. The apartment should be airy, without a fire, except in winter, or cold weather, and during the intermission of pain a little hot tea may be given ; and this, when the patient is delicate, or desponding, increases the pain. No person should be admitted in the room except the nurse and one female friend ; more only excite, and cause unpleasant feelings.

As soon as the infant is born, cries, and evinces signs of life, it is to be separated from its parent, by a division of the connecting medium, and put into the receiver which the nurse has ready for it, and the head should not be covered with a flannel cap unless it is very cold weather.

The mother should now have some cordial—wine, or spirit and water—



as she generally suffers a great deal during the birth of her offspring. The substance termed after-birth, from its coming away subsequent to the child, will soon be thrown off, but should half an hour elapse before this takes place, fear need not be entertained.

The next thing to be done is the withdrawal of the wet and soiled clothes, and the application of a bandage round the abdomen (to exert some degree of pressure), and a warm napkin, by which much comfort will be given. An additional quantity of bed-clothes may be put on when there is any feeling of chilliness, and the woman not disturbed for at least an hour after. When all goes on well, she may then be lifted or drawn to the upper part of the bed, not moving more than is absolutely requisite. After which, quietude must be strictly enforced, and as few friends and acquaintances as possible allowed in the apartment, so as not to prevent the calm refreshing sleep which usually takes place, and is so essential to recovery. Every woman who has children knows the importance of this.

*Treatment after Delivery.*—The plan recommended to be pursued in the present day is very different to formerly, when many unfortunately lost their lives by injudicious means being resorted to for the promotion of a speedy recovery. The womb, after the loss of its contents, gradually contracts with more or less pain, called “after pains”: they are in common arrested by some sedative medicine prescribed by the accoucheur.

But little in the shape of food will be required by the mother; for the first few days, some gruel, sago, or arrow-root, will be sufficient. About the third day there will be milk, probably in a considerable quantity, and it is particularly essential that the breasts are not allowed to become full, lumpy, or inflamed. The child sucking, and a brisk dose of aperient medicine, generally will be sufficient to prevent it. But if it is not, they must be gently drawn, and rubbed with the palm of the hand, to favour exudation of milk from the nipple; a little sweet oil being used, and more aperient medicine given, or there will be danger of a milk abscess.

About the fifth or sixth day, a little broth, beef-tea, soft boiled eggs, boiled chicken, light puddings, &c. may be taken; but should her constitution be weak and delicate, these are not to be forbidden on the second day, provided they do not cause thirst, feverish symptoms, sickness, &c. About this time the bed may be made, and the patient allowed to sit up a little while. If delicate and weak, this must be forbidden until the eighth or tenth day. She is on no account to walk about before this time, when the discharge will be ceasing. If this be not adhered to, there will be considerable danger of frightful affections being induced, causing life to become one of great misery.

## MANAGEMENT OF CHILDREN.

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When we look into the Bills of Mortality, and find that more than half the deaths take place before the age of five years, we cannot but be impressed with a conviction that there must be some very great defect, in the mode of rearing children, to account for this loss of infantile life. This conviction is the more confirmed from the constant observance of error, either in matters of dress, cleanliness, or food.

To medical men it is too often evident that excess of care and kindness indiscriminately lavished upon infants, tends to their being brought up in a manner not so much after the laws and dictates of nature as they should be. Which class of society, let us inquire, can boast of the most numerous offspring? Not the affluent, who often leave no heirs, but the needy, who toil for their daily bread, and at night lay down their heads in the enjoyment of a repose which has been earned by labour, and no excess or artificial kind of food interrupts.

*Washing an infant.*—As soon as an infant is born, and separated from its mother, let it be thoroughly washed before a fire with white soap and water, so as to remove the white substance from its skin; the means used being a soft sponge or piece of flannel. Care must be taken that the soap does not enter the eyes, or it may injure them.

The head should not be pressed by any person into what may be considered by them a proper shape, neither should any spirits be applied to it; they evaporate, produce cold, and often cause injury to the brain. *Let a mother rub a little spirits between her own hands, and she will never allow the head of her babe to undergo the same operation.*

The infant must be wiped perfectly dry about the joints, behind the ears, and folds of the skin, with a warm soft napkin, or cloth, and sprinkled with powder to obviate chafing. When this is done, the remains of the navel-string are to be very carefully folded in a small soft piece of old linen, having a hole in the centre, through which it is passed. Nurses occasionally scorch this piece of linen; the soft fluff is by this means removed from its surface, and it is consequently rendered harsh. It is to be kept up towards the chest by means of a flannel roller about four inches wide, and length sufficient to pass twice round the body. It generally falls off between the fifth and tenth day, when the part is to be powdered.

*Dressing an Infant.*—The dress should be put on as easy as possible, and pins avoided as much as can be conveniently done, small tapes or buttons being preferable. The body should not be entwined by any tight bandage or roller, under a false impression of giving strength; it impedes respiration, and injures, by its pressure, the stomach and liver; and, besides, the bones being very soft and yielding, they give way, and a deformed chest or back, with impeded circulation of blood, is the result.

The clothes should be kept extremely clean, and perfectly dry, particularly its under garments. Soiled linen becomes hard, and prevents the natural healthful secretion of perspiration. If this is not attended to, inflammation, redness, and excoriation, of the tender skin will be the consequence. It should neither be exposed to intense heat, nor a glare of light, as a strong fire, candle, or sun; the eyes being very prone to suffer.

*Suckling.*—As soon as the infant is dressed it should be placed by the side of its parent, and allowed to have some sleep. When it awakes it may be put to the breast; and this should frequently be repeated, as it tends to solicit and hasten, in a gradual manner, the coming of the milk, at first in small quantities, adequate to its wants and digestive powers. If this is neglected, the nipple often becomes buried in the breast, and its elongation will cause cracking, with considerable pain.

If the milk is soon secreted there will be no occasion, unless the infant is fretful, or its bowels have not been relieved for three or four hours, to give aperient medicine. Should it be required, half a tea-spoonful of castor oil is the best. A little milk and water, or thin gruel sweetened, may be administered before the milk appears.

It will require no other support than the breast for several weeks, provided it is strong, which it should be allowed to have as often as it awakes from sleep. Say every three hours at the most; but not directly after its mother has partaken of a hearty meal, had purgative medicines, or suffered from any excitement or emotions of the mind. It will be requisite to remove the infant frequently from the breast, to prevent a sudden distension of the stomach.

Should there not be a sufficiency of milk, and the child in consequence falls away, or should the mother not be able to nurse it from illness, recourse must be had to artificial food. Among the most desirable will be found milk and water nicely sweetened, thin gruel, arrow-root, baked flour and water, crusts of bread made into pap, &c. This, on account of alum and other impurities in the London bread, often disagrees. Bread baked twice, called tops and bottoms, the more usual food, often also generates acidity, and produces uneasiness with many infants. The food should be of the consistence

of cream well strained, not very hot, and not more than a few spoonfuls given at one time. It should always be sucked from a bottle (not a boat or spoon), this process being essential for its better digestion, and it also prevents air being taken into the stomach.

After a few months, food in quality a little more substantial may be given—as beef-tea, broths, gravies, jellies, light puddings, &c. It is not to be forgotten that children have their likes and dislikes (as well as beings of mature years) towards certain kinds of food; and if that which is refused is enforced they will become fretful and ill. The mother should not banish from her mind the obvious truth, that infants very seldom thrive on artificial kinds of food, and therefore it is her bounden duty (if she has health and strength) to nurse her offspring. Nature has not endowed the interior of the new-born babe with sufficient tone to extract the nutritious particles from food, but has provided the parent with the means for this purpose, that they may be separated from it, and poured into the mouth already prepared. And who can describe, but the mother who has felt it, the exquisite feelings of delight with which the little stranger is folded to the bosom, and warmed: its little ways then become known, and an indescribable bond of friendship is formed. These are the days when the foundation-stone of the superstructure of mankind is laid; and can too much care be bestowed in making it perfect? Every day we see the squalid countenance of the bud reared by artificial food, and do we not feel for the constitution that is receiving a check, and the frame that will (although of the fairest mould) be imperfectly developed?

*Wet Nurse.*—Should the mother contemplate procuring a wet nurse for her child, she cannot be too careful in her choice of one whose constitution is good, and not beyond the age of thirty years. After this, the vigour of the frame is sinking, and the milk thick. She should be of a mild disposition, fond of children, and have a good supply of milk, of which the appearance of her own infant will be the best criterion, and free from eruptions about the body. One who has had a child before should be preferred, she being better able to understand its little wants and ways. The milk should not be too old; not more than a month older than the child she proposes to suckle. Should the little one appear fretful, hungry, or fall away, it is a sure sign that the milk does not agree, and the nurse must be changed.

*Weaning.*—This process should be begun when five or six teeth have made their appearance, before which no solid food should be given. This will vary between the seventh and twelfth month; but if the infant is delicate, not until the fourteenth. Long nursing is extremely hurtful to the mother's constitution; and too often do we meet in all societies females reduced to great

debility and weakness from this injurious habit, and suffering from affections which may afflict them to the grave.

Before it is attempted, it will be advisable to accustom the infant to the use of food by degrees. Should it become fretful and cross, no soothing substances are to be given : they are dangerous in the extreme, and often cause sudden death. Let it be gently nursed instead, and it will be quieted.

Its food should be given about four or five times during the day, composed of sago, arrow-root, tapioca, bread and milk, &c. It should be placed on the carpet or rug, and as its knowledge of things around it becomes developed, let it amuse itself, stretch its limbs, and crawl about at its own discretion.

I think it would be advisable to accustom children to the use of their feet at a much earlier period than is usually done. I do not mean constantly, but for a little while occasionally, by which the muscles become enlarged, and the legs stronger. They are not generally allowed to be on their feet until many months old, and show signs of an inclination to walk. What is the consequence ? The tender legs are unable to support the body ; they give way, and distortion and rickets follow.

Care must be taken not to lift or lead infants by their arms or hands—a most dangerous practice, by which many have been broken or dislocated. Neither should they be suspended by a bandage around the chest : it causes an inclination of the head forwards, flattening of the bones of the chest, and often curvature of the spine.

*Diseases of Infants.*—In considering the diseases of the infantile period of existence, we are to remember that theirs is a constitution in which delicacy, sensibility, and predisposition to disease, are manifest, and the want of articulation to explain, and reason sufficient to denote, generally makes the locality of the affection difficult to detect, to those who have not paid more than ordinary attention to this branch of the profession.

There are always attendant symptoms to warn the mother that her infant is in ill health, or suffering from some incipient disease : and who can blame her for looking anxiously around for men of talent, on account of those she loves, when early life is overcast with fearful sickness, and ask whether there are no means by which their sufferings can be alleviated, or their lives prolonged ? The anxious parent will observe that the child evinces fretfulness, cries suddenly, starts from sleep, has sickness, drawing up of its legs, disordered bowels of an unnatural colour, and offensive, (their motions should be of a bright orange, and one or two daily), wakefulness, heaviness, dulness, hardness of belly, soft and flabby skin, wasting of body, plaintive crying, &c.

The generality of the above symptoms owe their origin to improper feed-

ing. It is surprising what an enormous quantity some persons will force their children to take, after which they become fretful, uneasy, and often puke it up; when, instead of gentle nursing, more is given to keep them quiet, which adds to the mischief, until at last illness or disease is induced.

*Dentition.*—The cutting of the teeth is the most critical and dangerous period of an infant's life. In many cases it deranges to a great extent the functions of the body, and causes extreme irritability of the nervous energy. The varied affections that are ushered in at this time are both alarming and formidable; and although many suffer but little, they are to be viewed in prospective, and guarded against before hand. Great attention should be paid to proper clothing, and the avoidance of change of climate. The bowels should be kept in a proper state, and quietude enjoined to the utmost; and under every disease arising the gums should be thoroughly lanced.

The first dentition generally takes place about the sixth or seventh month, attended with fretfulness, redness of gums, and discharge of saliva, and often convulsions. The two middle lower are the first that appear through the substance of the gums; then the corresponding upper; then in a short time one on each side of the lower, and one each side of the upper; and so on, until the set is complete; after which life is much more secure.

About the seventh year these fall out, and are succeeded by thirty-two others, which last for a longer or shorter period, according to the health of the person, and the care bestowed in keeping them in a clean condition.

Should the child be attacked with a convulsive fit, it must be placed up to the arms in pretty hot water, and the froth carefully wiped from its mouth. Its face should be sprinkled with vinegar and water, the skin gently rubbed with the palm of the hand, and the head not allowed to hang back, or very forward. Although it is very seldom that children lose their lives from these fits, still it may occur; and we should never despair, on account of discouraging circumstances, while there is the slightest hope of success.

*General Observations.*—Mild and kind treatment to infants and children, with proper advice and restrictions, are very essential for their well-being and future happiness. In infancy and childhood the dispositions are pliant in the extreme, and the action and behaviour of those around them are copied (as it were) from a book; and unfortunately all that is useless, and all that is improper, not only make the deepest impression, but are the easiest followed. From this period the future life and conduct of the man will be moulded. If harshly spoken to, their wavering intellects are prone to rebel: they become fretful and irritable—a feeling which no after-training may altogether subdue.

Exercise to a new-born infant is not at first requisite. It should be kept perfectly quiet, and not carried about the house from room to room: it being a tender fragile form, and soon affected by change of atmosphere. In a few weeks good and pure air is every thing for its growth and strength, particularly the refreshing breeze of summer. As a proof, we have only to observe the marked difference between the ruddy child of the country and that reared in the unhealthy localities of the metropolis. It should be carried in the horizontal position, and never thrown about.

Too much care and attention cannot be bestowed in procuring a careful and confidential nursemaid. It too often occurs that those who take infants out in the air are disinterested in their welfare, stand about in draughts at the corners of the streets, or stay out gossiping until late, and expose the tender bud to the fuming blast, or the damp and chilly atmosphere; when it is taken home to the anxious mother, fretful, uneasy, and suffering, with the seeds of disease implanted in its frame. She should be capable of speaking distinctly, lest an improper mode of articulation should be received by her charge.

The long clothes of infants are generally of too great a length, so as to prevent the proper action of the limbs, and the air reaching the legs to brace them. They should not be worn more than three months in summer or warm weather.

In closing these few pages I shall feel amply rewarded for my trouble should they have a useful tendency. In my own practice last year three thousand patients fell under my care, and as the majority of them were in infantile life, I could not but observe that some few rules would be of service to mothers.