

Sextuple Pregnancy.

BAUDOUIIN (MARCEL). *Gazette Médicale de Paris*, April 2nd and 30th, 1904.

WHILE the occurrence of quintuple pregnancy has been generally admitted, the possibility of a sextuple birth has been denied. Baudouin has carefully reviewed the literature relating to this subject, and concludes that sextuple pregnancy can and does occur. Of the five cases recorded in his paper he regards three as quite authentic. The first case of sextuple pregnancy put on record was in 1805. The history of the mother is interesting. In her first marriage, which lasted 22 years, she gave birth to 30 children—27 boys and 3 girls. In a second marriage she had three pregnancies, which yielded 14 boys—first three, then five, and lastly six infants at a birth. All the six children were still-born, and unfortunately the placenta was not carefully examined. Baudouin is disposed to think that only two ova were impregnated in this case, each of which produced three fœtuses. The second case of sextuple pregnancy (American), was reported in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* of 1847. Baudouin doubts the authenticity of this case, and has been unable to verify the reference. Two of the six infants are said to have survived. The third case (Italian), recorded by Vassali in 1888, was carefully observed, and there is no reason to doubt its authenticity. The patient, 36 years of age, who had already given birth to six single children, married a widower, 41 years old, who had ten children. He said that five of his cousins—all brothers—each had twins by their respective wives. The patient had a child in the first year of her marriage, suckled it till it was 11 months old, and weaned it on account of another pregnancy. In the early months the abdomen became unusually large, but there was no œdema of the body or the lower limbs. She became very thin and anæmic. At the fourth month the abdomen was like a pregnancy at term, and at this time the membranes suddenly ruptured without the occurrence of pains. Shortly afterwards one fœtus was born, and Vassali was summoned. The abdomen was still enormously

distended, foetal parts could be felt, but no active movements were detected. The following day four more foetuses were born. The placenta, which was firmly adherent, had to be removed manually, and in its substance a sixth foetus was found. The foetuses—four male and two female—were alive at birth, but died soon afterwards. The placenta looked like a single one, but each foetus had apparently been developed in a distinct sac of amniotic fluid. Baudouin believes that there were three separate ova concerned in this pregnancy—the first giving rise to two boys, the second to three girls, and the third to a single girl. Three placentæ must have been united so as to simulate a single one. The fourth case (quoted by Vortisch) is not authenticated. The fifth case, carefully recorded by Vortisch in 1903, occurred in a negress. The woman had previously given birth to twins, quadruplets and triplets in successive pregnancies; and in the present instance—her sixth pregnancy—she had conceived by another husband. Hence the maternal origin of the multiple births in this case. The six infants—five male and one female—died very shortly after birth, and were photographed by a missionary; the photograph is reproduced in Baudouin's paper. It seems probable that three ova were impregnated in this case, but Baudouin lays great emphasis on the necessity of making a careful examination of the placenta, as in this way only is it possible to judge of the number of ova concerned in the pregnancy. He will not admit the possibility of a sextuple pregnancy arising from the impregnation of a single ovum.

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