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The Abolition Case

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Dr. Parvin's paper on injuries to the foetus (Med. News, Nov.) reminds me of an interesting experience which I had in the North-West in 1886, which is worth placing on record. Mr. Fred. Brydges had kindly met our party at the Portage to take us over the Manitoba and North-Western Road, and he mentioned that two days before, a woman, while in the water-closet on the train, had given birth to a child, which had dropped to the track and had been found alive some time after. I was so incredulous that he ordered the conductor to stop the train at the station to which the woman had been taken that I might see her and corroborate the story. I found mother and child in the care of the station-master's wife, and obtained the following history: She was aged about 28, well developed, of medium size, and had had two previous labors, which were not difficult. She had expected her confinement in a week or ten days, and had got on the train to go to see her husband who was working "down the track." Having a slight diarrhoea she went to the water-closet, and while on the seat labor pains came on and the child dropped from her. Hearing a noise and groaning, the conductor forced open the door and found the woman on the floor in an exhausted condition, with just strength enough to tell him that the baby was somewhere on the track, and to ask him to stop the train, which was running at the rate of about 20 miles an hour. The baby was found alive on the side of the track a mile or more away, and with the mother was left at the station where I saw her. She lost a good deal of blood, and the placenta was not delivered for some hours. I saw no reason to doubt the truthfulness of the woman's story, and the baby presented its own evidences in the form of a large bruise on the side of the head, another on the shoulder, and a third on the right knee. It had probably fallen between the ties on the sand, and clear of the rail, which I found, on examination of the position of the hole in the closet, was quite possible.

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This is my E.D. ish and may have been the  
~~kind of thing that started him off, tho the he signed~~ E.D. earlier.