

Prize Competition, See Pages 112 and xxxiv.

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PULMONARY EMBOLISM.

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Pulmonary embolism, or more properly speaking, occlusion of the pulmonary artery or one of its main branches, is a condition which fortunately does not often present itself to our notice. When it does occur its onset is so sudden and, in the majority of cases, its termination so disastrous, that its very name creates a feeling of dread; sudden death, which is the rule in these cases, occurring in the course of any illness, more particularly in obstetrical practice, is appalling. It carries with it a feeling of horror, and no physician, however great his reputation may be, can escape the criticisms which invariably follow, even although the accident is entirely beyond his control; it is only by a thorough familiarity with the cause, and by being able to explain how impossible it is to foresee or avert the fatal termination, that he can in some degree hope to modify these adverse criticisms.

The cases of which I shall briefly give the history all occurred in obstetrical practice, so that in this paper I shall confine my remarks chiefly to this condition as a consequence or complication of labor, although practically the pathological condition is the same whether arising after labor or in the course of disease, accident, or surgical interference.

Case I.—Mrs. A., aged 35, a delicate and anemic woman, pregnant for the fourth time, was delivered after a comparatively