

readily disposed to, that the processes of pregnancy and lactation may simultaneously proceed in a few cases, we are no more entitled to conclude that this is the design of woman's constitution, than that a woman was designed for bearing twins, or quadruplets, because she sometimes bears them.

The muscular fibres of the uterus have a peculiar organization. They augment in length, in breadth and thickness, and spread out in fasciculi in different directions. One series of them seems to be a counterbalance of the other, and thus they are prevented from contracting prematurely. Their organization is much more elaborate than that of commoner muscles. They mature and accumulate their force for one grand display, and in that act exhaust their power, disorganize their substance. They must be repaired, if not renewed, for future service. The old, worn out materials must be removed, and much repair accomplished, ere the uterus can re-perform its function.

This operation can be very properly conducted while the next process to gestation—that of lactation—is carried on. The vigorous and plethoric state of the circulation would be injurious to the mother, had she no active occupation for her blood. The admirable function of lactation preserves her health and happiness, while it sustains her infant's life, and gives her time and opportunity, as well as means, for reparation of her reproducing organs.

The chemical constituents of the milk, require the same materials from the blood that are employed in nourishing the fœtus in the uterus—nitrogenous and saline combinations. It cannot, therefore, be in harmony with the monogenous adaptation of woman that she should produce and nourish simultaneously.

How then is the period of lactation determined? In proportion as the child obtains the powers of respiration, locomotion and mastication, more solid food is requisite for its well being, and as it necessarily is in the midst of other food, its senses and its appetite increasingly become excited by the food, and finally demand it. The intensity of interest which the mother feels for the well being of her offspring, turns her attention and her feelings to her function of lactation, so long as her infant depends upon her absolutely for support. This feeling, operating on that portion of the brain which supplies the maminae, the caloric of the brain, in its galvanic state, excites the blood-vessels to nourish and supply the mammal glands, for their required service. They necessarily enlarge and multiply, and keep up a *pro hac vice* or abnormal circulation and supply.

If the intensity of interest for the infant be maintained, the milk will flow continuously, for a much longer period than the natural term. Hence mothers, who are widowed during their lactation, frequently lengthen out the process, to enjoy the comfort which they find in the dependence of their infants on their care and sustenance. Hence, also, when a woman dreads another impregnation, she may, by the withholding of her feeling and desire for impregnation, render the uterus incapa-