

fundus uteri be incarcerated under the promontory of the sacrum, with the sacral supports stretched so much and for so long a time that they cannot recover their contractile power, and if normal involution of the pelvic organs be arrested, then descent may not only persist, but may progress, with constantly increasing cystocele and rectocele until the entire uterus has extruded through the vulva.

It is most important to remember that complete prolapse of the uterus is only an incident to prolapse of the pelvic floor. The whole mechanism is that of hernia, and the condition is hernia, for the extruded hernial mass drags after it a peritoneal sac which, hernia-like, contains small intestines. This sac forces its way to the pelvic outlet and extrudes through the vulva, having the inverted vagina for a covering.

The prolapsing uterus may be related to the vaginal walls in either one of two ways: The prolapsing vaginal walls may drag the uterus down after it; or the uterus itself may descend along the vaginal canal by force of its own weight and drag with it the reduplicated vaginal walls. Extreme prolapse of the uterus, the organ being covered thus by reflected vaginal walls, has given rise to considerable confusion in pathology, and by many standard authors wrongly has been called hypertrophic elongation of the cervix uteri. In a given case, the possibility of infra-vaginal elongation may be settled easily by placing the patient in the knee-breast position, when the uterus of its own weight will fall toward the diaphragm, and the reduplicated vaginal walls will unfold and utero-vaginal attachment will appear in the normal place instead of being, as it seemed to be, high up on the walls of the uterus. Those cases in which reduplication of the vaginal walls does not almost entirely explain apparent great elongation of the cervix, are rare exceptions. When formerly these mechanical conditions were attributed to hypertrophic enlargement of the uterus itself, and were regarded as adequate indications for the removal of the cervix, the surgeon, in the attempt to remove what he supposed was the elongated cervix uteri, sometimes invaded the bladder anteriorly and the rectum posteriorly.

*Surgical Treatment.*—In passing it may be well to mention, for the purpose of condemning it, an operation perhaps more frequently performed than any other for the cure of complete descent, namely the operation which generally passes under the name of Stoltz. This operation is designed to narrow the vagina, and thus to maintain the uterus somewhere in the pelvi-