

On the value of the curette in the foregoing, I presume, there is no difference of opinion, for, in addition to the fact that it is indispensable in these cases, its use, with reasonable care, is comparatively free from danger. These are the conditions demanding the use of the curette. It is when we come to consider the use of this instrument in the puerperal uterus that we advisedly ask the question, When is its use justified? When one considers the pathological anatomy of puerperal infection, one naturally shudders at the sight of such headings as "The Surgical Treatment of Puerperal Sepsis," and "The Use of the Curette in Acute Puerperal Sepsis," etc. That the curette may be safely used to clean out the uterine cavity in carefully selected cases, after miscarriage or after the removal of an adherent placenta, I am willing to admit; but even these cases can be done quite as efficiently and much more safely in the majority of cases, with the finger.

It is difficult to conceive of more dangerous teaching than the indiscriminate use of the curette in the treatment of puerperal sepsis. I am sure that no one who has had any experience in the treatment of these cases has failed to notice the aggravation of the symptoms following any form of intra-uterine manipulation. Even the simple uterine douche is not infrequently followed by a severe chill and a rise of two or three degrees of temperature.

The danger of perforation of the uterine wall, resulting in general septic peritonitis. Cases are cited where loops of intestine have been caught by the curette, as has also the omentum. Mann, of Buffalo, reports an interesting case of this kind, in which a loop of the bowel was drawn down and torn across by the curette.

The greatest danger of the use of the curette in these cases, and the one, in my opinion, enough to condemn its use, is the almost absolute certainty of causing a generalized infection as a result of the tearing down of the so-called leucocyte zone, the opening up of new fields for absorption, exposing the mouths of blood vessels and lymphatics.

One reads, with fear and trembling, such papers as that presented by Knyvett Gordon on the treatment of severe cases of puerperal sepsis by active disinfection of the uterus by means of the curette and the use of izal, in which he claims to scrape away the entire endometrium down to the muscle. He then paints the interior of the organ with undiluted izal, and then packs the uterus with gauze soaked in a one-in-two-hundred izal solution.