

that a young woman having valvular lesions of the heart, who can carry out her social and domestic duties without any serious symptoms of ill health, should not be prevented from marrying, although I freely admit that child-bearing is likely to aggravate the dangers connected with heart disease. I may say at the same time that I fear the dangers of pregnancy and labor in such patients less than I did some years ago.

*Which of the Heart Lesions is the Most Serious?*—It is generally acknowledged that mitral stenosis is the most dangerous condition. This was pointed out very clearly many years ago by Angus Macdonald<sup>2</sup>; and writers since the publication of his work, such as Berry Hart<sup>3</sup>, Galabin<sup>4</sup>, Fothergill<sup>5</sup>, and others fully endorse Macdonald's views. The rarer conditions of aortic stenosis and aortic regurgitation are dangerous, but not so much so as mitral stenosis. Mitral regurgitation alone is not as a rule a matter of serious import.

*How does Pregnancy Affect the System in Cases of Heart Disease?*—It is apt to disturb compensation, and the backward pressure may primarily overload the pulmonary circulation, causing serious thoracic complications, and secondarily may interfere with the functional activity of other organs, especially the kidneys and liver. Sometimes the general disturbance in the working of the various organs causes abortion, although, I think, not so often as has generally been supposed. In one patient with marked mitral insufficiency whom I attended about ten years ago, the labor was normal, but the child was still-born. She had one child living, aged 9. After the birth of this child she became pregnant four times with the following results: one miscarriage at three months, and three still-births at term, including the labor in which I attended her. I don't know whether the heart disease was responsible for these results. I have attended in labor several other patients with mitral insufficiency without having any serious trouble. About twenty years ago I was called to attend a woman in confinement. I had not seen her before, and when I arrived the labor was well advanced. The second and third stages were completed in a few minutes. I then found a loud regurgitant murmur. I had before that time supposed that this was a serious condition in relation to labor, and I was much alarmed. Since then I have learned by experience that mitral insufficiency is not a very serious condition in pregnancy and labor.

I formerly thought that the loss of balance throughout the system from heart disease was apt to cause that form of general toxemia which produced eclampsia; but, although albuminuria and dropsy are common complications, I am now doubtful about the frequency of convulsions in such cases. In some cases pregnancy appears to produce no ill effects whatever. Dakin<sup>6</sup> says