

causes due to the general health and habits of the mother; third, from causes due to the state of the womb and its appendages; and fourth, from causes due to diseases of the ovum. Under these headings an almost innumerable list of causes are produced by various writers, yet notwithstanding all this I am firmly of the opinion that there exists in some women a disposition, so to speak, to abort upon the slightest provocation. In many cases of habitual abortion, that there is undoubtedly some anatomical or physiological cause upon which the phenomenon depends, is more than probable, and in all instances in which there exists a mechanical impediment of any kind it may follow impregnation periodically almost as a matter of course, but putting such aside there are other and by no means rare instances in which we can only account for the repeated abortions by supposing that the uterus has contracted an inveterate habit. It is, perhaps, one of the most familiar observations in obstetrical practice that a woman who has previously aborted is much more liable to miscarry, and that in the face of no cause. In such it is generally observed that the tendency to separation of the ovum is greatest at a certain period of pregnancy, and every accoucheur of any experience can recall cases in which successive ova were thrown off at exactly the same age, as calculated from the presumed period of conception. The cause of such cases, however, is accounted for by the rather indefinite and non-tangible explanation—a perverted condition of the uterine fibres and hypersensibility of their contractile powers.

The prophylaxis of habitual abortion is one which concerns us greatly, for notwithstanding the amount of literature on the subject, and the number of drugs recommended, without counting the very early ones, more than twenty per cent. of all pregnancies terminate in abortion. That advice so generally given in all diseases, *remove the cause*, is equally applicable here, and of course should be resorted to whenever such can be discovered. Attention to the general health before and after conception, and the avoidance after pregnancy has begun of all those exciting causes which are more or less given to precipitate an abortion; the removal of local causes such as displacements, subinvolution, endometritis, and other local inflammations, and the treatment of pathological conditions such as syphilis, anæmia and tubercu-