

to the position of the bony exit of the pelvis—the point of the sacrum, or coccyx.

The upper peritoneal portion of the septum is the site of perforations resulting from encapsulated exudations in Douglas's pouch bursting through rectum into the vagina, or the rupturing of an extra-uterine pregnancy through both tubes.

The case before us belongs to the first class I describe; that is, the abnormal communication is due to necrosis of the soft parts as a result of long-continued pressure of the head during her first labor. The size of these pressure-necroses fistulæ varies very much; this one is about the average, being about 2 cm. in its longest diameter, which is in the direction of the long axis of the vagina. The mucous membrane of the posterior wall of the rectum protrudes through the opening into the vagina, and, as you see, carries with it a rolling border of the mucous membrane of the anterior rectal wall as well.

The opening, you will also see, is not in the centre of the passage—in fact it rarely is; it is situated to the right of the posterior columna rugarum, which sometimes overlaps it as a valve. The nature of such a blemish as this involves the loss of the most important function of the rectum. The patient cannot prevent gases and liquids passing from the bowel into the vagina, and thus renders her life most miserable. Our object, therefore, is to restore the recto-vaginal septum by operative means. And operative treatment is indicated in cases except those resulting from cancerous ulceration. The best time to operate is about six to eight weeks after labor.

I do not intend here to relate to you all of the different methods of repairing such an injury; time would not permit; but will demonstrate the method I intend to adopt in the present case by means of this little model of potter's clay. Previous to repairing recto-vaginal fistulæ and ruptured perineæ, by Tait's flap-splitting, it was thought necessary always to divide the sphincter and whatever remained of the perineum right up to the fistulous opening, and undoubtedly it was the proper method to pursue.

I do not think in this case, however, it will be necessary to