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PUERPERAL MANIA.

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That form of mania following and depending upon childbirth and the puerperal state is of much interest, because of its frequency, danger, and liability to become chronic. The object of this paper is not to enter into a discussion of the subject very fully, but to invite attention to some points that I have found of much importance in the successful management of some of these cases. The views advanced are the result of the clinical observation of twelve cases of the disease which I have either had under my own care or have seen in consultation. Only those cases that have been examined with sufficient care to enable them to be of use in establishing the views advanced in this paper will be reported.

The chief causes of puerperal mania, as given by all authorities I have been able to consult, are heredity, moral influences, dystocia, anæmia, and eclampsia as predisposing; while as exciting causes are mentioned moral emotions, toxæmia, albuminuria, and exhaustion. Clinical observation of a number of my cases leads me to the conclusion that there is another etiological factor of frequent occurrence that I have been unable to find mentioned by any writer. I refer to laceration of the cervix uteri. Doubtless it will occur to everyone that, as this accident happens so frequently and no mania results, little reliance can be placed on it as

a cause of puerperal mania. The same, however, is true of all causes mentioned above, the conditions existing without the supervision of maniacal symptoms.

The explanation of want of uniformity in results from uniform causes lies in the great diversity of material upon which these causes act. What would excite mania in one person might produce hysteria, melancholia, or neurasthenia in another. It may also be objected that a large number of these cases of insanity recover without having the laceration cured. This is true, but it will be admitted that the great majority of lacerations heal spontaneously in a few days or weeks, corresponding in time to the recovery of sanity in most of these cases; and even where they do not heal, they undergo change and become covered by mucous membrane, which lessens very much the local sensitiveness and favorably modifies the condition of the torn surface.

There are circumstances, moreover, connected with this form of insanity that lend plausibility to the view above stated as to causation.

Dr. Bucke has pointed out, in his book on "Man's Moral Nature," the strong probability that this has for its physical basis the sympathetic nervous system, and that disease of those organs exclusively, or almost exclusively, supplied by that system leads to perversion of the moral and emotional nature. This only requires to be done to a sufficient degree to constitute a form of insanity. He also calls attention to the fact that disease of the stomach,