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Original Communications.

MISSED ABORTION.*

By GEO. T. ROSS, M.D., Professor of Physiology, University of Bishop's College, Montreal.

Mrs. A. B., æt. 40, the mother of six children, became pregnant with the seventh, in September of last year. Her former history was good, having been ill only from diseases incident to child-bearing. She has evidence of a strumous constitution, the irritable mucous membranes showing, not only in herself, but plainly in her living children. She is of thin, spare habit of body, and an active, nervous temperament. Several years ago the husband was treated for specific trouble. Before the present occasion the mother had miscarried three or four times, the foetus in every case being discharged without unusual features. Present condition was as follows: Up till the end of the fourth month of this pregnancy no symptom of remarkable character was presented. The ordinary signs of the patient's state in January last were, to her, unmistakable. The foetal movements were very distinct during some three weeks, after which they ceased entirely. There seemed no reasonable ground to doubt the nature of the uterine contents from the exact history given regarding all the indications. The

mother, an intelligent woman, had experienced the usual phenomena too often to be mistaken in their nature this time, and the well-defined foetal movements, if the history were credited, seemed to place the nature of the case beyond doubt. A short time subsequent to the change noticed by the mother, I was consulted regarding it. On examination I was unable to discover the foetal heart beat, and found that the breasts, from being enlarged and turgid, according to patient's statement, were soft and flaccid; other indications also pointed to cessation of uterine activity. The general rule being that two weeks after the death of a foetus it is aborted, and finding the patient in good health, with nothing existing to justify interference, I advised waiting for further indications. An interval of several months now elapsed, and I was again consulted regarding the non-progress of gestation. It was quite evident now that since last interview no growth had occurred in the uterine contents, the size of the tumor being about the same; if anything, it was smaller. Vaginal examination showed the os to be undilated, although somewhat patulous. Uterus was uniformly enlarged, such as would still be not inconsistent with a four months' foetal growth. At this time, say seven months after what was believed to be conception, there did not exist a single

*Read before the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Montreal, 29th November, 1889.