

DOMINION MEDICAL MONTHLY

AND' ONTARIO MEDICAL JOURNAL

VOL. XVIII.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY, 1902.

No. 2.

Original Articles

VOMITING OF PREGNANCY.

BY WALTER MCKEOWN, B.A., M.D., M.R.C.S. (ENG.), TORONTO.
Surgeon to St. Michael's Hospital.

Vomiting in pregnancy may be physiological, exaggerated or pernicious. The first is regarded as of little consequence, the second a disagreeable accompaniment; but the third forms a most distressing and frequently fatal complication. Pernicious vomiting is such an exaggeration of the physiological nausea that the stomach refuses almost absolutely to retain any food. The retching is constant, and everything put into the stomach is almost immediately ejected. Even when no food is taken, mucus and bile are vomited from time to time. Emaciation and loss of strength is rapid. The cause commonly ascribed to this condition is reflex irritation of the stomach, from irritation of the sympathetic nerve ending in the uterus, caused by this organ's growth and stretching of the uterine walls. In support of this it is pointed out that it is more common in primipara, in twin pregnancies, and in hydramnios; also in chronically thickened and inelastic cervixes, and in hypesthetic conditions of the nervous system. Dirmoser, in the *Vienna Medical Weekly*, in 1896, first suggested the possibility of auto-intoxication as a cause of this condition, and while reflex action may be common, I believe that severe vomiting is much more frequently toxic than is generally recognized.

The development of the fetus must throw into the maternal circulation products not present at any other time. Some product