

and in this way is established a communication between the ovum and the uterine wall, which renders further development possible. The chief seat of this carneous degeneration is the decidua-vera. The amnion undergoes little change, and may be found adhering to the inner surface of the chorion, containing within its cavity a quantity of bloody fluid, and in which will be found what remains of the embryo.

As regards the etiology of this strange obstetric condition, it can be summed up in the following: Syphilis, nervous shock of any kind, direct injury, twin pregnancies, endometritis, metritis, fevers, etc. The syphilitic poison interfering with normal nutrition in the parts concerned in gestation, as it does in other parts of the body, induces local retrograde tissue change (increased cell growth) which is inconsistent with the growth and life of the foetus. Nervous shock and direct injury act by causing an extravasation of blood between the foetal and maternal parts, and bring about death of the foetus by a starvation process. This starvation process may also play some part in interrupted pregnancies occurring in very anæmic young women.

Now, gentlemen, that we understand what this obstetric condition—the subject of my paper—really is, and how it bears towards other conditions of a like nature, we will be able to form an idea of how very important it will be to diagnose correctly when placed in a position in which an error in our judgment may not only compromise our own professional reputation, but may interfere with the happy career of two innocent lives. In a case of this nature, the history of the patient and her size may have led either to no suspicion of pregnancy having commenced, or to those which may have been dissipated by the further history of the case. The important elements of suspicion may not have become apparent to the patient herself or to the physician. Here an error is extremely liable to occur, and that it has occurred and is liable to occur again I will show further on by relating a case in point.

I will first, however, bring to your recollection the occasion of my exhibiting before this Society last January a specimen of the so-called mummified foetus or flesh-mole, supposed to have