

Many women who have perineal lacerations and a moderate prolapse of many years' standing do not consult a gynaecologist until after the menopause, this is due to the general loss of muscular tone at that period. All the uterine ligaments, of course, participate in this general loss of tone.

UTERINE LIGAMENTS.

When we study human anatomy, we find that the principle Nature has applied to hold the various organs in place is that of suspension by ligaments. Briefly reviewing the organs of the human body, namely, the heart, the lungs, the liver, the spleen, the pancreas, the kidneys and the intestines, we readily admit that they are hung by ligaments from the bony framework of the body. Not one of them is held in place, or receives support from anything placed beneath it. The ovaries and fallopian tubes hang on the posterior surface of the broad ligaments by *their ligaments*. Reasoning by analogy, and basing our conclusions upon the uniformity of Nature's laws, the logical inference is that the uterus is held in place by its ligaments, and, weight for weight, no other organ in the body has so many ligaments.

That these ligaments are compelled to support the uterus is clearly demonstrated by the fact that, when the supporting power of the floor of the pelvis is absolutely destroyed by the perineum being torn clear through into the rectum, the uterus remains in place. The only exceptions to this rule are found in cases in which the uterus is displaced and dragged down by complicating conditions that overcome the resisting power of the ligaments.

The chief action of the round ligaments is not suspensory, but rather to guide and limit the excursions of the fundus. In their quiescent state they hold the fundus to the front and thereby secure the impingement of the intra-abdominal pressure upon the *posterior* surface of the uterus. With an overful bladder the fundus uteri is carried quite to the promontory of the sacrum and the intra-abdominal pressure is found to impinge upon the *anterior* surface of the uterus. The round ligaments prevent the uterus from being gradually crowded down into a permanent retro-displacement.

The main functions of the broad-ligaments are to furnish supports for the uterine appendages which are hung upon its posterior face, and to furnish safe conduct to the blood vessels in their course to the uterus.

The chief purpose of the utero-sacral ligaments, if not their sole function, is to retain the uterus in its normal position. The two sets of ligaments, the utero-sacral and the utero-vesical taken together, form a sling of tissue, reaching from the promontory of the sacrum to the symphysis, in which the uterus hangs suspended by their attachments just above the internal os. The utero-sacral ligaments prevent descent of the uterus as a whole, while the utero-vesicals control the to-and-fro, or antero-posterior, motion.