

rupture of the circular artery, but without blood-poisoning afterwards, so these women make a rapid recovery. The extent of injury, however, prevents the parts from uniting properly, and as the tissues of the cervix remain gaping, but free from induration, these women become all the more prolific in consequence of the local condition. Year after year each gives birth to a child, and if the general conditions remain unimpaired, they pass for being unusually healthy women and bring up large families. During the whole period of child-bearing the cervix remains soft and covered with an extensive erosion, which has seldom been more than partially healed during the existence of pregnancy. As the woman with this condition reaches the time for the menopause, and a longer interval elapses, from any cause, between the pregnancies, an unexpected development of epithelioma may occur.

The mucous membrane of the cervix has been gradually undergoing cystic degeneration, preparatory to a change of life, and the blood vessels have become smaller and much decreased in number. It is often observed, in anticipation as it were of this change of life, that nature is most successful sometimes in removing by absorption cicatricial tissue, which has formed, as the result of injury, about the cervix, and so far repairs the damage that the parts are left in a comparatively healthy condition if the process be not hindered. As soon as a sufficiently long interval has elapsed after a pregnancy, the lacerated surfaces will begin to cicatrize from the bottom of the cleft, and the tissues, which were unusually soft before, soon become indurated in a remarkable degree. Several instances have passed under my observation where epithelioma has suddenly sprung up from the bottom of the laceration, and from this newly formed cicatricial tissue, as seed would come up from a furrow. In the absence of positive data on which to formulate an explanation, I can only offer a supposition based upon observation, and one, it seems to me, most consistent with the facts before us. It would seem that after the great changes had already taken place in the tissues I have referred to, the general process was delayed by the effort of nature to repair a local damage. This would necessarily cause a sudden and unusual flow of blood to

the parts which are not in condition to meet such an emergency. The result is that what was a benign process in the beginning, as an effort of nature to repair the injury, results in epithelioma, a product of perverted nutrition. Observation teaches clearly that epithelioma follows an injury, but not necessarily every injury. As the result of an unusually large and extended experience, I must state in this connection that I have never seen a single case where epithelioma has developed on the cervix uteri of a woman, unless she had borne children, had miscarried, or had suffered from a criminal abortion; or unless, if never impregnated, the cervix had been divided at some time, or torn open by the process termed divulsion.

Let us now return to a consideration of the duty which must rest upon the medical men of the future, if through their efforts they are to diminish the numbers of laceration of the cervix uteri which will require surgical interference. I have already referred to the active tendency to repair which always exists after labor, if nothing has occurred to check it, and I wish particularly to impress the importance of utilizing this action to the utmost. If the members of the profession can be brought to realize the importance of aiding the efforts of nature to resume action after they have been suspended, and to direct the work afterwards, more could be accomplished during the puerperal month than could be done in years subsequently. Many here present, I have no doubt, can fully corroborate my experience as to the rapidity with which a mass from a local cellulitis after labor will clear up as soon as nature is able to get the work, and will often accomplish the task before the expiration of the lying-in month.

After a very rapid or very tedious labor, or after instrumental delivery, with or without a chill, there may be a rise of temperature and pulse, and a thickening and tenderness on pressure will be detected, by bi-manual palpation, somewhere in the pelvis. While we can assume the fact that septic inflammation has been established through a laceration of the cervix, it is not always an easy matter to recognize the injury or its extent, as the parts are soft and the os patulous in consequence of the oedematous and overstretched condition of the tissues.