

## A CASE OF APPENDICITIS IN PREGNANCY.\*

By DR. JOHN SHEAHAN, ST. CATHARINES.

My only excuse for bringing to your notice the subject of appendicitis is that I hope to call your attention to it as a most unfortunate complication of pregnancy in which instead of one, the lives of two human beings are involved.

Perhaps the most common complications of the abdomen in pregnancy are ovarian tumors and fibroids of the uterus. Shring, of Sydney, claims that hydatid cysts occupying the pelvis are seen occasionally in Australia as complications of pregnancy. These cause mechanical conditions that interfere with the pregnant uterus by pressure.

Any one of these may or may not be sufficient to terminate pregnancy by abortion or may threaten life by gangrene from torsion of the pedicle of the tumor.

Other complications of pregnancy are more dangerous, viz.: The acute infective processes that may occur within the abdomen. Under this heading may come appendicitis, salpingitis, cholecystitis or peritonitis due to perforative ulcer in typhoid fever, tuberculosis, actinomycosis, carcinoma, or gastric ulcer.

Under any of these conditions we must determine whether to deal directly with the pathological condition by operation and leave the physiological pregnancy to terminate naturally, or whether we should adopt an expectant plan of treatment hoping that the pathological conditions may not become serious to life—and not operate because pregnancy exists.

Up to recent years one may safely say the teaching has been to adopt a policy of non-interference; but in the light of the modern aseptic surgery the opening of the abdomen even in the pregnant state has become a comparatively frequent operation, and one not to be dreaded under proper conditions. Of course no one would feel he was using the best judgment if he operated in a case where it could safely be avoided. But in cases of the acute infective type, as already enumerated, that demand active interference if pregnancy did not exist, operation ought not to be decided against if pregnancy happens to be a complication or rather a coincidence.

The case I desire to call your attention to came into the St. Catharines L. & M. Hospital on December 10th, 1902, and was operated on immediately.

These few notes I have obtained from Dr. Campbell,

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\* Read at meeting of Ontario Medical Association.