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An Address on Ectopic Gestation

by

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Mr. President and Gentlemen, the subject which I have the honor of bringing before your attention this afternoon is that of ectopic pregnancy. It is a condition well worthy of the serious consideration of every physician, surgeon and pathologist alike. When viewed from all the transcendent sequelae following in its wake, this subject at once assumes the importance of one of the tragedies that may befall any woman.

The uterus, gentlemen, may be considered an accumulation of slumbering cells which nothing can awake but the knock of a fertilized ovum. Such an ovum, however, is not without its troubles and dangers. It will be my duty to bring before you for consideration some of the morbid processes that may be detrimental and fatal to its development.

Fortunately for mankind, more particularly for those who are obliged to bear the burdens, cares and dangers of parturition, Nature in her own inimitable ways and by ordinances which far surpass in beauty and in perfection of design the imagination of man, is usually quite willing and competent to fulfill these functions in a normal and satisfactory manner. Occasionally, however, the ordinances of Nature become disarranged and disregarded. Morbid influen-

ces in the uterus, and more particularly in the tubes, may render it absolutely impossible for a normal pregnancy to take place. Many of the disastrous consequences which ultimately lead to deteriorated health or chronic invalidism can frequently be traced to the mischievous results of an ectopic pregnancy.

When the intricate anatomical superstructure of which the uterus and the tubes are composed is in a healthy, normal condition and the vitalizing product of the male and female possess sufficient inherent power to carry on gestation normal pregnancy then progresses in an uninterrupted manner.

When such an ovum reaches the uterus, the decidua hastens to envelop it in its mantling fold of welcome. The latent cells and fibres of the uterus receive with glad acclaim the advent of a new life, and with characteristic and marvellous harmony advance in size and function to meet the necessity for the progressive and incessant changes which are constantly to take place. How far different are the conditions that prevail in extra uterine gestation. The dangers and vicissitudes of such an extra uterine condition become at once singularly interesting to contemplate.

It is somewhat remarkable that