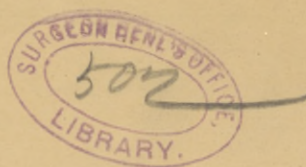


MURPHY (C.W.)

Abortion x x x x x x x



Murphy (C. W.)

Reprint from THE ST. LOUIS CLINIQUE for January 1893.

ABORTION :

*ACCOMPANIED WITH UNUSUAL REFLEX MOTOR DISTURBANCE
OF THE ARM.*

REPORTED BY CHAS. W. MURPHY M. D. Salem, Ind.

A Paper read at the Washington County Medical Society, Salem, Ind.

December 1892.



Abortion—Accompanied with Unusual Reflex Motor Disturbance of the Arm.

REPORTED BY CHARLES W. MURPHEY, M. D.

Read before the Washington Co. Medical Society, Salem, Ind. Dec. 1892.

Mrs. M., aged 33, anemic, of rather feeble natural organization and mother of four children; was called hurriedly to see her Sep. 6th, 1892. On reaching the bedside I obtained the following history: Missed catamenia three weeks before, and ten days previous to visit symptoms of abortion commenced, the hemorrhage and pain gradually increasing until the morning of visit, when the hemorrhage became so profuse as to cause syncope. As the hemorrhage was not very free while present, and as she had just passed a large clot, I took it for granted without an examination that the embryo or fœtus had escaped, and ordered rest in bed and equal parts of ergot and black haw, to be given in teaspoonful doses every two to four hours, according to the profuseness of the flow.

Two days later I was called to see her again. Found she had wasted but little since commencing the medicine which she had been taking every four hours. The uterine discharge was offensive. The night previous, at ten o'clock, a clonic rapidly convulsive movement of the whole right arm commenced, depriving her entirely of sleep. Her husband was trying to hold the arm still but with only partial success. Having some years ago a case of tonic contraction of the left arm clearly attributable to chronic endometritis, it occurred to me at once that the symptoms might be the result of uterine irritation. A digital examination revealed a portion of the embryo hanging through the cervix.

Ordered a hot vaginal injection. A speculum was then introduced and by means of dressing forceps the embryo was removed. As soon as this was accomplished the clonic contractions of the flexor muscles of the arm ceased. The appendages of the fœtus were all removed by scraping the cavity of the womb with a dull curette and, having no iodine with me, a two per-cent solution of carbolic acid was used to paint the cavity. Hemorrhage occurring rather freely, a strip of iodoform gauze was packed into the womb which controlled it promptly. Iodoform was freely used around the cervix and three or four cotton tampons applied. The reflex arm movement did not return, but muscular soreness was experienced for several days. The tampons were removed on the second day after application, antiseptic injections were ordered, and she made a good and complete recovery.

The above case is reported not with a view to pointing out any excellency in its management, for the treatment of the abortion is open to some criticism; but more especially to show the peculiar and unusual reflex phenomenon in the arm. The immediate cessation of the clonic contraction upon the withdrawal of the fœtus, and without any knowledge of the patient as to what I was doing, clearly demonstrates to any mind the consequential relation existing between the two. Hilton in his masterly work on "Rest and Pain" explains the reflex pains that may occur in the knee

ABORTION.

and hip joints, the loins and posterior part of the sacrum, by the connection of the sacral and lower lumbar ganglia of the sympathetic, with the sciatic and obturator on the one hand, and the nerves distributed to the uterus and ovaries on the other. On the same hypothesis we may explain the reflex motor disturbance of the arm by the irritation of the womb being communicated to ganglia, and from ganglia to spinal cord, along which it is transferred or

ascends to motor cells corresponding to the brachial plexus, from which is issued—the motor impulses producing the clonic contractions of the arm.

In conclusion, it is quite likely the physical conditions and relations of the fœtus to the uterus were almost identical at the time of first visit as at my last, and had I made an examination at that time as I should have done, this article in all probability would never have been written.
