

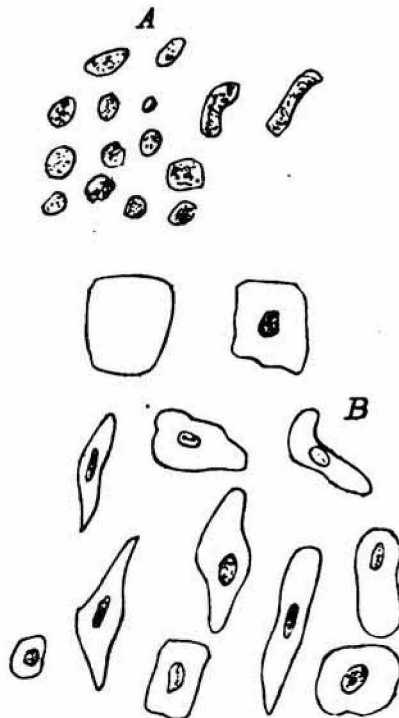
*Vaginal Discharges examined with the Aid of the Microscope.*

By LUTHER PARKS, JR., M. D., of Boston. (With two wood-cuts.)

I HAVE had two opportunities of inspecting, microscopically, vaginal discharges in the living subject, the results of which I here give.

In an inconsiderable quantity of sero-mucous secretion from the vagina of a patient, immediately after the close of menstruation, Nov. 3, 1853, were

Fig. 1.



seen mucous, or pus-globules, like A, Fig. 1, and epithelium scales, like B, Fig. 1. A few months previously I had removed a glandular polypus, of small

size, from the cavity of the cervix uteri of this patient. The os and cervix uteri were now found in an apparently healthy condition.

Leucorrhœal discharges from another patient, taken Nov. 22d and 23d, 1853, gave similar appearances.

Having obtained a uterus with a portion of the vagina attached, from the dissecting-room, through the kindness of Dr. Hodges, I proceeded to its examination, with the following results. Within the canal of the cervix, and partly emerging from the os, was a mass of transparent tenacious viscid fluid, a portion of which I removed, *avoiding contact with the neighbouring parts.* Placing this under the microscope, I beheld a large number of mucous, or pus-globules, like Fig. 1, A, and a few like A, Fig. 2.

Having laid open the cavity of the womb, and scraped from its inner surface, at about the centre of the posterior wall, a turbid fluid, I found the field to be filled with mucous, or pus-corpuscles, similar to A, Fig. 1, and A, B, Fig. 2. B, Fig. 2, represents the only specimen of the kind I saw.

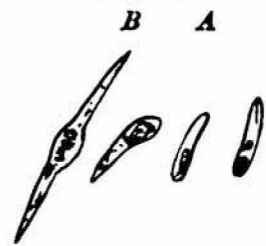
The above-mentioned masses of glairy fluid having escaped from the os, lay in contact with the vagina. This I removed and placed under the glass, when I saw in it mucous, or pus-globules, A, Fig. 1. In addition, were a number of epithelium scales, B, Fig. 1.

An opaque fluid having been scraped from the upper part of the vagina, below the os uteri, showed an abundance of epithelium scales, with a minor proportion of mucous, or pus-corpuscles, A. A specimen from the lower part of the vagina seemed to contain a still smaller proportion of the mucous, or pus-corpuscles. A mass scraped from the outer surface of the cervix uteri, near its junction with the vagina, consisted of epithelium scales like B, Fig. 1, with few or no small globules, like A.

A second specimen, taken from the cavity of the uterus, near the left Fallopian tube, was similar to the previous specimen from the centre of the uterine cavity.

We find, then, from these observations, that the secretion of the vagina, and of the exterior of the cervix, consisted mostly of epithelium scales, while those of the cervical canal, and interior of the womb, contained small globules—mucous or pus—of an entirely different appearance. We also saw that, in the vaginal secretion taken just below the os uteri, there was an admixture of globules, like those seen in the secretion from the uterus; and that, in a specimen taken from the lower part of the vagina, the proportion of mucous or pus-globules was smaller, this proportion being also reduced nearly or quite to zero, in the mass scraped from the exterior of the cervix uteri. We may infer, then, that the mucous or pus-globules seen in the masses, scraped from the vagina, came from the uterus, and that while these are peculiar to the lat-

Fig. 2.



A B

ter, the epithelium scales belong to the former. We may thence also presume that the discharges taken from the living cases were composed of an admixture of uterine and vaginal secretions.

In none of our observations did we see any of the ciliated epithelium described by Dr. Tyler Smith, though in A, Fig. 1, are two corpuscles which may possibly be specimens of the cylindrical epithelium mentioned by him. These observations, as far as they go, lead me to the inference that the epithelium occurring occasionally in fluid taken from the cavity of the cervix (as described by Dr. Tyler Smith, in his admirable paper on the microscopical examination of the cervix uteri), are, as partly suggested by Dr. Smith, obtained by contact with, or imbibition from, the vagina.

I will add that the preceding investigations were made before I had seen the paper of Dr. Smith, which I received through the Messrs. Ticknor, December 14, 1853.