

ON CONCEPTION-FEVER, OR, THE FEBRILE ACTION INDICATING THE
OCCURRENCE OF CONCEPTION. By DR. ROHDE, Braunsburg.
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It is well known that many women are able to state the exact day of conception, but a satisfactory explanation has thus far been wanting. R. says that years ago he noticed that in one case an irregular, rather painful, menstruation, ushered in by a brisk febrile excitement of several days' duration, was the last before impregnation. The woman had never before suffered from menstrual pain or irregularity. His attention now being directed to anomalies during the menstrual epoch, he observed that febrile action at that time was not uncommon; that, indeed, women were more liable to it on slight causes then, than at other times. As a rule, however, a cold or some temporary reason, could be found for the fever. But in several cases he chanced to ascertain that a menstrual period ushered in by fever, and in two entirely healthy women the occurrence of a remittent fever, one to two weeks before the last period, exactly corresponded with the date of the subsequent delivery. The flow itself was normal, rather more profuse than usual. The height of the fever in one case reached 40.6° C. (104.6° F.), and was accompanied by a chill; generally it did not exceed 39° C. (102° F.) Repeated chilliness was always present. The fever remitted in the morning and lasted two to four days, gradually sinking to the normal condition, generally with the commencement of the menstrual flow. The pulse and respiration corresponded in frequency with the temperature.

Of six cases R. possesses notes; of as many more he has noted only the febrile excitement. Unfortunately, he says, the confidential manner in which he, as family physician, acquired these data, and the smallness of the town in which he resides, forbid his confirming his assertions by the names of the parties.

R.'s observations justify him in assuming that *every conception rapidly excites general febrile action*. This fever is generally so slight, immediately preceding or coinciding with the menstrual flow

upon which it is supposed to depend, that medical aid is not sought for it. The conception fever is neither so evanescent nor trivial, however, as to attract the attention only of women of the more delicate and intelligent classes. R. says, that women of the middle and laboring population have frequently, in answer to his questions, stated as quite a matter of course, that they knew the fertile coitus by a certain degree of chilliness and general discomfort following it. One woman, who had borne six children, stated, voluntarily, that she had always known the date of conception by the occurrence of headache and nausea about an hour after intercourse, and by general lassitude and depression during the following two or three days. The date of conception, in her case, was entirely independent of the beginning of the menstrual flow; indeed, she conceived several times during the menopause of lactation. Another woman, forty years of age, who had not conceived for seven years, and had given up all thoughts of again becoming a mother, distinctly noticed this peculiar febrile reaction following a coitus, soon experienced the usual signs of pregnancy, and was confined at term, reckoning from the date of the fever.

Of the authors on Obstetrics, only Busch mentions that a fertile coitus "is generally followed by lassitude, malaise, sensation of drawing, warmth and fulness in the abdomen, slight chilliness, extending from the abdomen or sacrum," occasionally "general excitement and increased sensitiveness." As a sign of impregnation Busch notes "chilliness alternating with feverishness." Brunner, in his work on "The Infectious Diseases from an Etiological Standpoint," 1876, states that in malarial regions, the occurrence of conception particularly disposes to an attack of intermittent fever, so that an attack at the menstrual period always led him to diagnose the inception of pregnancy. R. observed one case, where he mistook the febrile action occurring in the intermenstrual period for malaria, and gave quinine; the result showed that it was merely the fever of impregnation. These observations are sufficiently interesting and important as regards the calculation of the duration of pregnancy and the probable date of delivery, to call for extensive investigation, which is easily made by simply noting the date of the febrile reaction, when met with, or elicited on inquiry, and then comparing it with the date of the subsequent delivery.

P. F. M.