

GYNECOLOGY AND OBSTETRICS AMONG THE ESKIMOS.

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Nothing gives me greater pleasure than to come before you to-night to give you some of my experiences in the Arctic regions, and to tell you a little something about those most northern

people. Thinly scattered along the northwestern shore of Greenland is a small tribe of Eskimos who are known as the Arctic Highlanders. These people are isolated, so much so that never within the knowledge of the oldest of those living have they had any regular communication with either the civilized or uncivilized world; they are hemmed in by gigantic walls of ice. They are not able to penetrate farther north because of the great Humboldt Glacier, which is nearly fifty miles in width; they are not able to cross the waters of Baffin's Bay in their frail skin boats, called kyaks; they are not able to penetrate farther south because of the almost continuous line of glaciers at the head of Melville Bay, which is, as you know, still unexplored. They will not go into the interior because they claim that the interior of Greenland is infested by mammoth animals, gigantic men, and all sorts of superstitious spirits, and they claim that the spirits of their departed friends also inhabit the interior of Greenland. These people are the most northern people on the globe. I do not believe that any people will be found farther north, although the region from the eighty-second parallel to the pole remains unexplored; but in that region along the northern border of Greenland there have been found no remains of human habitation. The temperature of the atmosphere which surrounds this region of Greenland for about nine months of the year is below the freezing point, and for about six months of the year it would range from 20° to 50° below zero; however, there are two or three months in summer when the temperature is fairly mild at the sea-level; in the interior it snows more or less continually, and from week to week and month to month the air is filled with snow. This great accumulation of snow is by cold pressure formed into ice, and this vast accumulation at certain parts of Greenland reaches a depth of a mile or more, and this ice is slowly forced out to the sea and there we see the ice in the form of glaciers coming down the valleys. These glaciers discharge mammoth pieces which are called icebergs, and these slowly come down to the southern seas.

With this short description of their land, I will next begin to tell you something of the people. They are a people short in stature; they resemble the Mongolians in many respects, but their habits and customs, their language, and almost everything else differ widely from any other race of people we have any knowledge of at present. The men are five feet one and one-half inches in height—that is, the average—and the women are four feet eight inches; however, men can be found that are five feet five or

six inches, as well as women who are five feet ; but they are few. The average weight of the men is 135 pounds and that of the women 118 pounds. These people have nothing to eat but what they get from the animal kingdom. Their only food is meat and blubber. It is commonly supposed that these people drink fat very much as we do water, and most of us, I think, have been taught that in the schools. This is not the case. They do eat some fat, but they eat it about the same way that we eat cheese, taking small pieces between times. They drink the blood of the animal largely, and the only cooked food or meat they have is that which they cook for the purpose of getting the blood out of it. They eat large quantities of this meat and two-thirds of it is raw and frozen, and here we have a little tribe of people that use no salt—no common salt—or no condiment of any kind, taking their meat simply as they get it from the animal kingdom, without any further preparation.

They dress entirely in the skins of these Arctic animals and the blubber of the animals forms their fuel. Perhaps you will be interested in knowing the kind of animals found here. The animals which are of the most importance to the Eskimos are the seal, walrus, and narwhal. These are the three animals from which they obtain nearly all of their food, fuel, and drink ; they occasionally get a whale, but not very often in this northern region. On land and on the sea they obtain the polar bear ; on the land they obtain the deer, the fox, the Arctic hare, and occasionally a wolf. All these animals are used to eat and their furs are used for clothing. During the summer, for about two months, many of the birds which are seen along the coast of Maine, Labrador, and Newfoundland go up there to breed ; so during the summer months they can get any quantity of birds, in fact, they are so abundant that they can catch them in nets. These birds they use for their underwear, and the muscular tissue of the birds is used as food for the children. The older people claim that it is only good for the children, and they are superstitious about certain kinds of birds. The eggs are not allowed to be eaten by any except women who have had five children, and such are rare.

The point that would be of most interest to you regarding their life was a matter which I was not permitted the pleasure of witnessing—the birth of a child. I was told many times how it took place, and I can tell you their customs regarding it and what they do. Girls there menstruate rather late ; they do not menstruate till they are nineteen or twenty years old, but they are married at twelve or thirteen years. They do not menstruate during the long

Arctic night, and that is an important point. During the days and months of continued darkness, which is four months in this region, the women do not menstruate, and if they are taken sick at this time with almost any disease, they claim it will be all right when the sun returns and their menstruation reappears.

The Eskimo women are fairly prolific ; they average about three children to every family. There are perhaps some customs regarding marriage that I should, perhaps, tell you in order that you may understand the importance with which they regard a mother. Women that are childless, that have proven sterile, are cast aside at will by the husband. There is no bond of marriage unless a child is born, and as they are married when they are twelve or thirteen years old, this gives a period of six or seven years of experimental work, and after they have been together for a long time and a child is not born, the woman is exchanged. She wanders about from place to place, and man to man, until she succeeds in getting somebody who will take care of her for a while, and usually she will have a child some time with some man, so very few of these women prove sterile.

Now about the birth of a child. The Eskimo woman, when she is about to become a mother, is put into a stone house, if she is where a stone house can be obtained ; if not, she is put into a snow house ; but if it occurs during the summer she is put into a tent made of skins, and here she remains all alone ; she has no help or assistance of any kind from anybody. When they think she is about to become a mother, she is practically locked into the house. They give her enough food to last her for two or three weeks, and this is cut up in pieces so she can eat it without having to cut it. She goes on, she has the baby, and she cuts the cord with a stone, by simply grinding it between two pieces of stone ; she then ties the cord with a piece of sinew. All this work is done by the woman herself, without any assistance whatever, and after the child has been born about a week, after everybody knows outside by the crying of the baby that it has existed for a week, then the house is again opened, and she begins to receive her friends, but for some time she is considered unclean, and men will not even enter the house.

With this rather rough custom you would naturally suppose that there would be a great many deaths, and this is the case ; there are a great many women who die from childbirth. These people, although they are said to have their children easily, and are said to have a child in no time, every one of them complains that

they have a great deal of trouble, and that there are a great many of them that lose their lives. I can remember three instances that occurred within two years where women died from childbirth and the cause was peritonitis.

Now about abortions. This is another element of ridicule, for an Eskimo man will have nothing to do with a woman that aborts, and if it becomes known, it is the common talk of the tribe; so few of the women abort; in fact, there was only one case in that whole northern tribe that I heard of that ever had aborted.

This tribe of people numbers but 243 men, women, and children. There are, according to the statistics that I took, about 105 female children to every 100 male. The mortality among the children is rather small compared to ours. The diseases which the children have are few. One is measles, and when they have an epidemic of measles it is very severe in these northern regions. It does not occur often, but when it does it is apt to take off a number of children. The child is nursed by the mother for five or six years; I saw children tall enough to stand up and suckle in that way. Then, the diseases among the older ones are indeed very few. About the only diseases of any consequence among these people are rheumatic complaints in one form or another, and that in turn gives them cardiac affections; but aside from that they have very little to complain of. They had a mild form of la grippe in 1891 and 1892, but we had it very much more severely, and nearly all the members of our expedition were taken down with la grippe early in 1892.

When we came a little farther south to the South Greenland Eskimos, then these conditions changed. Here they have been in contact with civilization; they have had among them missionaries, and they take better care of the children and better care of the mothers; but while they do this they introduce other customs which are rather injurious. They introduce, for instance, civilized clothing, which is almost useless in these northern regions; they introduce whiskey, tobacco, tea, coffee, sugar, and all these things are equally destructive to Eskimo life, and happiness. An Eskimo is not satisfied with one cup of coffee, but will drink eight or ten, or in fact will drink as long as he can get it. Now, many of these people are pretty wretched; indeed, the Danish doctor at Godthaab says he thinks two-thirds of the South Greenland people have tuberculosis in one form or another. All this is due to the influences of civilization. With the small tribe of people in the north of Greenland, they have not a single case of

tuberculosis. Again, in the south of Greenland la grippe proves very fatal, so that thousands of lives are lost there every winter. It has been raging there for the last three winters successively.

I think there would be nothing further that I can say in the way of their diseases except their theory regarding the diseases. They believe that sickness is caused by an evil spirit, and they have among them a certain class of men that they call *Angekoks*. These men are in some respects like the Medicine Men of the American Indians, but they have no medicine; there is no way of obtaining medicine in that northern region. The only forms of vegetation there are lichens, some forms of moss, and a few wild shrubs, such as willows and poppies, none of which reaches the height of more than two, or three inches. These men by a series of incantations or howling and screaming, and by almost anything that will cause excitement, claim in this way to cure disease. It is a sort of faith-cure in another form. Their superstitions regarding this great spirit are perhaps a matter of interest. They believe that this great spirit, whom they call *Turnahuchsnak*, is all powerful and in many respects he is a convenience, for they ascribe to him everything that they cannot explain. For instance, there was a woman who was called *Manee*, and she was our principal friend around winter headquarters; she told me repeatedly that this great spirit had devoured her little sister. I listened to the story so often that I began to be interested in the matter and cross-questioned her. I found that at the time the little sister disappeared was the time of a famine. The family were isolated from the rest of the people, so that the nearest other Eskimos were nearly 200 miles from them. The water was frozen over very early, so that they were unable to obtain walrus or seal; consequently they were left without food; they had deep snow early in the season and were nearly two weeks without anything to eat. Then the father disappeared with this little girl, going round a certain cape, where they claim to hear the voice of this great spirit. The noise of the winds coming down in the ravine causes a peculiar sound, and this they claim is the voice of the great spirit. The father went there with the little girl; he returned with her dead and cut up in pieces; he said that the great spirit did it. This gives you but one instance of how they use this great spirit. There can be no doubt but that the father did this and brought the little girl home as food to prevent the rest of the family from starving. This is only one case, and there are two or three others which are similar to it. These people are not

cannibals : they do not eat human flesh from choice, but they will do what a white man under the same circumstances would. When starvation threatens these people the old women, as well as those unfortunate childless women, are turned out to starve, and as soon as they starve their bodies are eagerly devoured by the other and more useful members of the tribe. These famines are not very common occurrences. They occur perhaps once in every ten years, but when they do occur it is a well-known fact that the people do these things.

The anatomical peculiarities of these people are very interesting. Their skin, as you see, is a sort of bronze color. It is less porous than our own skin and the functions of the skin are not so active in these cold northern regions. Their blood supply is very much more liberal than ours, so that when one of these Eskimos is cut, even a very small abrasion will bleed for hours, while if one of the members of the expedition were cut he would hardly bleed at all, because the extreme cold causes the blood to retreat from the skin. It does not do this with these people ; they are so full-blooded that the least excitement causes the blood to flow freely from their mucous membranes. Beneath their skin and encircling their whole body they have a layer of fat or blubber, which protects them from the extremes of temperature in the northern regions. This is indeed a very interesting peculiarity. Their muscular development is fairly good for a people who do not exercise much. The intestinal tract is rather an interesting subject. These people eat but one meal a day ; they begin about four o'clock in the afternoon and continue eating for about four hours and then go to sleep. During this time I have known them to eat five pounds of meat, and have heard others say that they have seen them eat fifteen or twenty pounds ; but I have not witnessed anything like that. In the morning when they rise—it is not exactly morning because they would sleep during a time that would correspond with us from twelve o'clock midnight to twelve o'clock midday, taking meridian time—but when they rise in the morning they eat nothing, and if they have before them a journey of ten, fifteen, or twenty miles, they will wait until they get to destination before they eat. They claim that it is peyoungitor (not good) to eat and to travel on it, and treat their dogs in the same manner ; but dogs are usually fed only once every second day. We found by experience that if our dogs were fed at the end of the journey we could get much more work out of them.

To continue with the anatomical peculiarities, and about the

abdomen. The abdomens of all Eskimos are very prominent. I was not afforded the opportunity of measuring the intestinal tract to get its length, but their food being entirely animal I should imagine it would require a larger intestinal tract or a greater surface for absorption. Whether this is true or not their abdomens are certainly very prominent in the lower regions and it would seem to indicate that.

Now about their eyes. These people have brown eyes invariably and dark hair; there is no difference; in fact, they are a homogeneous race. Even you will notice in this boy that the eyes are not oblique like those of the Mongolians, but rather straightly set. I noticed a peculiarity about the eyes which I discovered by accident. I had noticed that the Eskimos who came to us and were handed picture-books invariably turned them upside down. I gave one of the men a lithograph of an actress, which he took to his house, and a few days afterward when I went to his house I saw it there hanging upside down. This amused me and interested me so much that to every new-comer I handed an illustrated book. Of course, they knew nothing of printed matter, never having seen printed books or papers before; they all held these pictures upside down. I asked them to draw for me the images of animals, and these they drew upside down. The conclusion that I came to was that they had not yet been taught picture-writing as we had, that they simply held these pictures in such a way that the images would be transmitted to the retina in the reverse position, and in that way they would more readily grasp the idea. We all know that the image is transmitted to the retina in a reverse position. These people I believe are no exception to the rule, yet I had never heard of this strange peculiarity having been discovered before among aboriginal people, and yet it must be the case among other tribes. While travelling along the coast of Labrador last summer I saw some of the Mountaineer Indians, and they presented the same peculiarity; but the Eskimos along the coast of Labrador who have had missionaries among them did not present the same characteristic, and I have tried the experiment, since returning, with very young civilized children, and found in a few instances that they did the same. I have simply offered this as a suggestion; you can think the matter over and I have no doubt you will find food for thought in it.

Now, gentlemen, I have tried to bring before you in a few words the interesting matters of Arctic life. I have no doubt that

many of you have thought of other things, and after I get through I will be glad to talk with you, and have you question me about certain things or certain peculiarities of these people. I have brought with me a boy who is now sitting in the rear of the room. He understands English a little, although he cannot speak it. If any of you care to examine him he is here at your disposal.

The Chair: I am sure I voice the sentiments of the Society when I say how much we are indebted to Dr. Cook for the very interesting and instructive evening he has given us, and I hope that the members will feel free to ask any questions, which the Doctor has so kindly offered to answer, regarding the peculiarities of these people, especially those that pertain to our subject—Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Dr. Raymond: There is one interesting point about which I should like to ask Dr. Cook. With us here we expect a cessation of menstruation during the whole of lactation. I would like to ask the Doctor what the fact is among Eskimo women, inasmuch as they nurse their children up to the fifth and sixth years, at what period of lactation does menstruation return—whether it is absent during the whole of that time or whether it comes back earlier. I ask this with the idea of ascertaining whether there is that relationship between lactation and menstruation which is the belief among many.

Dr. Cook: This is a matter on which I examined the people very carefully, and as nearly as I could find out, they vary considerably. Some women never menstruate during the time of lactation; a great many, and in fact most of them, would menstruate after the first year. That is all I noticed in that respect.

Dr. Kortright: Do they ever have any twins?

Dr. Cook: Very rarely; I could get the history of but one case of twins and in that case the woman died.

Dr. Kortright: Then you do not know whether they pursue the custom of aboriginal nations, of destroying one of the twins?

Dr. Cook: I do not know, but there is a custom of destroying young children. If the father and mother die, any child remaining alive under the age of three years must also die, which is done by fastening a piece of seal thong about the neck, which is tightened till the child is strangled; but about the twins I was unable to get the history of but one case, in which both twins died soon after they were born and the mother also.

Dr. Chase: I would like to ask Dr. Cook if he has any theory to offer concerning the absence of menstruation during the period

of darkness ; whether, any theory has occurred to him by which he could explain the phenomenon.

Dr. McNaughton : Do these women become pregnant during the period of darkness?

Dr. Cook : These people are rather like animals. The sexual desire is a periodical one, and it does not occur to any great extent until after the return of the sun. During the whole of that period of darkness, which in this region is four months, all of the senses are more or less blunted, but just as soon as the sun returns, these women and the men fairly quiver with the sexual excitement, so that most of the cases of conception take place soon after the return of the sun every year. I tried hard enough to trace some one case where it had taken place during the period of darkness, but I could not.

Now, about the theory regarding menstruation. I noticed that among ourselves after the return of the sun we had a yellow or jaundiced appearance. Our muscular power during the continuation of the Arctic night was reduced to one-half of what it would be after the return of the sun. If we walked two or three miles we were exhausted and would perspire freely and come home to drop down tired out, and would fall asleep easily, so that this shows that there was less muscular power ; our condition was that of chloro-anæmia. The Eskimos seem to undergo a period of partial hibernation, if I may put it as such, during the period of the Arctic night. They eat little, they exercise little, and they sleep a great deal of the time, and that is perhaps the only explanation that I have to offer ; that the reduced muscular power and chloro-anæmic condition caused by the absence of the sun would not permit of menstruation.

During the summer months the Eskimos travel a great deal ; they move about from place to place in search of food or game, and then their sexual desire becomes less and less as the summer progresses. When the winter sets in, darkness does not begin suddenly ; for about two months there is first a disappearance of the sun for only a few minutes, the next day it is double that time, and the next day it is double that time, so that the sun very rapidly disappears ; but it takes two months before it entirely disappears. Then the gloom of the Arctic night sets in, and although the Eskimos spent their time telling stories and legends and tried hard to amuse us, I could notice a depression among ourselves, as well as among the people, and that reached its climax about Christmas ; and although we had a very good Christmas din-

ner and everything we could wish for in the way of food, we were all very blue, and this was the only part of all my Arctic experience that I found disagreeable. I never suffered from the cold and none of our party did ; but I have drifted off from my subject.

Dr. Kortright : Then I suppose that nearly all of the conceptions occur at the same time. About what time would that be ?

Dr. Cook : About Thanksgiving time.

Dr. McNaughton : Is the period of gestation the same ?

Dr. Cook : It is the same as with us ; I could notice no material difference.

Dr. Jewett : The Doctor made some allusions to difficult labor, especially the question, which is an interesting one, in regard to the shape and size of the head among these people in its bearing on the ease or difficulty of labor. I would like to ask the Doctor if this boy before us is available for any demonstration of the anatomical peculiarity to which the Doctor has alluded.

Dr. Cook : Yes, sir.

About the difficulty of labor. The Eskimo skull is wider than that of the white man and it is nearly circular in shape in small children. The pelvis of the Eskimo women is considerably smaller than that of the Caucasian ; that would be the only explanation that I would have to offer in the way of difficulty. I do not think that they have an inordinate amount of difficulty ; I simply suggested the fatalities among them because it has been reported that all aboriginal people have children freely and without any difficulty, and that is not the case with these people.

Dr. Raymond : There is another question I would like to ask Dr. Cook—whether he is able to throw any additional light on the subject of the so-called difference between the male and female type of respiration. Of course, you are well aware that the text-books tell us that abdominal respiration is characteristic of the male and costal of the female. You are also aware that Dr. Mays, of Philadelphia, who has made a study of the American Indians, and many others beside him, tell us that the statements made in text-books are entirely incorrect, and that their observations show that there is no difference between the male and the female, provided that civilization does not come in to hamper the female with the modern corset. Can the Doctor, perhaps, give us some information on this point ?

Dr. Cook : I had thought of that and observed it very carefully. I was assigned to the duty of the study of these people from an ethnological standpoint. I made it a rule that they

must be stripped, photographed, measured, and examined, and on the ethnological blanks I put down their respirations. I found out of forty-one or forty-two women only two cases of thoracic respiration and in one other case, which was doubtful. All of the others were abdominal, and this I think shows that matter pretty conclusively. They have no corsets or nothing about their stomachs which would prevent its distension. Their trousers are very short and come to a little above the knee; all the women wear trousers made of seal and fox skins and their coats are wide and give their abdomens lots of room.

Dr. Raymond: Then there is no distinction between the Eskimo male and female as to respiration?

Dr. Cook: No, sir.

Dr. F. Baldwin: This boy's respirations are fourteen times to the minute as he sits there before us. Are their pulses more rapid?

Dr. Cook: Their pulses on the whole are more rapid. I think the average pulse of the men is about 76, and the women something like 83 or 84.

Dr. Raymond: Is the temperature the same?

Dr. Cook: Their temperature is one-tenth of a degree higher than ours. I found some a little higher than that, but they are all practically the same.

Dr. Jewett: The doctor alluded in his remarks to the occurrence of puerperal peritonitis. I would like to know if he has any theory to account for the puerperal infection. We know the present tendency is to ascribe infection to extraneous sources. Do these women interfere within the passages to assist the labor, or does the infection occur from the primary condition of the passages—auto-infection?

Dr. Cook: As a people the Eskimos are very filthy; a bath from birth to death is an unknown thing, so you see the conditions for the development of germs would be rather favorable. The women told me that occasionally they assisted the natural forces by the use of their fingers in bringing the head down; outside of that I heard of no other interference. There is certainly no one but the woman herself, and it is quite possible that she may become infected in that way; but there is so much filth and dirt around the people that I do not see how they can help introducing germs if there are any to introduce. There are germs in the North. I did not have the sterilized tubes to make these experiments as I would like to have done; we were hurried so I did not have an opportunity to get them; but the meat during the summer,

and even in winter, will spoil very rapidly if left in the house. The temperature of these Eskimo houses, even the snow houses, would be up as high as 80°, and never below 70°, except right on the snow itself, and they have the snow pretty thoroughly covered with fur. That is all I can give you in the way of explaining the puerperal peritonitis. If the germs are there I think they will introduce them in one way or another.

Dr. Jewett : The doctor finds cause for infection from without. That does not go to break down our belief that clean obstetrics is indispensable to the protection of childbed patients.

Dr. Raymond : When the house is closed up during the time of the woman's confinement, what is the temperature ?

Dr. Cook : That I cannot tell, except they say it is warm. They keep a stone lamp burning all the time, and sperm oil or blubber is the fuel. They always keep their houses too warm to suit me, but they disrobe entirely while in the house.

Dr. Jewett : Does the doctor know of any observations upon the bacteriological flora of that region ?

Dr. Cook : I do not. I have suggested to Lieutenant Peary that in his present expedition they take sterilized tubes and make the experiments. In Southern Greenland some observations have been made by doctors who are sent there by the Government, but I am not at present in a position to give you the results. I believe, however, they were published by the Danish Government in 1890. I shall try and secure a copy, and if I do I will send it to the Society.

Dr. Raymond : Is there a physician with Lieutenant Peary now ?

Dr. Cook : Yes, sir.

Dr. Raymond : In reference to the use of alcohol in the far North, what is its legitimate use aside from cooking ?

Dr. Cook : I do not believe it has any legitimate use. It has been reported by some explorers to be absolutely necessary. When we first went North many of the members of our party were in favor of a regular allowance of alcohol, but I strongly opposed it from the start. I held, as I believe is usually held by medical men, that alcohol is simply a stimulant, that it sends the blood and with it the heat out to the skin where radiation takes place, and would take place much more rapidly under the influence of the stimulant than it would without it, so that after the stimulant had expended itself it would be impossible to keep warm without another dose of whiskey. Taking this view of the matter, I opposed the use of alcohol at any time except on state occa-

sions, on birthdays and holidays, or those days when we thought it necessary to have a celebration.

Dr. Raymond : Does the doctor find use for it when the food supply is diminished? would it not come in there in small amounts to supplement the food supply?

Dr. Cook : I did not have an opportunity to test that matter.

Dr. Raymond : What were the views in the Greely expedition?

Dr. Cook : They claimed that it supplied them with fuel for the body. Whether it does or not I am not in a position to say, for we had food enough during all of our time.

Dr. Jewett : I notice the layer of blubber to which the doctor alluded does not seem to be present in the individual before us.

Dr. Cook : This young man is from a more southern latitude—from Labrador—nearly 2,000 miles south of the people I have been talking about. He is part of the Eskimo stem, but not of this most Northern Greenland tribe. He has a good deal of blubber on him, but it is not so well marked in the boys as in the girls.

Dr. Emery : How old is this boy?

Dr. Cook : Fifteen years old.

Dr. F. Baldwin : Does the warm weather affect him disagreeably?

Dr. Cook : Yes, sir; when we have a day that is warm he complains of the heat, and when we have a cold day he complains of the cold.

Dr. L. G. Langstaff : What is the average duration of life among these people?

Dr. Cook : That is difficult to determine. An Eskimo does not remember his age after he is ten years old, claiming that it is not good to remember his age after that; furthermore, an Eskimo cannot count more than his fingers and toes; there he stops—at twenty. I was able to establish a period, and that was the time when Dr. Kane was there in 1853. I found one or two individuals who had seen Kane, and knew how old they were then, and from that I figured the ages. The average age as near as I could determine it would be about forty, and you see that would come pretty close to ours. There were many people of a fairly good old age, especially among the men, not so many among the women. I counted out of this tribe of 243, at least ten or eleven men who were past sixty years of age and three or four who were past seventy. That is as accurate as I could get at their ages.

Dr. MacEvitt : I would like to inquire whether there is any

syphilis in the higher Arctic regions. I recently talked with a physician from one of the more southern latitudes who claimed that it was almost universal with the women there.

Dr. Cook : There is absolutely no syphilis or anything allied to it in these Northern people, and indeed very little in the Southern people at present. A few years ago there was a cleaning out at Ivigtut, one of the most southern settlements. This is a mining station where cryolite is obtained, a good many vessels going there, the Danish Government taking the women away and isolating all the syphilitic cases, and from the physicians whom I saw in Southern Greenland—and they have Government physicians there—I learned they had but two cases of syphilis in all Greenland at that time and these were isolated. But in Labrador it is not that way ; there syphilis is common, and as you go further up where the whalers go it is almost universal among those people.

Dr. Jewett : The Doctor has mentioned the fact that the women sometimes die during childbirth. What do they do for a substitute food for the infant when the mother dies in a region where the supply of food is so limited ?

Dr. Cook : If the mother dies before the child is three years old, the child must also die ; if the child is more than three years old they will feed it on meat and other natural food, blood and such material, without any vegetable diet whatever.

This strangling of the child is done when the husband dies as well as in the case of the wife, so it is not alone because the child is apt to die of starvation.

Dr. Madden : Do the women marry again ?

Dr. Cook : Yes, as soon as they can get a husband. The women claim that when the husband dies and leaves them a young child it prevents their chances of getting another husband, and that is one of the reasons they give for destroying the child.

Dr. MacEvitt : Were you able to determine the existence of genito-urinary diseases there ?

Dr. Cook : I saw none of any kind—indeed I heard of none among the Northern people, and among the Southern people I did not go so accurately into the details of life.

Dr. Chase : I would like to inquire what the moral sentiment of the people is regarding the obligation of the married state.

Dr. Cook : As a general rule these women are very faithful. Occasionally in times of a feast the men will be liberal to each other and exchange wives, but it does not very often occur. This fact is not true where these people have had a taste of civilization. As

soon as they have once had sexual intercourse with white men, so I am told, they are lost, and women will sell their virtue for almost anything ; so much is this the case that, as I told one of the gentlemen before the lecture, along Cumberland Gulf and Baffin's Land on the American side, where the whalers frequently go, as soon as the natives sight a vessel, forty or fifty women will go up to the ship's side in boats and the officers of the whalers will select the best looking ones and take them to the officers' cabin, and the others will go down to the forecabin. These are the people among whom syphilis is common.

Dr. Jewett : Dr. Cook does not need to be told that this Society is interested in major gynecology. These women must be subject to many of the pelvic and abdominal growths which sometimes afflict their civilized sisters. It would be interesting to know what becomes of them.

Dr. Cook : Of the forty odd women I examined I did not notice or hear of a tumor in any member of the tribe ; but I do not wish to have it understood that there are none among them, for I do not consider my observations complete in that direction. I stripped forty women and examined them carefully for all those things and found no trace of tumors of any kind. I asked them questions about their mothers and fathers and departed friends, but could hear nothing of any of those tumors of which you speak, or tumors of any kind, except occasionally a glandular enlargement.

Dr. A. H. Buckmaster : In regard to putrefaction, I have seen it stated that when an animal is killed in the Arctic region it is necessary to remove the viscera at once or decomposition takes place rapidly and the meat is unfit for food.

Dr. Cook : It is with some animals, like the musk oxen ; not because of decomposition, but because of the peculiar odor which is imparted to the flesh, which is not from decomposition, but from the viscera. It is also the same with the walrus. The natives eat the contents of the intestinal tract of the seal and the walrus, and even the contents of the stomach of the reindeer. That is probably the only bit of vegetable matter they get.

Dr. Kortright : How large is the Arctic hare ?

Dr. Cook : About as large as our jack rabbit and the fur is very bushy and long.

Dr. Chase : In order that we may all participate in an expression of satisfaction with what the Doctor has said, I move that we return a vote of thanks to Dr. Cook for his very instructive and interesting remarks. Seconded and adopted.