AND

INAUGURAL DISSERTATION,

ON a cause

Population redounding to Abortion

SUBMITTED TO THE

PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, AND MEDICAL FACULTY

OF THE

University of Nashville,

FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF MEDICINE.

BY

John M. R. Wetson

OF

Georgia

1857

CHARLES W. SMITH,

BOOKSELLER AND STATISTOR,

NASHVILLE, TENN.
From the very highest regard,
From the most sincere and unblemishable feelings of love, respect and admiration as a man of science, learning and wisdom, and as an obstetrician of skill, ability and talent, and as a teacher of never-faltering energy and devotedness——This Essay is most respectfully dedicated.

To

John M.C. Watson, M.D.
Professor of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children in the University of Nashville

By the Author

John M.C. Westhoof
cause and it may be
considered by the faculty,
prejudice in me to
say any thing of the ab-
ove as a direct cause;
but I hope you may
view it with a lenient
eye, and should a pre-
sumption idea present
itself, that you may
look it over.

I have chosen the above
as a subject for an essay
not as an edifice or instru-
cement, for I am well
aware that it is far beyond
the power of any combi-

dic medical man to
advance a single idea
of instructive matter to a diligent and intelligent faculty.

Perhaps this is one of the most important causes connected with abortion and is without a doubt a cause of much moment and will yet receive thorough attention from the scientific world. Of this I feel doubly afraid. And tho' I have seized upon this subject I feel almost totally incapable of doing it. The slightest justice, yet in performance of the necessary duty which is
required of me as a candidate for graduation, I hope at least to be able to write an acceptable thesis. I will in the first place ask: what is abortion? It is the expulsion of the fetus before the seventh month of intrauterine gestation. What is it, then, that causes the uterus to cast off the contents which it has, by the laws of nature, promised so faithfully to shelter, defend and protect? It is independent of such protection. There must be a cause of some
The exact duration of pregnancy, is, I believe, not known. The "according to the statement of Mervovan, and others, it is from the two hundred and fifth to the three hundred and eighth day. Some they say mature sooner because of the great vital force with which they are endowed, and also because of the strong and able constitution of the mother, while on the other hand, not a few are blighted with bad little or not force, and lose the projection.
Brother is but a weak and constitutionally de- 
anged creature, consequently more liable to abort 
from any cause.

What is it, that thus reduces 
her—may not among 
the many causes be placed 
position. Undoubtedly it 
may be; for we have 
learned that the greater 
number of severe cases of 
denervation dismension 
and almost all the distress 
mental discharges are 
produced in this way.

In the non-impregnated 
state she may thus be 
rendered debilitated and
diseased—and when impregnation takes place she is almost wholly unfitted to pass through the months of pregnancy without great danger to her own safety and of abortion.

I do not pretend to say that abortion is induced in this way alone; for I know full well that it is brought about by almost innumerable causes; but why not while we are viewing these causes continue the world as to their disastrous and their miserable end, look for a
moment to this great and wise Red cause, which by a word might be so easily avoided.

It is I believe an admitted fact by all medical men that copulation in the inferior animal will produce abortion. Why will it not then for the same reason produce it in woman? It is true, the inferior animal has, its particular time to copulate, the superior none, and I may say not without its evil effect.

Why is it that the inferior
animals refrain from evil during the state of pregnancy. Of this I can only say: it is a work of God, an instinct—an endowed faculty. To us, (the superior) he has not given instinct, but intelligence. Instinct prompts the inferior to refrain—and knowledge should thus prompt the superior. It would be proper, perhaps, to remark that the married woman who has borne children is more liable to this misfortune than those who have none.
After the uterus is impregnated and bears its fruit it never returns to its exact former size. It is a great deal larger and more vascular and has much more vitality. Consequently in the act of coition it is much more exposed to this cause of inflammation and when it is again impregnated it is perhaps more susceptible during pregnancy. The uterus undergoes a decided change. It assumes a higher degree.
of vitality and increases greatly in size. Even the arteries and veins which were previous to this state of affairs very small almost imperceptible are greatly enlarged. In fact the whole uterine system undergoes a marked and certain change. The cervix uteri is materially changed. It becomes hard and swollen and its whole structure is changed by the great organic activity which infects the uterine system. In the act of coition may
inflammation, and ulceration of the neck of the uterus, and this oftentimes causes such an amount of inflammatory congestion of the whole uterine system as to be wholly incompatible with the growth of the child, and as a matter of course the child dies, we have repeated hemorrhages, dried placenta and abortion. The sensibility of the uterine system in every woman is more or less great.

In some it is so very feebly that inflammation will almost immediately
follow the act of coition. Independent of the inflammation caused by the penis coming in contact with the uterus, the act alone may produce inflammation. During coition, the invagination of blood to the organ may be so great as to cause an enormous capillary engorgement, and produce inflammation. From vaginosis and vulvitis, which we are aware, often occurs from copulation, we may have inflammation of the vulva.

Dr. Bennett if I am not
mistaken in his word, the returns, markedly says that in inflammation of the cervix is the cause of a greater number of the diseases of the pregnant, and also the greatest cause of laborious pregnancy, severe sickness, abortion, and miscarriages. And when we know this copulation will produce this inflammation, we can but place it down as one of the causes of abortion. It does without a single doubt produce this inflammation and the
Digestion, we are told is deranged almost invariably when there is inflammation of the cervix. So great is the sympathy between the uterus and stomach. This depraved condition of the digestion often causes defective nutrition, consequently depilition and emaciation follows.

If the stomach be naturally weak, which is often the case. This indigestion may be seriously produced. The functions of the liver are deranged, as well as those of the kidneys by the derangement of digestion.
The secretion of bile may be deficient, or it may be copious, owing to the retarded secretion or to irregular activity. We have severe hydronephritis of pains, chilliness, headache, and severe vomiting.

The circulation and respiration, too, do not escape. We have severe pains in the region of the sternum and all over the chest, therefore difficult respiration.

Through the sympathetic nervous system, the heart may be deranged, and thus the circulation
is disturbed. It does not simply act upon the sympathetic nervous system, but on the cerebral and spinal, causing the most insufferable headache, depressed spirit, often amounting to temporary insanity, and abortion. In the act of eviction, the muscular motion may be sufficient to detach the placenta, so delicately is its attachment to the uterus; and also the great Trust on the abdomen, which is no doubt sometimes
very violent may detach the mucina, and too it is often sufficient to exfoliate the mucus and permit an escape of the water and unavoidably abortion is the consequence.

Respectfully

J. M. R. Wentworth