AN

INAUGURAL DISSERTATION

ON

Amenorrhœa

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Amenorrhoea

The delicate and impressionable nature of the female economy, consequent upon her sexual organization and functions, impose upon her diseases peculiar to herself. Of these there are perhaps none more distressing to our female patients than amenorrhoea, and probably none for the removal of which the female is more frequently urged to the necessity of placing herself under the care of the physician or surgeon. Notwithstanding the great sacrifice of modesty, that they not unfrequently have to make in so doing. By the term amenorrhoea I mean the absence of the menstrual flow. There are two varieties: emansio mensum when...
They have never appeared, and
suppress menstruation when there
is a want of their return after
having been well established when
not interrupted by gestation or
lactation. The menstrua consist in
a periodical discharge of a quantity
sanguineous fluid from the uteri;
and may be considered as peculiar
to the human female.
In the healthy female they return
once in twenty-eight days, and con-
tinue three-five or seven days according
to the constitution of the woman,
and the quantity eliminated varies
greatly in different women, and
even in the same woman at diffe-
rent times, and under different
circumstances. The period at which
The catamenia appear may be stated at the fourteenth or fifteenth year of age, and that of the decline at forty-five or fifty. In consequence of the peculiarity of her living economy the female is necessarily compelled to perform that great function to wit menstruation, to the healthy performance of which, the perpetuity of the human species is indebted. Having a knowledge of these facts, we as physicians, should endeavor to familiarize ourselves with all causes or combinations of causes which tend to exert an unhealthy influence upon the execution of this function, whether they are of a physical character or such as are independent of physical conformation.
and further more, should require a knowledge of the means best calculated to remove these causes, and to combat their effects.

The form of amenorrhoea which I will consider first is emaciation mensural. I will consider the most common conditions of the system with which it is connected, and point out the treatment, which, according to my views of their pathology, promises greatest success. Climate, habits generally determine a period for the appearance of the menses in each particular portion of the globe, and they so constantly appear at this established period, (caste, family) that any deviation in this respect by some regarded as a state.
of derangement or disease. When menstruation does not take place at the ordinary time, the physician, after having carefully scrutinized the general health and having found no general nor functional derangements, should be ready to make allowance for the delay and to distinguish this condition of delay from that which is referable to some morbid state of the system.

In order to menstruation it is essential that the uterus and ovaria be developed and in a healthy condition, and this necessary development of the genital organs is indicated by corresponding changes in certain other portions of the system.

The period at which menstruation
set in, in, as before stated, variable,
and should the female, not having
evidences of the development of her
genital organs, transcend the ordinary
period, two or three years or even more.
She should not be tortured by the
use of the reputed emmenagogue, but
on the other hand, should, the evidences
of womanhood, have declared themselves
and her health seem to suffer incon-
sequence of the non-establishment of
this function. The cause or causes of
such delay should be diligently sought
for, and when found, promptly re-
moved. Emansio mensium is not an
unfrequent consequence of physical
obstacles, and when so can only be
remedied by surgical means.
The most frequent of these are
imperforate hymen, and adhesion of the vaginal walls, and, as occasional causes may be mentioned, absence of the vagina, either in part or entirely, occlusion of the os uteri, absence of the uterin scrotum, etc. An imperforate state of the membrane hymen will very probably not be ascertained to exist, until it is evinced by its disturbance to that physiological act of the female, which declares her competent for the performance of the great function of reproduction. Absence vagina from imperfect hymen is a congenital occurrence. The remedy consists in the destruction of the obstructing membrane, which may be done by thrusting a trocar through it while a finger in the rectum gives a clear notion
of the direction to be given to the trocar, the bladder and rectum having been previously evacuated in order that they may be out of harm's way. When the trocar is withdrawn, and the detuned fluid evacuated, the membrane should be divided into four triangular flaps by passing a narrow flat bistoury with a probe point through the membrane, and carrying the incision down nearly on a level with the vaginal walls. Care, however, should be taken, once the menstrual fluid has been evacuated, that the divided surfaces do not unite and cicatrize. This is to be obviated by pressing in the opening once in two or three days, a silver gelat bougie of proper size. Thus, the woman is freed from danger of laceration, to which she possibly would have been otherwise exposed, by the constriction of the vagina, should she
ever be placed in circumstances of labor, "Emansio mensium," as before mentioned, is occasionally the result of occlusion of the os uteri and closure of the vagina, from congenital or accidental causes. The former of these conditions may be relieved by making an incision in the region of the os tineae, and subsequent dilatation, and the latter by gradual dilatation. There are other physical causes of emansio mensium, though not very frequent. Such are a want of development of the uterus and ovaria or their absence and absence of the vagina either in part or entirely. The symptoms produced by the accumulation and retention of the menstrual fluid from this latter cause, may be sufficiently serious to render it imperative to attempt to form an artificial passage for it, but I have no means to propose for the mitigation or restoration of the former conditions.
The womb, not unfrequently, becomes enlarged or developed for the reception of the monthly contribution of menstruation when there are obstacles to its elimination, and from want of circumspection or knowledge of the sympathies existing between the uterus and mammae in their pathological, as well as in their physiological states, the physician would be liable to run into error. Hence, the necessity of being careful in making out a diagnosis in such cases.

If upon a scrupulous examination of the case, there is found no possible cause of the emaciation, the physician may reasonably conclude that the fault consists in a torpid, sluggish and insensitive uterus. For this condition of her uterus, the young woman should use stimulating articles called emmenagogues. The vol, fennel, of quainum tinct, of celandine, etc. may be used internally at the same time using the bath.
fomentations, cataplasms, synapisms &c. The above-mentioned medicines and
means, tend to increase the vital activity of the parts about the pelvis, and
we may reasonably expect their useful coincidence with constitutional measures
in arousing the dormant sensibilities of the womb. There are other causes
that are of a constitutional character which prevent the establishment of
menstruation in the young female.
It may be traced to various debilitating
diseases—such as phthisis pulmonary,
scarlet fever, a chlorotic or impoverished condi-
tion of the blood &c. What I have
to offer in regard to the pathology and
treatment of these conditions, will
be mentioned when considering the
succeeding part of my subject.
However well-established the menst-
Rual discharge may be it is liable to
be interrupted from a variety of causes
independently of pregnancy and suckling,
One very common cause is anemia, in which case the blood is incapable of developing the innervating force in sufficient amount for the regular and healthful operation of the ordinary functions. In this condition of the system no attempt should be made to re-establish menstruation in order to the cure of the anemia, but (mutatis mutandis) the healthy condition of the circulating should be restored in order that it may enable the nervous mass to enthrone the vis viva in sum equal to the demands of the general, as well as the special wants of the economy. In the anamnestic condition of the system, the diminution of the menstrual flow may gradually go on pari passu with the deterioration of
the blood until it finally ceases altogether under its influence without there being any uterine disease or any other uterine symptom, then the scantiness and final disappearance of the secretion or hemorrage as some choose to call it. In order that the innervation of the patient be perfect and powerful there must be a due proportion between the dose of oxygen and the biotic powers to be evolved, and the indications, to be met in this condition of the system, consist in the regulation of this proportion. So this end we should endeavor to thicken to enrich the blood in order that the rich and perfect compound may be enabled to absorb and take from the air the necessary amount of
oxygen for the wants of the system. The remedy, which I propose for the accomplishment of this end, are the preparations of iron: Barlett's moss, or the impalpable powder or bark, wine etc. To be used pro re nata. The diet should be nutritious and easily of digestion. The kept soluble. The mind cheerful and attention paid to the dress moderate exercise taken in the fresh air etc. There are many things which will present themselves to the mind of the observing physician that might concur in the great end of improving the general health, which, being renewed, the catamenia follow as "Light follows the uprising of the morning sun." When amenorrhoea can be traced to any of the various diseases of debility by which the female is liable to be
assailed, the best treatment is the treatment of the disease to which it is referable. There remarks upon the suppression of menstruation are applicable to emaciation in women when associated with like conditions of the system. Exposure to cold in some of its forms may be considered as the most frequent of the remote causes of this suppression. When cold is applied in the intervals with sufficient force to prevent the recurrence of the catamenial discharge, the first notice the woman has of its influence is the want of return of the discharge at her next period. In most cases, at first, the woman experiences neither pain nor inconvenience, but if she fails menstruating for seven consecutive periods the approach of its
health is observed; The woman now becomes pale, emaciated and very much emFebred To which may be superadded a variety of nervous symptoms such as palpitations of the heart, difficulty of breathing, a sense of suffocation etc to these may be added "whites" or hemorrhoes. If cold be applied at the approach of the menstrual discharge or after they have flowed some time the woman may present quite a different train of symptoms. She is attacked with violent pain in the head, back or bowels and this may be with such severity as not infrequently to excite great anxiety for her safety. For the relief of these cases recourse should be had to blood-letting, purging, warm baths, camphor, opium assafetida. The discharge can very rarely be
re-established, after having been thus interrupted, nor should we at all times attempt to re-establishment from the fact that we, while the force of our endeavours is directed to this end, might do much injury by neglecting the consequences of the suppression. After bleeding, purging or have been performed, if pain still exists, in the region of the womb, advantage may occasionally be derived from the use of the warm bath or hot fomentations to the abdomen or if the pains be very severe, injections of thin starch and laudanum may be used with good effect.

We should treat these female symptoms upon general principles for they are subject to the laws by which diseases in general are governed. When our object is to invite the return of the menses.
we should use such of the uterine stimulants and in such forms as seem to be indicated by the wants of each individual case, and we should at the same time employ every possible means of invigorating the general health, of vitalizing the economy and of promoting the regular play of the various functions. The female is sometimes troubled with vicarious menstruation, in this our first effort should be directed to the restoration of the integrity of the uterine organs if it be impaired, we should then, by the means enumerated, endeavor to divert the motumen haemorrhagium of menstruation from its abnormal into its natural channel.

I will say nothing more in special reference to ammenorrhoea, but will add that we, to be successful in the treatme
of the great host of diseases to which the female is liable, have much to study as to her, that is not strictly medical, but psychological and moral. We should explore the history of those wondrous functions and destinies which she by her sexual nature is enabled to fulfill, and the strange influences that her organs by their peculiar endowment, are capable of exerting, either in sickness or health, not in her body alone, but on her mind and her very soul. We should endeavor to increase the boundaries of our knowledge in everything that appertains to the female sex, we should subject ourselves to “grow pale by the reflection of the midnight lamp” rather than not have a knowledge of the means attained to be most efficient in giving comfort both to her body and mind.