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AN

INAUGURAL DISSERTATION

ON

Dysmenorrhoea

SUBMITTED TO THE

PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, AND MEDICAL FACULTY

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FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF MEDICINE.

BY

John C. Lee

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Dysmenorrhoea

This disease is common to our climate, and is more or less very painful, sometimes not very much so, but not unfrequently, so much so, as to give great distress, through the whole course of her menstrual life. How many ladies feel a dread of that approaching day, when they expect a return of their menstrual period.

The pain resembles in intensity, that of labour, or abortion, properly so called, for to either, the case may be said to have a strong analogy;
A woman who suffers with

dysmenorrhoea, is unhealthy, as to the womb, and are not likely to be fruitful, in the married bed. It is true, that dysmenorrhoea, may last for many years, in certain individuals, without material injury to their constitutions, notwithstanding the invariable returne of the pain at the menstrual term.

The pain, the irritation, the imperfect performances of the functions, and state of the tissues that lead to it, are well calculated to excite the solicitude, both of the patient and the physician.

It usually commences, with

a slight menstrual discharge, which is pretty suddenly arrested, pain now almost instantly ensues. This described by some women, to be of a forcing, bearing down kind, returning at longer or shorter intervals, until a membranous substance or small coagula, are discharged, after the expulsion of this substance, the woman enjoys ease, unless there be a fresh production, in which case it requires for its expulsion, fresh contractile exertions of the uterus. Besides the alternate or labour like paines, just mentioned, there is always

a permanent one in the back, hips, and loines, which continues, untill the alternate paines have ceased, indeed this aching pain sometimes proceeds the other, and announces the discharge to the other hand.

The quantity discharged is very various, sometimes it is small, and at other times, very abundant. The degree of suffering, is not always in proportion to the quantity of substance discharged, indeed the pain would rather appear to be less, when much is discharged. The duration of the period, are also very variable.

in some it will last but
a few hours, when it will
require several days, for others.

It would perhaps be very
difficult to assign all its
remote causes. The most common
are the application of cold
during the flow of the menses,
taking cold after parturition,
and abortion, especially those
of a rheumatic disposition,
and it is nothing strange that
the female suffer from rheu-
matism at her menstrual period,
when custom and fashion has
caused her to clothe the
pelvic region, and thighs,
in such a way as to be con-
stantly exposed to the

influence of cold and damp, applied to the lower extremities. The menstrual alterations, of the reproductive organs, which allows them never to continue in one even tenor action, exposes them more particular, than other organs, to the morbid influence of cold, and damp, which are admitted to be the most provocatives, of rheumatic disorders.

But there are many causes, beside rheumatic vice, which gives rise to pained menstruation. The womb may be the seat of neuralgic sensibility, of the nerves, of the tissues

when aggravated by the vascular engorgement of the functions attendant on the monthly flow, and it is reasonable to believe that the woman will be relieved by a full establishment of the evacuation of the menses. Otherwise a woman may suffer pain at her crisis, from various heterologous formation to which the womb is not unfrequently ^{found} to be subject. A displaced womb, cannot be supposed to have healthful existence, such as retroversion, and prolapsed uteri, since such dislocations, cannot fail to produce distortion and

traction of the nervous fibres, which render the organ liable to suffering, under changes of its sanguine circulation, and its innervations.

A womb that is maintained in its proper attitude, and height in the pelvis, will be less likely to suffer from dysmenorrhoea, than a displaced one. If the uterus be force prolabed, with the os uteri resting upon the floor of the pelvis, and resting there for a long time, the neck of the womb is likely to become bent, and thereby placed in the condition

of a structural canal, and if we have a structural canal of the cervix uteri, will not irritation of the body and fundus supervene, from the difficulty which must ensue, in the evacuations.

I do not pretend to say, that all the cases of structural ~~cases~~ cervix uteri, are caused from anteflexion or retroflexion of the neck of the womb. although those flexions and angulations, are among the frequent causes. In a number of other instances, the causes appear to be so hidden as not to be cognizable.

The married and the single women, are alike subject to it.

The treatment of dysmenorrhoea are as various as the causes, for which we would consider the treatment, temporary, and permanent. The first, consist in the administration of remedies, to relieve pain, at the commencement of the attack.

And the most efficient and certain, for this purpose by Dr. Peaces is camphor, and opium, in their various preparations, and as far as my experience extends, I have witnessed very soothing effects from their use.

The ergot, also are recommen-
ded, also warm baths, and
amputation. And for the
permanent cure, the vola-
tile tincture of guacum
stands very high as a reme-
dial agent, especially those
of a rheumatic disposition.
I have witnessed the ~~off~~
~~use~~ of this tincture in
several cases, with the
happiest effects, two of
them since conceived and
brought forth healthy
children.

As a remedial agent
Prof Meigs, recommend the
golden sulphuret of anti-
mony, combined with

Camphor & Opium, or morphia,
the acetous tincture of, col-
chicum, & magnesia with some
distilled aromatic water.

Blue pill or calomel before
lying down at night, and
the colchicum mixture in
the morning which is a dose
three drachms, acetous tincture
colchicum, one drachm magnesia,
and three drachms sulphate
of Magnesia, with four ounces
of any aromatic distilled
water, a wine glass full
dose to be repeated every two or
three hours, untill the bow-
els are well evacuated,
for it is important to keep
the rectum free from

all irritating substances, such as hardened feces, we may relieve the rectum also by soothing enemata.

When we are satisfied that dysmenorrhoea is caused from a stricture of the canal of the cervix uteri, which we can only satisfy ourselves by ~~by~~ a minute examination, which examination we should in all cases insist, after a failure of the other remedial agents. Dr Mackintosh and others has given numerous cases of females in which the orifice of the canal of the cervix uteri were so small as scarcely to be

perceptible to the touch, for
which he would first introduce
a small bougie through the
canal into the cavity of
uterus, and by successive
operations, every day using
still larger and larger bougies,
untill the passage is sufficien-
tly restored, the effects
of which in most cases res-
tores health to ^(the) ~~the~~ patient.