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AN

INAUGURAL DISSERTATION

ON

Menstruation.

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Menstruation

The female is subject to a discharge of blood from the uterus, which has many names, owing to its periodicity; The terms menstruation and catamenia answer all our purposes.

The period of the females, life at which this discharge comences, varies according to climate; in southern climates it is said to make its appearance, at a very early age, generally, however, from the age of twelve, to fourteen. Whereas, in northern climates it ordinarily, begins from the fifteenth to the the twentieth year of the females life. In females who comence at the age of from twelve to fourteen, generally, cease at about the thirty fifth or or seventh year of their life; and on the other hand, when they comence

menstruating at such an advanced period, they generally cease from fifty to sixty.

The duration of this discharge is ordinarily, from two to six days, however, every woman seems to be governed by a law of her own special nature.

The amount of this discharge is estimated to be from two to eight fluid ounces at each term; there are many exceptions to the general rule; for instance there are some who eliminate ten or even twelve fluid ounces, while there are others who do not eliminate more than one or two.

So soon as the catamenia makes its appearance in the female, she is then capable of propagating her species.

This discharge, as a general rule, pertains to a woman no longer than she is capable of conceiving; there are however, many women, who do conceive after they lose the power of menstruation; this is considered as an exception to the general rule.

Menstruation, as a general rule, occurs once every twenty eighth day; this admits of many exceptions: women very frequently menstruate every twenty first or second day.

Much disputation has attended the investigation of this discharge; some authors contend that it is an effusion of blood, while others believe it to be a secretion.

Some authors declare that it comes from the arteries, and others believe

that it comes from the veins of the uterus. These disputes appear to be pretty well decided in favor of its being a hemorrhage. I think that blood cannot be secreted. Dr. Meigs remarks "that a woman could as well secrete a muskle, kidney, a liver as a blood disk." There is a great discrepancy of opinion among physicians even, at present, some contend that it is a secretion, while others believe that it is a hemorrhage. I think from the analyses that have been made by different authors, that it is, when poured from the vessels, pure blood. And if it be blood why is it not a hemorrhage. We know that the uterus is copiously supplied with blood vessels; and the manner in which

we account for the discharge containing mucus, is that only a portion of these vessels are engorged at the same time: those vessels that are engorged pour out blood, while the mucous membrane which lines this cavity is secreting mucus, and hence the sanguino-mucous discharge.
Dr. Meigs says that all that was said on the nature and causes of menstruation prior to the year 1825 was nonsense, and our real information began to acquire some philosophical certitude from the moment of the discovery of Purkinje's vesicle, which, cast so bright a dawn upon the nature and laws of reproduction.
Let this be as it may we have

proof sufficient, I think to justify
the conclusions of authors who con-
tend that this discharge is a hemor-
rhage, and not a secretion.
And for further proof of this discharge
being a hemorrhage, when it is
found abundant, passing from the
cavity of the uterus, rapidly it is nearly pure
blood. And on the other hand, when
it is found, tardily passing over these
cavities, to contain a great deal of mucus.
The ovaries seem to exert a great influence
over the catamenia.
Menstruation seems to be owing
to an influence exerted over the
womb by the ovaries
There are many theories brought
forward to explain the efficient cause
of menstruation; the most of which

are very unsatisfactory. The most popular is that which looks upon the maturation and escape of ova as the efficient cause.

It is said that every twenty eight days a Graafian vesicle rises to the surface of the ovary and during its development, and enlargement puts the membrans; Tunica albuginea and peritoneal coats, upon the stretch, and in that way becomes a source of irritation; in consequence of which there is an afflux of blood to the parts: that is to the ovaries, tubes, and uterus; which is discharged in the uterus; the vesicle finally ruptures, the irritation is removed, and the flow ceases this view is supported by many.

And menstruation seems to be a function of the uterus designed by Nature, for some great cause, and this cause is, unquestionably, a preparation for conception.
Women are found to be more readily impregnated, immediately, after this monthly term; and if such be the case it proves that which I have just remarked, with regard to the design of this discharge.
A woman that conceives does not on that account [illegible] cease to mature and deposit her germs; and she retains a strong tendency to menstruate up to an advanced period of pregnancy; yet as a general rule she does not discharge

the menstrual fluid: but there are many women who do menstruate after conception, but this is an exception to the general rule.

It is said that a woman is more liable to abort at her menstrual crisis, than at any other time, which must depend upon the catamenial effort, under the periodical exacerbation of the gemiferous force.

Women who have a nursling at their breast are not apt to menstruate till their children are seven or eight months of age; and there are hundreds, who do not menstruate, until they have weaned their children. Yet they are liable to become pregnant. You can readily see that a woman can bear

several children, without menstruating, and at the same time be in good health. As to the young girl. There are many brought up in the country to daily exercise. You will very rarely see one of these sent to College to complete her education without its interfering more or less with the catamenia: whereas had she remained at home she would have been regular. So soon as she takes her seat in school room, and devotes several hours during the day to hard study; she will find that the menses will suspend: and probably remain so, till she leaves school, and ceases to employ the force of her nerves, in those

intellectual or mental operations.
that require for their effectuation,
all the biotic force she is capable of
evolving. The consumption of this
force of nerves leaves her destitute
of both the power, and necessity, of
discharging the menstrual fluid.
Young girls are very apt to become
deranged in this way, although
this derangement does not interfere
with the true physiological office,
ripening, and the discharging of
her monthly ovulum from the
Ovoria. This shows how easily this
function may be interfered with,
and also how essential it is for us
to keep in mind this important
function.

The pregnant and suckling female do not menstruate because the life force is fully occupied; yet they fulfil the germiferous law.
The sedentary school girl does not menstruate, because her nervous mass is preoccupied.
As we proceed it is well for us to say something with regard to those unfortunate females who never menstruate and yet enjoy good health.
There are many recorded cases of females who never menstruated; and the reason, when ascertained, is because they are destitute of ovaries, or uterus, or probably both.
And how unfortunate it is for the female to be destitute of that great

and important function designed by nature, for such an important end. And how often, unfortunately, are females, who are without these important parts, suffered to marry. And who is able to describe the feelings of a husband or wife, under such circumstances: whereas had this female been examined by a physician, she would not have fallen in such a deplorable condition; she is now the wife of a husband, and can not reflect without conceiving of his unhappy condition.

Attempts, to bring on menstruation in the absence of one or both of these important parts, is well calculated to bring ridicule upon a physician.

Therefore a physician should be cautious in his dealings, with absent menstruation. In such cases it is highly necessary that a physician should, always, be on his watch; Should he perchance, make this unfortunate mistake, and administer his emenagogues; he would be ridiculed not only by the medical world, but by the non proffessional.
And hence it is of paramount importance that he should keep these matters in view. These things with many others of vast importance, pertaining to this important subject, should be well considered, by the practitioner of medicine.

James H. Mathews.