

AN
INAUGURAL DISSERTATION

ON

Menstruation

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Menstruation

It is universally known that the human female is distinguished from the male in three distinct peculiarities; namely that of child bearing, giving suck and elimination at stated periods of a quantity of sanguinous or bloody fluid; Then the bearing of children and the giving of suck and the menstrual discharge are the three great distinguishing peculiarities that belong to the female sex; At the approach or just before menstruation there are very great and perceivable changes that take place in young girls, you will see a decided difference in their manners and attitudes at the approach of this period, you can also

perceive a decided change in their voices it becomes more harmonious and womenlike; The muscular system also becomes more symmetrical and better developed; The physiognomy assumes a more charming and beautiful appearance, the changes are so palpable and perceivable, that you will be constrained after having been absent for a month or two from a girl to remark what a great change has taken place since you last saw her, you will remark how much like a woman she behaves her self; And now it is that the young girl takes on all the characteristics that belong to the female sex; Climate has a decided influence on the female

organs of menstruation, for we are informed that girls who are raised in hot countries arrive at puberty or at the period of menstruation earlier in life than those who are raised in colder countries; for instance in Greece girls menstruate at eight nine and ten years of age; and as we advance to the north there is a gradual protraction of this period untill we reach Lapland, where women do not menstruate untill a much older age; and in fact some of them do not menstruate only during the spring and summer seasons, so we plainly see that climate has a decided influence on the menstrual organs of females;

The period or age in this Country that girls menstruate is from the fourteenth to the sixteenth year of their lives; And they continue till about the forty fifth year of their lives, there are symptoms that are familiar to the medical man just before this period of menstruation commences and these are more severe at the first attack than in the succeeding periods, but are perceivable during the whole period ^{of} menstrual life; The quantity of fluid or Blood lost at each period differs in different women in the same climate or in the same women at different periods, The average amount

in this country is from two to six ounces, there is also some difference in the time required for the completion of each menstrual period, in some women this discharge returns precisely to a day but in others there is a variation of several days, in some it is over in two or three days, and in others it may last for ten and more, But the average time is from three to six days, At whatever time in life this discharge comes on a girl is said to be at puberty, But as above stated this depends much on climate, or the constitution delicacy or hardness of living, we know that much depends on

The training or raising of a girl at what time in life she will menstruate, we know girls who are brought up to hard and laborious labor, and fed on a rough diet do not menstruate as early in life as those who are brought up with all the luxuries of life, also those in whom the susceptibilities of the nervous system are exaggerated by their moral and physical training and education, will menstruate earlier in life than those who are brought up roughly, you may take two girls and raise one of them to rough and hard work, and a rough diet, and the other

vice versa, who shall have all the luxuries of life and confined in warm rooms and keep the company of the gay and rude; The latter will menstruate two or three years before, the former, This kind of raising has a decided influence on the premature elimination of the catamenial discharge; Girls who are raised in large cities and kept in school rooms and fed on the richest diet will menstruate much earlier in life than those who are brought up in the country and exercise freely in open air and eat a rough diet;

A great many people think
the moon has the power
of regulating the time for
females to have this pecu-
-liar catamenial discharge, but
any thinking individual can
see at once that this is not
the case, if the moon infl-
-uenced this discharge, would
not all women menstruate
at the same time, most ass-
-urdly they would; and we
know that this notion has been
for ages deeply impressed in
the public minds of men,
but we deny the moon
having any such influence,
for there is not probable
an hour or a minute,

of any day in which some women
is not in the beginning or middle
or end of her term; Now if the
moon had any influence in this
discharge it ought to be felt by
the mass of the female population
on the same day and not by
one in a hundred;

Another hypothesis is that the
menstrual discharge is caused by
general plethora, or vascular fullness,
but we know this to not be
the case, for we see women
menstruate who are not plethoric,
but quite anemic or to a certain
extent bloodless; Again you do
not prevent a woman from
her regular menstrual discharge
by bleeding her just before,

the return of her regular period,
you may bleed a woman a day or
two before her regular time for
menstruation without at all hin-
-dering or checking her menstrual
discharge, besides this there are
many lean and scrawny women
who loose a much greater qua-
-ntity at their menstrual disch-
-arge than the robust and
fat women who you would
suppose to loose a much
greater quantity at each period,
so we plainly see that general
plethora can not be the cause
of menstruation, or of any more
blood being lost at a time
and if a woman had to be
plethoric to menstruate, there

would be but few who would menstruate at all or if they had any discharge there would be little or no fluid eliminated at each period, but we have as high authority as is in the world that women who are quite anemic do menstruate and do discharge or evacuate as much if not more at a time, than those who are quite plethoric or of a sanguineous temperament; There are women who are laboring under severe diseases yes chronic disorders such as will at last bring them to their graves who notwithstanding menstruate regularly,

untill their late decline in
the disease, but this is not
the case with all women or
in all diseases. Some times
the slightest shock to ^{the} constitution
will put to flight all this
power of life; notwithstanding
how little some times deranges
or breaks in upon these organs
and hinders them from per-
forming their natural functions,
So we are not to conclude
because a woman is not pleth-
oric or that because she is
diseased that she dose not
menstruate, for women in
all diseases and of all ages
menstruate; But why it is
that woman alone is endow'd

with this great peculiarity
of function, man has not
ever been able yet to tell
and we doubt much whether
he ever will be able to satis-
-factorily explain this great phis-
-iology peculiar only to women,
The inferior animals none of
them are endowed with this
great and peculiar function,
It does seem that menstrea-
-tion peculiar only to woman
places her high in the scale
~~above~~ above the inferior ani-
-mals, or that menstruation
is her highest endowment,
but why it is necessary
that woman should menstr-
-uate or that she ^{should} have a

discharge from her genitalia every twenty eight days, we think it is for the well being and good health of the woman; Is it necessary that a woman should menstruate to conceive, we answer not women conceive before and after menstruation at all times; Notwithstanding few women menstruate during pregnancy or after conception but if a woman who has not conceived misses her period or fails to have her regular discharge does not her whole economy become deranged, it most assuredly does where is a more severe,

disease then amenorrhoea or sup-
-pression of the menses, we
know of none. so then we
plainly see that it is for
the wellbeing and good health
of the woman that she
has this monthly discharge,
this discharge is from the
Fallopian tubes and uterus, and
just before this discharge
ten or twenty hours if this
discharge was suppressed
would it not leave these
organs in a state of high
congestion and would not
inflammation necessarily
follow it undoubtedly would
and if these organs could
not be relieved of their

excess of blood would ^{not} serious
disease follow most assuredly
it would so this is plain
proof that menstruation is a
preservative process to health,
A woman who is not
pregnant can not live long
without this periodical disch-
-arge, we acknowledge that
women do not have this
discharge after conception
one out of a hundred may
do so, but women unimpreg-
-nated to enjoy good health
must have this discharge
monthly, it seems that con-
-ception changes the economy
of the woman in some way
that every thing go on

right without this discharge
but why this is so we
can not tell,