

AN
INAUGURAL DISSERTATION

ON

Menstruation

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OF

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Menstruation

There is a striking difference between woman and man, not so much from their external configuration as from the function, appertaining to reproduction, such as menstruation, giving suck and child bearing. When we consider the high office the female fulfills, the office of multiplying, which is so essential to the maintenance of our honored race, we do not think it strange that she should be provided with organs to cleanse herself, when in

an unimpregnated condition.
The menses at the present day
is considered by the best
observers to be pure or nearly
pure blood, the amount
eliminated at each term is
variously stated by different
authors, but striking the
ballance between the two extremes,
it might be considered at
from six to eight ounces
each term. The amount of the
menstrual flux is mostly
dependent on the vital force
of the economy. We do not have
the discharge in young females
before the year of pubescence
neither are women troubled
with it who has passed

the period of childbearing; it characterizes the female only when she is susceptible of becoming pregnant, after the menses cease to flow she is no longer capable of bearing children. The age at which menstruation comes in this country is from the fourteenth to the fifteenth year; but there are variations from this period; some menstruating earlier others later; when it appears before the fourteenth year it is considered premature, and ^{the} other organs are not sufficiently developed to accomplish the great end for which they are designed;

when it is tardy and does not occur at the specified time, it is predicted to some mishap in the normal construction, and betokens the coming of future evil. The cleansing period or time of menstruation is considered as a general rule to last from three to five days; but as every woman has a law peculiar to herself, we may readily perceive that there must be great difference in different women, for one will menstruate a large amount in a comparatively short time;

while another will require a much longer time to menstruate a smaller quantity, the period, in which women are entirely free from the menstrual discharge, is very various in different habits and constitutions; the period of intermission as an average is from twenty three to twenty five days, but some are not clear of this wretched and pestiferous drain more than the contracted period of eight or ten days. There is a question which has agitated the minds of obstetrical observers for many years, and this is whether

the catamenia be a secretion or not, but I think this has been satisfactorily settled by authors of modern date. I stated that the menses was pure or nearly pure blood, according to Prof Meigs it is an impossibility to secrete blood, hence the discrepancy of opinion as to what vessels the menstrual fluid is elaborated from; the most plausible hypothesis, and cogent reasoning are decidedly in favor of its venous origin; and it seems to me not an extravagant idea that the catamenia might be cast forth

from the tenuated basement structure of the capillaries. The analysis of the menses will convince any person who has pried into the recesses of physiology, that it is a fluid that cannot be secreted physiologically, therefore we conclude that it is an effusion, hemorrhage or something else aside from secretion. We come next to the cause of menstruation; this has been a theme of debate and research from the earliest ages of medical science, and the true cause was not ^{been} elucidated until comparatively recent date

it was by the never tiring zeal and unweaning energies of our most profound intellects, who adorn the medical profession, that this once almost mysterious subject has been correctly delineated by the intrepid polysearches of those memorable benefactors.

The true cause of menstruation depends on the periodical expulsion of a mature ovum, this fact is yet in infancy, but it is one that will repulse every opinion that tends to its subversion.

As the expulsion of an ovum is the cause of menstruation we might infer in the

non-expulsion there would be no menstruation; yet a woman may have discharges of blood from the genitalia resembling the menses and not ovulate; The womb is a vital organ possessed of the power of contractility and dilatibility, and hemorrhage aside from menstruation is liable to occur and this should be carefully diagnosticated, for a mistake in such a case might lead to serious consequences.

A woman commences ovulation at the pubertic period, and continues to the age of forty five years. Menstruation and ovulation are concomitant

or one is the sequence of the
other. The ovum is matured
periodically once a month.
The periodicity of ovulation
is not confined to the human,
^{female} it stands prominent throughout
the entire animal creation,
but the interperiodical space is
much longer in the inferior
animals; the same immutable
law is in force throughout
the vegetable kingdom;
the morning flower in its
meridian splendor will
eliminate its balmy odors
for a while, then calmly
nod its winning face to the
chilling tornado, and rest in
silent torpidity, until the

the genial sunbeams of spring
bespeak it forth from its
slumbering dome, and bid
it resume its former splendor.
During the intermenstrual
period the ovum is gradually
growing, but a few days
anterior to menstruation
it rapidly grows and matures
itself, it slightly protrudes
the membranous walls of the
ovaries, which creates a slight
afflux of blood to that point
when the distended and tenuated
membranes yield and give
vent to the living ovum
This process is attended with pains
in the sacrum, pubes and lumbar
region which are relieved by

by the torrent of the menstrual flow. When the ovum is mature there is an excitement of the veins, arteries, and capillaries surrounding the ovarian follicle, yet this is not sufficient within itself to induce menstruation it is dependant on an ovo-vital force which excites the somatic powers. The ever present nerves partake of the excitability and concentrate their dominant force on the uterus, and uterine appendages which solicit the womb vessels to gape and relieve themselves. Considering the delicate and complex apparatus from which

The menses flow, the intimate
alliance which each constit-
uent part bears to the others,
we can foresee the evil
consequent on its derangement,
a morbid condition of one
part will transmit its
contagious incense to its
fellow allies, then the grand
source of health, menstruation,
will cease its unobscuring
current, and the woman
is involved in disease

A student of Medicine let me be
When I from this College am freed
Success to him whose mind's engaged
In pursuing the medical page
An attention undivided & unrelaxed
Makes a doctor superior to quacks