

Progress of Medical Science.

THE VIENNA TREATMENT OF UTERINE HEMORRHAGE.

Dr. Carl V. Rokitsky, Jr., may fairly be regarded as a representative of the German, or at least of the Vienna, school of gynecology. If we examine therefore, his most recent utterances on the subject, * we may expect to get a reasonable idea of what advances our German brethren are making in the treatment of this class of affections, and wherein their methods differ from our own.

Two indications for treatment in general are pointed out by Dr. Rokitsky: first, to stop the excessive hemorrhage of the moment; second, to prevent its return. The general treatment to fulfil these indications must consist in the exhibition of repressive medicaments and in the administration of a proper regimen, while the local therapeutics should be directed towards a pharmaceutic effect upon the vaginal or uterine mucous membrane on the one hand and against the exciting causes of bleeding in the uterus on the other.

One of the most important points in the treatment of uterine hemorrhage is rest,—rest in the horizontal position, with raised hips, the coverings not too warm, no movement, not even in emptying the bladder or rectum. All excitement is to be avoided; the food and drink are to be of the simplest character: roast meat and ice-cold soda-water are the best nourishment. The chamber should be kept at an even temperature and supplied with plenty of fresh air. Everything which can cause congestion of the pelvic organs is to be avoided.

In what is called active uterine hemorrhage, particularly metritis hæmorrhagica, cold in all forms is to be avoided, because, while its transitory application tends to cause congestion, its continuous employment is not to be thought of. The application of frequently-changed cold compresses to the abdomen is, however, to be recommended. In these cases the plentiful application of leeches to the lower portion of the abdomen, or even to the vagina itself just before the menstrual period, is often extremely effective. In light cases these means, combined with mild laxatives and tonics, will place the patient in an improved position; and these precautions should be taken by all women liable to hemorrhage at the menstrual period.

In menorrhagia, which is simply the expression of general debility, marked improvement follows the use of tonics, and particular preparations of iron. When the loss of blood is not due to uræmic disease, improvement of the skin's action, strengthening of the general health, and regulation of the bowels aid greatly in the cure. A systematic course of hydrotherapeutics is often of great benefit in these cases. In all severe cases of profuse hemorrhage, which tend rapidly to anæmia, it is indispensable, during the intervals, to stimulate the strength of the patient to the utmost degree possible.

* "Ueber Gebärmutterblutungen und deren Behandlung," *Wiener Klinik*, I Jahr, 4 Heft, April, 1875.

In what is called passive hemorrhage, which is by far the most usual form of profuse menstruation, and which, by lasting weeks, or even months, brings the patient almost to dissolution, cold may be used with propriety. This means, however, frequently fails, and the physician is constrained to employ pharmaceutical or occasionally mechanical applications to the uterine mucous membrane. The medicaments used for this purpose are astringents, or more usually caustics. These are used in the solid or the fluid state. The use of powders has been of late almost entirely given up. Of the various medicaments, none can replace nitrate of silver. The others are usually tardy in their action, and often produce untoward symptoms (as the uterine colic brought on by the mixture of alum and sulphate of copper).

Whether or not the speculum is used in making these applications, their use should always be preceded by examination with the uterine sound, in order to ascertain as exactly as possible the situation, the condition, and the irritability of the uterus.

Dr. Rokitsky recommends the use of the lunar caustic in considerable quantity: if a small piece is used it is wasted in coagulating the blood, and does not reach the mucous membrane itself. He never uses the caustic until the cervix has been dilated. Slight pain is caused by its use, which usually lasts only a few minutes, occasionally an hour or so. Nausea, and even vomiting, may occur. Very exceptionally the pain may last a day or so, or give rise to feverishness. Dr. R. has only in a single case observed the supervention of dangerous symptoms. One precaution should be observed, particularly in walking cases,—that is, not to cauterize too energetically the first time. The irritability of the uterus should first be tried, and if there is a tendency to uterine colic it should gradually be accustomed to the application.

As to the method of applying the caustic: after the cervix is dilated sufficiently, and the uterine axis brought as nearly into a normal position as possible, a stick of caustic, perhaps an inch long, is introduced by a sidewise motion, either by means of forceps or on the end of a quill from which, after the caustic is placed in position, the latter is broken off. The introduction must be rapid, or the inner cervix may close before the caustic is completely introduced.

A cylindrical speculum of hard rubber is preferred by Dr. Rokitsky, who advises also that no effort be made at forcing it into position. If, for any reason, this cannot be employed, a "porte-caustique," or "uterus pistole," may be used. In most cases cauterization one, two, three, or four times every second, third, or fourth day will control the hemorrhage. Relapse may be prevented by the use of extract of ergot. Digitalis, tincture of cannabis indica, rue, savin etc. are nearly useless.

Two methods of cauterization with fluids may be used: either cotton-wool soaked in the medicament and introduced by any of the ordinary instruments through a rubber speculum, or intra-uterine injection. The latter method is highly praised by many authors, who, at the same time, ward against the effects which may easily follow. The best guarantee against such