

WHY DO NOT PROSTITUTES CONCEIVE?

This is variously accounted for by the laity and the profession. First, it is said that few women serve long apprenticeships to the trade without having gonorrhœa one or more times. Second, it is averred that frequent and often violent connection with different men produces a low form of inflammation, which proves inimical to conception, either through exciting uterine discharge, which is destructive to the spermatozoa, or the mucous membrane of the uterus offers no lodgment to the impregnated ovum. The same explanation applies to the cases in which gonorrhœa is held responsible for the condition of barrenness.

Another theory of conception—for it cannot be regarded in a higher light as yet—is, that the male element reaches the uterine cavity by a sort of suction process, excited by the sexual orgasm. This theory would fail to account for many pregnancies in the view that Dr. Waugh takes of at least fifty per cent. of women not having or experiencing the orgasm at all. Just what prostitutes lack in this theory I can only guess at; but it is probable that either the uterus fails to respond to the repeated demands or the chronically inflamed mucous membrane, able to furnish suitable soil for the attachment of the egg.

The theory to which many attach their belief, is that the uterine cavity being in nearly its entire extent lined with ciliated epithelium, this hair-like surface waves or sweeps the male element into the uterus by the undulating motion peculiar to that variety of mucous covering. Anything that would injure temporarily or permanently that lining would interrupt for a time or forever the union of the two elements of the sexes and their attachment, which constitutes conception.

There is a popular notion, which is also satisfactory to many medical men, that the semen reaches the uterine cavity by the male organ so meeting the os uteri as to form a continuous canal, and the force of ejaculation acts as the propulsive power. This theory is bosh. The almost countless means employed to prevent conception

show conclusively that there is a very great diversity of opinion as to how it really is accomplished.

The explanation of barrenness in prostitutes would, on the suction theory, be that there being no orgasm there would be no suction. To my way of thinking the best explanation we have is this: Inability to conceive results from any abuse of the sexual organs, whereby a specific or chronic inflammation is set up, which changes the nature, secretions and functions of the mucous lining of the uterine cavity.

I have in mind now a woman who for a number of years was a muscular prostitute, and who painted the town red at irregular intervals for years. By and by she settled down, reformed and married, and bore her husband several children after the lapse of few years. Clearly in this case the causes that produced barrenness had ceased to operate and the parts resumed the normal condition, and then conception was possible. Old soldiers in the wars of love after a time lose all power of regaining sexual vigor; hence the great majority of prostitutes fail to conceive even after reformation.

It seems passing strange that the theories of conception have so multiplied and the true solution be so slow in making its appearance.—J. A. De Armond, M.D., in the *Medical World*.

LAPAROTOMY FOR BULLET- WOUND OF ABDOMEN PER- FORATING INTESTINES— RECOVERY.

(Under the care of Mr. C. E. Bell.)

W. P., aged 18, was admitted into the Exeter Hospital on November 30th, 1888, at 10:30 p.m. About an hour previously he was taking a small loaded pistol, which carried a bullet about the size of a large swan shot, out of his left trousers pocket, when it exploded, the muzzle being opposite the waistband of his trousers. The bullet entered his abdomen just below the ribs on the left side; he did not feel much pain at the time, but was slightly faint on his way to the hospital.

I saw him soon after admission. He is a well-built young man, and is evidently