

Original Communications.

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MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN,—Having been thrice honored with the Chairmanship of the Obstetrical section, I wish to acknowledge my sincere appreciation of your indulgent favor, and to express my earnest desire to aid, to the utmost of my humble ability, the noble work of this Association.

I must ask your indulgence while I briefly present an imperfect outline of some of the more important advances in gynæcology during the past few years.

The subject is of much importance, far too large for one review, or the few moments at our disposal on the present occasion.

All observers must have noticed the continued researches that have been pursued by many able men during the last four years, with regard to the mucous membrane of the uterus. A short time ago the interior of that organ and the diseases connected with it, were but little known. It is true we have not, by any means, reached the end of such investigations, nor definitely settled some important points connected therewith, but enough has been accomplished to place gynæcology upon a more secure and successful basis than hitherto.

No doubt our improved means of diagnosis, such as Sim's speculum, the uterine sound and probe, the employment of sea-tangle and sponge tents, have paved the way for further advances, and placed the profession in possession of resources that are as yet, perhaps, but imperfectly appreciated. The value of the finger, *per urethrum*, as well as *per rectum*, and the introduction of the finger or hand *per vaginam*, afford us invaluable means for recognizing and treating uterine derangements. Simons' method is second only to Noeggerath's. The rapid dilatation of the urethra, and the exploration of the uterus it thereby affords, is of the greatest value in many cases. As Dr. G. Thomas lately remarked, "it will undoubtedly have a great future."

Much attention has been bestowed upon the phy-

siology of menstruation. We are learning many important and new facts concerning it. To Dr. Williams, of London, Eng., more than to any other, belongs the honour of having recognized the process of nidation and denidation during each menstrual period. But a short time ago we were indisposed to believe that the decidua of parturition and the uterine mucous membrane were one and the same thing, much less to accept the statement that the cavity of that organ was denuded to its muscular tissue. But this is all changed now, not only are these views generally held, but we are constrained to believe that the mucous membrane is removed and restored again during each month cycle. The researches of Dr. Williams, referred to, establish this fact, which has a most important bearing upon the treatment of uterine disease. In fact, it is the basis of all scientific treatment.

Heretofore we have groped along, very much in the dark, and, while our patients fortunately often got well, much that was done was done empirically and at haphazard. A well-known gynæcologist remarked "that his patients sometimes got well." There is, at best, but little ground for boasting of what we have done. Nature does the work, and we, at our best estate, are but her assistants.

Of the various forms of uterine disease, perhaps the most common, as well as most intractable, are such as are connected, with chronic congestion, sub-involution and hyperplasia of that organ. Of sub-involution I will not speak, except to say that it is undoubtedly often the cause of uterine flexions and displacements, with their frequent train of ill-health and misery.

If uterine disorders were confined to the married it would not be so bad—although sad enough—but when we find it so very general among the young and unmarried of our day, the subject becomes invested with utmost importance.

The knowledge we possess enables us to prevent much that exists.

The chief factors in causing uterine congestion and hyperplasia are improper and prolonged exercise shortly before and during menstruation.

It may not, perhaps, be going too much out of the way to designate what I believe to be some of the most objectionable exercises that cause these congestions and displacements of the womb. I refer to promenade concerts and dancing parties, just before and during menstruation; the latter is the most objectionable, as, to the fatigue of the body which is apt to be excessive, there is superadded the