

# CANADA LANCET.

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## A M E N O R R H Œ A .

BY THE EDITOR.

In cases of sudden suppression of the menses, the first thing that is usually done is to direct the patient to sit in a warm hip bath for half an hour or over the vapour of hot water, to go to bed, cover up warmly, and to drink a cupful of spearmint or pennyroyal, "tea"; this, every mother knows, gives great relief to the distressing symptoms, although it does not succeed in restoring the catamenia; for they rarely return under any treatment before the following month. During this interval the diet should be light and nutritious, the bowels kept loose, and early hours, cold bathing, and active exercise be enjoined.

But should the pain in the pelvis and loins be very severe, and be accompanied by a quick pulse, flushed face, intense headache and a hot and dry skin, after the hip bath from half a dozen to a dozen large Swedish leeches should be applied to the upper and inner part of the thighs, and the patient to be put upon nauseating doses of tartar emetic, ( $\frac{1}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  grain), or James' powder (3 to 6 grains) every three hours to diaphoresis; when, from 12 to 15 grains Dover's powder, or an injection into the rectum of a drachm of laudanum with 30 grains of pulv. camphor in a wineglassful of gruel, will be found to give great relief. Should the suppression be accompanied by gastric derangement, the antimony ought to be pushed to emesis. If colic supervene, half ounce doses of tincture of aloes and myrrh every three hours in warm sweetened milk until the bowels are freely opened, will entirely remove it; warm fomentations of poppy heads, or a large mustard poultice, would be likewise of great service.

*Leeches.*—When menstruation is delayed or arrested in a healthy individual, and the menstrual period is again at hand, if the vascular fulness be well marked, a few leeches applied to the thighs close to the vulva, after a warm hip bath, the bleeding being encouraged on their removal, will generally be found to restore the flow within a few hours.

*Purgatives.*—Next in point of efficacy to leeching, in cases occurring in healthy females, are active purges, aloes generally being chosen as the basis, from its peculiar property of creating fulness of the pelvic vessels. They are most efficacious when given in small doses some days before and continued throughout the periodic efforts, one large one being administered when they are at their height; but the large dose alone often proves sufficient to restore the action of the uterus, for I have frequently noticed an almost magic effect at this period from half an ounce of the compound tincture of aloes.

*Black Hellebore.*—Drs. Mead, Thompson and many others consider this drastic purgative particularly applicable to suppression from cold, Dr. Mead affirms that he found in it such signal virtue that it hardly ever failed in answering his expecta-

tions. The dose is five grains of the powdered root repeated every three hours until it operates. Or a drachm of the bruised root boiled in half a pint of water and given in doses of an ounce every two or three hours. Or from 30 drops to a drachm of the tincture may be given in milk and repeated in like manner. It is a powerful remedy and requires caution in its employment. To the addition of the extract of black hellebore, Hooper's female pills doubtless owe most of their popularity and efficacy.

*Mustard.*—This is one of the readiest and most valuable of stimulants in the treatment of amenorrhœa; a table spoonful added to the hip or vapour bath, greatly increases its efficacy; and a mustard poultice applied to one of the breasts for fifteen or twenty minutes, or until it becomes painful, by producing congestion of the gland and acting sympathetically, often succeeds alone in restoring the flow. It should be alternated each night with similar cataplasms to the upper and inner part of the thighs, which will be found to produce a fulness of the parts almost immediately after their application; they should not be allowed to blister the skin, as apart from the pain this occasions, it prevents their reaplication.

Dr. Ashwell highly recommends the internal use of mustard previous to the flow; there can certainly be no objection to its use in doses of 8 or 10 grains, the quantity he recommends, and might easily be taken on a sandwich three times a day.

*Electricity.*—This agent is not applicable in high states of congestion, but in ordinary cases it seldom fails of doing good. The magneto-electric machine in common use is the one I usually employ, and find it very efficacious and the least troublesome of any; placing one conductor on the sacrum and the other over the pubes, shocks of medium intensity should be passed through the womb for ten or fifteen minutes daily during the catamenial period; and in cases of debility, a less intense application may be continued for several weeks. Some practitioners prefer passing the current through the spine from the cervical region to the pubes, or downwards through the lower extremities, by inserting one disc in a tub of warm water into which the feet are immersed. An isolated conductor carried up to the os uteri and the current transmitted through to the womb from the sacrum is however the most efficacious plan when allowable.

*Enemata.*—Dr. Meigs recommends a warm emollient enema in suppression; and an injection into the rectum of ten grains of powdered aloes in a gill of gruel, is said to act powerfully in stimulating the uterus and promoting the menstrual flow. They should be retained as long as possible, say from ten to twenty minutes.

*Vaginal injections.*—It is an old custom in many parts of Europe, to stimulate the uterus, in cases of suppression, by means of vaginal injections of Eau de Cologne and milk. And liquor ammonia by producing engorgement of the os uteri and vagina,