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## Original Communications.

### A REVIEW OF THE TREATMENT OF FIBROIDS OF THE UTERUS.\*

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The treatment is best considered under the head of Medical, including Electricity, and Surgical.

*Medical.*—We have at present no remedy that will act upon fibroid tumors, so as to cause their disintegration and absorption.

*Ergot of Rye*, however, is a very important remedy in fibroids. It acts beneficially in two ways: 1st. It checks their nutrition by diminishing the amount of blood sent into them. 2nd. It favors their pedunculation and expulsion.

These two effects are due to the action of the drug on the unstriped muscular fibres of the walls of the uterus, and coats of the blood vessels. The best results are obtained from ergot, when the drug is administered hypodermically, and in suitable cases. By suitable cases, I mean those in which the tumor is intra-mural or submucous; it must be surrounded by layers of muscular fibre sufficiently developed to be capable of contraction.

*Hydrastis Canadensis*, given in doses from  $\eta$  15 up to  $\zeta$ iv, will usually check the hæmorrhage, but it has no influence on the size of the tumor.

*Bromide of Potassium* and other remedies have been used with a varying amount of success.

*Electricity.*—The treatment of fibroids of the uterus by electricity, was about three years ago brought prominently before the profession by Dr. Apostoli, and it is still on trial; as yet we have not sufficient data to come to any conclusion, as to its real value.

If we take Apostoli's figures they are most pleas-

\*Read before the Hamilton Medical and Surgical Journal Club.

ing: he says that in 278 cases he has treated, 95 times out of 100, permanent benefit has followed, with a suppression of all the miseries connected with such tumors. Now what are these miseries: hæmorrhages, troubles of menstruation, dysmenorrhœa, nervous disturbances, direct pains in the growth itself, and from mechanical pressure, and the annoying series of reflexes

*Cutter* records 50 cases, with the following results: 11 cured, 3 relieved, 25 arrested, 4 fatal and 7 without benefit.

*Skene Keith* mentions 13 cases in all, of which he says, the tumor was reduced and symptoms relieved.

*Thos. Keith*, 100 cases, in every one of which he says the tumor was reduced in size, hæmorrhage and pain checked, and general health improved.

These results are most pleasing, but against them can be cited numerous cases that have not been benefited in any way. *Apostoli*, *Massay* and others, say, that this method of treatment has met with failures because the gynæcologists do not know how to apply the treatment properly; but this, to my mind, is not a reasonable statement. After a discussion following a paper on this subject by *Dr. Townsend*, before the American Gynæcological Society, the conclusion arrived at was, that the results obtained by *Apostoli* and the *Keiths* had not been got by others who had used it in a large number of cases, nor could any better results be obtained by electricity than by rest, ergot, etc.

*Dr. Halliday Croom*, of Edinburgh, has arrived at the following conclusions:

1st. That electricity will arrest the hæmorrhage, but he has not seen a case in which the improvement was permanent, and he does not regard electricity in this respect as in any way superior to rest, ergot and styptics.

2nd. In regard to the pain, he says, that as far as fibroids are concerned, the pain is accentuated.

3rd.—With regard to the diminution in size of the tumor, he has not met with a single case which has shown any disposition to diminish through the influence of electricity, more than by any other means. While, on the contrary, he has found more significant cases of diminution from rest and ergot than from any electric treatment whatever. He is rather inclined to think that the electric current increased the development of muscular tissue, and his experience has been that