

size and mobility of the fundus of the uterus should have been made by bimanual examination, and that either by Barnes's dilators or the slower process of laminaria or sponge-tent, the cervix should have been sufficiently dilated to permit internal exploration, to which I would reply that in my judgment the patient was too weak from the first time I visited her, to have made either of these procedures safe or justifiable. Further, I would remark that abdominal palpation gave no evidence of any greatly increased size of the uterus, certainly not of that increased volume that the presence of hydatid masses would necessitate. The patient and husband, moreover, remarked to me that frequently within the last two years, at what was conceived to be irregular menstrual periods, she had lost fully as much blood, but without the large watery discharge. I had therefore the first two days no reason to anticipate that the means employed would prove ineffectual in arresting the flux. The question arises, what was the cause of this persistent discharge of blood and serum? I at once exclude hydatid cysts, whether true hydatids due to the presence of acephalocysts, or uterine hydatids, as causal, for two reasons; the first that the volume of the uterus was quite insufficient for entertaining such an idea, and the cause of their existence assigned by the majority of modern writers on the subject absent, namely either a true or a false conception; the second that Dr. Zimmerman's microscopic report of the coagula I submitted to him was to the effect that no evidence was afforded of hydatid or hydatiform structures, merely blood, epithelium, leucocytes, and a few involuntary muscular fibres. Before, however, passing on to a consideration of other probable causes, this opportunity for enquiring into the invariable correctness of modern opinion that uterine hydatids can only proceed from the villi of the chorion undergoing a dropsical swelling, may by the Society be considered a fitting one. I will first briefly cite a few passages from the authors most impressed with the idea that hydatids can only be the result of a true or false conception, and then the opinions of writers dissenting from this view. Montgomery says on this subject—"Some maintain that they are not necessarily the result of conception, while others as strongly, and it appears to me, with much greater reason and truth, consider them the product of disease attacking the

ovum." Beck, in his Jurisprudence, says—"I will repeat again what I have before endeavoured to prove by a reference to the best authorities, that there is no case on record where hydatids of the uterus have been found independent of conception." Baudeloque and Vogel express similar opinions. Desormeaux says—"The development of these masses of hydatids is more frequently, if not always, the result of conception." Velpeau's words are—"The mole and hydatids of the uterus being but the products of conception degenerated, give rise to the same phenomena as true pregnancy." Morgagni's view is the following—"This, therefore," speaking of the true mole, "cannot exist in virgins, nor as far as I know, that, in like manner, which might with more propriety be called a mola vesicularis or congeries of vessels, disposed after the manner of a cluster of grapes." Rokitsansky considers both moles and hydatids as degenerations of the ovum. Madame Boivin, in her work, entitled "*Nouvelles Recherches sur l'origine de la mole vésiculeuse, or Grossesse Hydatique*," announces, as the result of her observations, that hydatids in the uterus, in all cases, are the result of conception, originating in the filamentous processes springing from the external surface of the transparent membranes of the ovum. Fernel, axiomatically, says—"Nusquam visa est mulier molam sine mare concepisse." Burns thinks that hydatids and moles are never formed in the virgin state. Fodere considers true moles and hydatids are the result of intercourse between the sexes, and that those substances which are discharged from the virgin uterus are merely condensed coagula of blood which, of course, may form in the chaste as well as the unchaste. Meigs regards hydatids as depending upon a hydropic state of the villi of the chorion, which by a process of endosmose is able to convert them into cysts, and both moles and hydatids as originally true conceptions, but changed afterwards by some accidental diseased action. Thomas attributes hydatids to dropsical swelling of the villi of chorion. Playfair considers that sometimes hydatids result from the death of the ovum, and at others from obscure maternal causes, some blood dyscrasia, such as syphilis. He does not consider that they ever occur independently of conception. Graily Hewitt relates a case in which true hydatids originally formed in the liver had extended to the