

and, of course, not to its organic life, but to its nervous system, its animal life. It is a state not of organic irritation, but of nervous irritation. In simple uncomplicated cases, the alteration of the sensibility is the only indication of its existence. There is necessarily no turgescence of the organ, no congestion, active or passive, no inflammation, and, of course, no alteration of structure in an irritable uterus, even after the lapse of years. Congestions and inflammations, when found, are complications, sometimes the result of the nervous excitement of the organ, but frequently adventitious and secondary, or accidental.

"In a normal state the uterus can be pressed upon and pushed in various directions, almost without the consciousness of the woman; but, from various causes, this quiescent condition of its animal life may be disturbed. Its vitality is exalted, it becomes more excitable; slight impressions cause sensation, pain, even severe pain, spasms, cramps, and other evidences of nervous irritation, of morbid excitement. It has passed from a healthy to an unhealthy state, as regards its nervous system; it is morbidly sensitive; it is "irritable." This state is a simple exaltation of a natural vital property, sensibility, and constitutes a nervous irritability beyond its normal or healthy standard."

As might be surmised the predisposing cause of this condition is "nervous temperament." By this is meant that certain persons are from their original organization, peculiarly impressible, easily excited or depressed in everything that regards their cerebro-spinal system. Early marriage, Dr. Hodge thinks predisposes to nervous affections; indeed he states marriage is frequently the cause of hysteria, especially in erotic habits, and where no conception ensue. At page 236, he draws the following conclusions.

"A review of the causes of irritable uterus will, to a great extent, enable us to answer the repeated inquiry, why nervous affections of the uterus are so much more prevalent and distressing during the present than the past generation. The answer is twofold, or, perhaps, threefold. The first relates to the predisposing states of the patient's system. The nervous temperament of women of the present age has been greatly developed by the wonderful increase of the indulgences and luxuries of modern life. The physical education of the girl has been most carelessly and thoughtlessly disregarded; while every stimulus has been applied to procure a precocious development of the mind, the heart, and the passions. The organic life has been neglected, while the animal has been unduly and too rapidly excited. Another answer to the query is, that the tight dresses, the weight of garments, the braces, etc., to which girls are subjected, are more constantly resorted to, and are of a more decided character than those employed by their ancestors.