

UTERINE CONDITIONS DEMANDING OR JUSTIFYING THE USE OF CURETTE.*

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One feels like offering an apology for presenting a paper or rather opening a discussion, on a subject so familiar to all engaged in obstetric or gynecological practice. The prevailing opinion seems to be that curettage, or scraping out of the uterus, is a useful, simple and positively safe operation. To the former, let me attach a green light, and to the latter a red one; and for a confirmation of the necessity of these danger signals, we require to glance but for a moment at the appalling list of casualties traceable to this operation, a report of which would afford a most profitable half-day's reading.

To what extent human life has been sacrificed and suffering intensified by the unskilled and injudicious use of the curette no one can say. I look upon curettage as one of the most formidable operations, and the one demanding the most scrupulous care of any operation on the female generative organs; yet the most inexperienced physician considers himself quite competent to perform it, and when about to perform any operation about the pelvis, the fact that the patient is under an anesthetic seems sufficient excuse for curetting the uterus. Herman, in an address or a lecture to the Polyclinic, in London, cited a very good example of this, even in a well recognized gynecologist, who had sent him a pamphlet describing what he considered a new operation for cystocele, in which he began by saying, "I first curette the uterus, etc." However, there are conditions that demand and justify the use of the curette, but I feel assured that the consensus of opinion of this section is that it should be more restricted than it is.

The use of the curette is demanded in persistent menorrhagia or metrorrhagia, both for curative and diagnostic purposes, also in suspected cases of malignant disease of the body of the uterus. The information derived from the scraping of the uterus, and the microscopical examinations of the scrapings enables us to determine whether the uterine hemorrhage is due to endometritis, glandular hyperplasia, the remains of an abortion, tuberculosis of the endometrium, carcinoma, or sarcoma.

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