

The objection has been made that this operation is a serious one ; that, when successful, it deprives the woman of organs which characterize her sexually ; that, in short, while a woman may lose her ovaries and still remain a woman, yet, when the uterus is also removed, she is entirely unsexed and unnecessarily mutilated. Much of this sort of argument seems to me purely theoretical and unwarranted by facts, but its presumptively authoritative character and constant assertion give it some dignity and standing. It would seem, however, that a living mother and housewife, even though deprived of uterus, ovaries, and tubes, is more desirable than a dead woman with these organs in her pelvis. It may be said that the alternative here suggested is exaggerated, but those who have practised much obstetrics, and have verified causes of death in the puerperium by personal autopsies, know well that the conditions are not overdrawn.

In cases of dense adhesions of displaced uterus, tubes, and ovaries without pus formation, in which severe pain is one of the prominent symptoms, simple ablation of the adnexa, with release of the uterine adhesions, is usually insufficient to give relief. The attachment of the uterus anteriorly by hysteropexy or other method of antefixation, in conjunction with removal of the appendage, is sometimes effective, but the entire extirpation of the uterus with the appendages is more successful.

The complete extirpation of the uterus and appendages by the vaginal method for pelvic suppuration was done for the first time by Péan on December 12th, 1886. The case was one of endometritis, complicated with salpingitis, pelvic peritonitis, and suppurating cysts of the ovaries. The uterus was large, inflamed, painful, and fixed in the masses of exudation surrounding it. The same operation was done on the 20th of the same month. In 1888, Péan did the operation four times. He described it, with its results, in a communication to the Paris Société de Chirurgie on July 2nd, 1890, and again before the International Medical Congress in Berlin in the same year.

When first performed, the operation found few supporters, but Segond, having performed it a number of times, became enthusiastic over the results obtained. Doyen, of Rheims, began operating by the vaginal method in 1887, and, at the Brussels Congress of Gynæcology in 1892, was able to report upon 77 cases. At the same congress, Segond reported 103 cases, Péan 150, and Jacobs, of Brussels, 58. The mortality in Segond's cases was a fraction over 10 per cent. ; in Péan's, 0.75 per cent. ; and in Jacobs', 2 per cent. In a later statistical report (July, 1893), the latter operator reports 140 operations, with a mortality of 1.42 per cent. At the semi-centennial meeting of the Berlin Obstetrical and Gynæcological Society in May, 1894, L. Landau reported 38 operations, with no