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Original Communications.

OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY.

By LAPHORN SMITH, Lecturer on Gynecology Bishop's College, Montreal.

At the Brompton and Sussex Medico-Chirurgical Society, a paper was read, (*N. Y. Med. Record*, 9th June, '88) by Sir Spencer Wells, one of the greatest living abdominal surgeons, or perhaps indeed the greatest who has ever lived, on the electrical treatment of diseases of the uterus.

He stated that after visiting Apostoli's clinic, and carefully examining 60 of his cases, the conviction was irresistible that though the method might not have reached perfection, the work so far as it went was good. If the women were not radically dispossessed of their tumors they were symptomatically cured. After enumerating the various forms of uterine disease under Apostoli's care, he says: "In the treatment of these conditions, instead of scraping and cauterizing the cavity with the curette, or caustics, or fire, Apostoli does the same thing with a pole of the galvanic battery. We give ergot, or mercury, or iodine, or bromine, in the hope of altering the nutrition of the diseased mass ; he sends a disintegrating current through it. We castrate to cut short a woman's sexual existence; he seeks to quiet down neurotic sensibility, and induce regularity of ovarian function. Where we proceed to a root and branch extermination, he proposes a denutritive paralysis of the uterine substance. Time will show whether, and how far, he surpasses us in his results."

"Where the object is mainly to suppress hemorrhages," he says "electrical treatment has decided advantages over other practices. Should the tumor be growing, but not advanced beyond the limits of reasonable surgical interference, balancing the comparative risk I should be disposed to put the matter to the test ; since, in case of failure, the more hazardous operation of removal can still be done. In my opinion with the option before her, it would be neither wise nor charitable to give a patient strong advice in favor of immediate cutting operation."

My own experience fully bears out his opinion when he says: "Experience seems to show that there is a group of cases, numerous as they are troublesome, of chronic metritis with enlargement and surrounding deposits, which may be cited as pre-eminently eligible for electrical treatment; they are as regards the patient, painful and exhausting to the judicious surgeon, they are exhausting by their rebelliousness, and in some rash hands they have opened the way to practice more lamentable than the disease. It will be one of the crowning merits of electro-therapeutics, if proved to be equal to bring relief to these patients. Recent reports give good reason to hope that this end may be realized by a careful use of the positive galvano puncture."

In a late issue of this JOURNAL was published the magnificent testimony of Keith, the greatest of Scotch abdominal surgeons in favor of Apostoli's method. As I was the first in Canada to put his method into practice, this testimony of Sir Spencer Wells is especially pleasing to me. When such men as Spencer Wells and Keith believe in it, I can hardly find any room for doubt.