

specimen of a case in which pelvic cellulitis, abscess and death followed dilatation by a tupelo tent and stem pessary. During the discussion on these cases it was universally thought that the prolonged local irritation, together with the introduction of septic matter, was the direct cause of trouble.

In the same journal (1885), page 952, Dr. C. C. Lea reports a case of perforation of the cervix uteri by a laminaria tent. Dr. Mundé also spoke of similar cases. And in the issue of 1888, Dr. C. C. Lea presented a specimen of a case of death due to septic peritonitis following dilatation of the cervix uteri by laminaria tents. Without going any further into the misfortunes of tents in general, we may ask ourselves, Why has dilatation by tents been so much practised during the past twenty years when death or destruction of health has always been considered in the balance? I can only answer such a question by repeating Emmet's conviction above quoted, "that he always, when using tents, held the patient's life in his hands"; and Marion Sims' statement that he never used them when he could possibly avoid it, and never applied them without apologising to the patient for the very unpleasant effects they produce. Sims also stated that he who gives an efficient, safe, and pleasant substitute for tents will confer a great boon on surgery. Marion Sims' book, "Uterine Surgery," written in 1865, undoubtedly has been responsible for the great generalization of the practice. He, however, tells us that it is necessary, before using them, to explain to the patient (1) that the tent may possibly cause some uneasiness; (2) that it will certainly produce a dirty, disagreeable, bad-smelling discharge; and (3) that it will be necessary to see her in six or eight hours to remove the tent and probably to introduce another.

Judging from such advice to his patient, from such a man, the use of the tent in gynæcology could only have been justified by the general status of surgery at that time. Sims, in his honesty of purpose, knew that it was a dirty, bad smelling, dangerous thing, and felt that improved methods would surely come.

The reason of the foetid discharge from the uterus after removal of the tent is because the operation has been a septic