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Communications solicited on all Medical and Scientific subjects, and also Reports of Cases occurring in practice. Address, DR. J. L. DAVISON, 12 Charles St., Toronto.

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CURETTING THE UTERUS.

This operation, which has been characterized by such men as Scanzoni and Chassagnac as "unscientific and barbarous," has its ups and downs, its ebb and flow in popularity with the profession. There is no doubt that, properly performed, it is of great assistance in the treatment of many uterine and cervical diseases, such as endometritis, fungosities, congested mucous membrane, menorrhagia, etc. The dangers attendant upon this procedure are slight, especially if there has been no previous tenting. Occasionally pelvic peritonitis or cellulitis follows, so that the operation should always be done with the strictest antiseptic precautions, and it is better that it should be done at the patient's residence, and that rest in bed be insisted upon for a few days, and of course longer if any unpleasant symptoms supervene. We remember seeing a case of rapidly fatal cellulitis take place after curettage for fungosities, in a woman aged about 50, by the late Angus MacDonald of Edinburgh, who took occasion to caution his clinical class as to the possible fatal results flowing from even this simple operation.

Dr. Dorsett, of St. Louis, in a paper read before the American Association of Obstetricians, at Toronto, in September last, introduced a somewhat new idea as to the value of curettage in diseases outside the womb. He says:

"Did it ever occur to the neurologists, after a faithful trial of bromides, chloral, nux vomica, lady's-slipper, infusions and decoctions of herbs and roots, prepared possibly by their own hands or under their personal supervision, the use of the electric battery, the electric fan, etc., on a hysterical or neurasthenic female, that possibly the patient was suffering from a pelvic inflammation occasioned by a foul womb, a mucous membrane that had been absorbing and distributing constantly toxic elements that are coursing through the system of the fair female, poisoning her whole system, producing symptoms that might easily tally with those of neurasthenia?"

"Neurasthenia? Of course neurasthenia — nerve prostration—brought about by a continuous absorption of toxic elements, producing general prostration, headache, restlessness, insomnia, frequent sighing, cold and clammy feet, gloominess, muscular weakness, inability of thought concentration, loss of interest in business or the family, etc."

The above contains a real germ of thought. We have been accustomed, since we have known what *ptomaine* means, to account for the headache, depression of spirits, anorexia, dullness of intellect, sleepiness and a dozen other symptoms with which we are all familiar, as following either constipation or decomposition of fæces in the intestinal tract, by the fact that these poisonous ptomaines, produced in the intestines, were absorbed, and by circulation in the blood, act upon the nerve centres as to cause the symptoms just enumerated.

Then why not absorption from the endometrium, as suggested by Dr. Dorsett? The anatomical position and the function of the unimpregnated uterus, will allow of this absorption of deleterious material to continue over a long period of time, setting up the various neuroses suggested by the author. While of necessity, or at least from the action of purgatives, the bowels are occasionally cleared, thus freeing the system of such depressant substances, with the result as we all know of an almost immediate clearing up of the symptoms.

Curettage, then, in such cases acts upon the system through the uterus, just as pil. hydrarg., followed by a saline, acts upon the system through the intestinal mucosa, namely, by removing from