

of Greece, and of Rome, the practice of gynecology can be readily traced, and although, like all other learning, it became paralyzed by the baneful influence of the dark ages, it was upon the revival of letters at once pursued. Before the middle of the present century, however, it did not in any respect deserve the name of a science. About that time, through two influences—the speculum, which since the days of Récamier had slowly worked its way into use, and anæsthesia, which enable the surgeon to perform operations, both tedious and painful, upon the genital organs—the science of gynecology passed in great degree out of the domain of medicine, with its uncertain theories and doubtful resources, into that of surgery. And from that day a new era has existed for this department of medicine which has given it a place among other, not only of respectability, but of dignity. I know not what view others may take as to the influence which has had so great a result upon gynecology, as all have seen exerted during the past quarter of a century, but, in my judgment, it is the bringing into the service of the department the powerful aid of surgery. Let me beg you to observe that I am not urging the claims of surgery at the expense of those of constitutional treatment in gynecology. Far from doing this, I am a strong advocate for the great advantage of constitutional treatment in diseases of the pelvic viscera of the female. There is no more clashing between medicine and surgery here than there is elsewhere; they should work together for good, the one sustaining and supplementing the other. Nevertheless, I fearlessly assume the position that an enlightened, conservative surgery is the pivot around which is to revolve the gynecology of the future, and that, were surgery withdrawn from this department to-day, it would be emasculated of the greatest part of its usefulness and efficiency, and would gradually lapse into the condition which it occupied half a century ago.

Every virtue has a vice which so closely corresponds to it, and so nearly resembles it upon superficial examination, that the real and the false are often confounded. Vanity often simulates modesty; cold policy passes current for charity; even arrogant pride is not rarely mistaken for humility. In medicine, cant, for there is cant in medicine as there is in religion, in politics, and in all other spheres in which the mind of man works, is often mistaken for that most laudable and meritorious of medical qualities, conservatism.

When vaccination was introduced, a great deal of medical cant was talked; and so when the pains of labor were first assuaged by chloroform; when ovarian tumors were submitted to laparotomy, and thousands of valuable lives were yearly saved; and so, also, when the obstetric forceps was put upon its proper basis as an instrument to be resorted to in the interest of mother and child before the symptoms of powerless labor had absolutely developed themselves. When, through the instrumentality of Simpson, Sims, and Simon, surgery was

introduced into gynecology, a jeremiade was inaugurated, the echoes of which are only now dying away like the grumbings of a recent storm. Those who practised gynecological surgery were accused of recklessly mutilating the most beautiful of God's creation. Their conservatism was impeached, their judgment was impugned, their honesty was attacked. And what has been the outcome of the controversy? What is the present status of the moot question? By the aid of gynecological surgery, thousands of women, who formerly filled beds of suffering throughout their menstrual lives, are now in a month or two restored to perfect health; thousands who were doomed to early death are saved; thousands who for weary years visited the offices of one, and then another, and still another physician, resisting the powers of general tonics, and nitrate of silver, and potassa fusa, and the actual cautery, are now quickly enabled to perform all the duties of life without exhausting their resources by yearly stipends to the medical man. A woman suffers from profuse leucorrhœa, and backache, and difficult locomotion. Formerly she would have gone, times without number, to her doctor's office to have caustics applied to the ulcer of the neck of the womb, until he got tired of her or she of him. Now a lacerated cervix is cured by Emmet's great operation, and limit is put to her patience and her husband's capacity to bear expense. A young woman, whose terrible sufferings at menstrual periods have half crazed her, made her nearly an opium-eater or gin-drinker, and almost transformed her into one of those social vampires who suck the sympathies and vital force of a whole family in place of blood, instead of living on, a libel upon her sex, is cured by Battey's operation and restored to her place in life. Another, who has had the accident of lacerated perineum inflicted upon her by parturition, instead of passing her life in "ringing the changes" upon all the varieties of pessaries known to art, is cured by perineorrhaphy or colporrhaphy. And still another who, perchance, for twelve years has had an issue of blood, and who has suffered many things of many physicians, and has spent all that she had and was nothing bettered, but rather grown worse, after having exhausted all the hæmostatics and oxytocics and astringents, has a loop of wire, called a curette, carried into the uterine cavity, and fifteen or twenty fungoid growths, about as large as grains of barley, removed, and straightway the fountain of her blood is dried up.

Surely the time is at hand when the gynecological surgeon may boldly say to his detractors, "enough of this, the logic of events condemns your futile efforts," and to those in his own department, "he who is not prepared to give his patients the advantages of surgery, either at his own hands or those of another, is not prepared to act honestly and fairly by those who intrust their interests to his keeping."

The pathological conditions which most frequent-