

DISCUSSION ON DYSMENORRHOEA.¹

THE TREATMENT,

BY

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Treatment of Dysmenorrhœa.—The treatment of dysmenorrhœa is such a wide subject that one can only rapidly run over some of the different forms without fully advancing arguments for or against any one particular kind in the time at our disposal.

In considering this question, we must keep before us the fact that dysmenorrhœa is merely a painful manifestation of some abnormal condition of either the body generally or one or more of the pelvic organs, and that, in order to cure the symptom we must cure the cause. Thus our first steps should be directed towards discovering that cause. The physician who blindly treats dysmenorrhœa by a routine course of sedatives, without thorough investigation of the case, is doing justice to neither his patient nor himself. The routine use of this class of drugs is to be most strongly deprecated as they in time do positive harm in making patients their slaves and undermining their nervous system. Of course if one is called in to see a patient who is in the midst of a most acute attack of pain, an hypodermic of morphine is often absolutely necessary, although much may be gained by the application of heat to the hypogastrium and a dose of 10 grs. of antipyrine or phenacetine repeated twice if necessary with an interval of one hour. Alcohol acts like magic in relieving the majority of cases and it is largely used (far more largely than one would at first think) by women, but it should be utterly prohibited as the habit is very apt to grow on one and it really increases any local trouble which may already exist.

A great deal may be done to prevent the occurrence of dysmenorrhœa by care of the growing girl. I think that it is the experience of the older physicians, that dysmenorrhœa is growing more and more common, and this is to a great part due to the carelessness and ignorance of parents who do not know the extent of the injury that they are doing to their daughters by urging them to excel at their studies. As they approach puberty, girls should have freedom from all kinds of excessive work. They should be encouraged to go into the open

¹ Read before the Montreal Medico-Chirurgical Society, Dec. 18, 1896.