

is that we mutilate women and render them sterile. In the greatest number of cases this argument is simply ridiculous. The suppression of the ovaries at an age where it constitutes a real sacrifice is inexcusable if it is not necessary; but does the fact of operating upon women at the epoch of menopause or already mutilated by purulent or parenchymatous bilateral lesion render us worse citizens? To extirpate a uterus and not to find the alterations we had foreseen is always an error, but it is far from being a crime toward mankind; and to add up the figures of several surgeons and exclaim, "What a number of women lost for reproduction!" is great ingenuousness, if not simply a bad joke. No! I confess that we are exposed to commit some errors, but one must not exaggerate their frequency nor their importance. In every conflagration the fire claims its share. I do not pretend that in gynæcology, more than elsewhere, we have reached the ideal. I am quite willing to believe that the modern surgeon does not, properly speaking, solve the problems he meets with. In removing a diseased organ he cuts off the Gordian knot, instead of untying it; but while waiting until the philosopher's stone has been found in pathology, you must admit that very often the surgeon is compelled to act radically; and if some operators have compromised hysterectomy by indiscriminately resorting to it, a wise and intelligent intervention has rendered the most eminent services to humanity.

Hysterectomy is indicated against the diseases which threaten life or against those which render existence miserable by the perpetual sufferings which they cause to the patients. Among the former are cancer, pelvic suppuration, and the large tumors of the uterus. With regard to the malignant affections, no discussion; there is no other hope than complete and early removal of the uterus. But here, general practitioners, you have an important rôle to play. It is upon you that, most of the time, depends the efficacy or the failure of the specialist's intervention. In fact, the indispensable condition of genuine success consists in an early operation. But it is not always an easy matter to diagnose uterine cancer at its beginning; and how many women have been irremediably lost for having been tamponed, cauterized, and douched for pretended ulceration of the os!

Therefore, in all suspicious cases do not hesitate to have recourse to competent advice in the matter, and do not wait until a fœtid discharge, metrorrhagia, and pain have demonstrated that