

ART. XXVIII.—*Retention of the Menses simulating Pregnancy.* By HECTOR PELTIER, M.D., Ed., Professor of Institutes of Medicine, Montreal School of Medicine; Physician to the Hotel Dieu, &c.

As I believe that every physician is bound to bring before the profession any practical case of interest which comes under his observation, I take the liberty of submitting the following :—

A young lady, 20 years old, after exposure to cold and getting her feet wet, whilst her menses were upon her, was suddenly seized with rigors, followed by a little fever and arrest of the discharge. She, however, did not pay attention to this. She remained three months without menstruating, when I was called in to set all right. Now, as the period for the customary appearance had elapsed, I waited until the next monthly period.

I must remark, that since the age of fourteen, when menstruation began, she never experienced any thing of the kind, though she said, (and unfortunately many young girls are too confident on this point,) that she had often got her feet wet without the least inconvenience supervening. At this time, the fourth month, the abdomen was somewhat voluminous, in fact, looking very much as it does at the fourth month of pregnancy. The young girl, who before the stoppage was inclined to become stout, lost flesh, as also happens in similar periods of pregnancy.

My confidence in the education and moral character of the young lady, kept me, through false delicacy, from asking any question, or making any examination, which might have given me, probably a decided opinion of the case. I say *probably* and not *surely*, because I was aware of many cases where, in similar circumstances, examinations per vaginam had been made by the most skilful and experienced physicians and accoucheurs, and gross blunders had been the result of giving a decided opinion.

I will presently relate a few cases, to point out why I did not make the said examination, though I must confess it ought always to be made, but the physician should be reserved as to his diagnosis. However, I resolved, without any examination per vaginam, to give her a few emmenagogues, such as absinthe, and four pills of myrrh, aloes, and assafoetida, two in the morning and two at bed time, for three consecutive days. This had no more effect than it would have had in an old woman past 50. As I had failed, I did not wish to continue any harsh treatment. I waited until the fifth month. At this period, the mother, though full of confidence in her daughter, began to fear that something wrong might have happened. The abdomen had become larger, and gave all the outward appearance of pregnancy. This time I gave no remedy, leaving nature to her course, and assured the mother that there was no pregnancy. Yet, to say the truth, I began to fear that I might have given