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OBSERVATIONS ON THE NATURE AND TREATMENT OF VARIOUS DISEASES,

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No. I.—ON THE UTILITY OF ELECTRO-GALVANISM IN AMENORRHEA AND DYSMENORRHEA.

Although Electro-galvanism has been for some years past employed in Europe,* in cases of amenorrhœa and dysmenorrhœa, yet I believe I am correct in stating that it was never used in Montreal until introduced by me, within the last year.

Having been requested to meet a physician of this city, in consultation in a case in which I recommended a trial of electro-galvanism, in order, if possible, to induce a return of the catamenia, he mentioned that he had no experience of the remedy, or of the class of cases in which it should be employed, or of the method of employing it; and, as many of my readers may be similarly circumstanced, I have thought that a few practical remarks on the utility of this agent, and on the peculiar cases to which it is suited, would not be useless or uninteresting.

In an early number of Guy's Hospital Reports, Dr. Golding Bird published a paper shewing the value of electro-galvanism in various diseases; and, amongst others, in derangements of the uterus. Since then, it has been extensively employed in Dublin by Drs. Graves and Stokes, and other eminent physicians; and whilst acting as clinical assistant to those gentlemen, as well as in my own practice, both in Dublin and in this city, I have had many opportunities of witnessing its good effects in these troublesome diseases.

The practitioner often meets with instances where females have suffered for months, and even years, from complete arrest of the menses, or from their being secreted scantily, and with difficulty and pain, or where the discharge comes on abundantly and without pain at one time, whilst at the next period the patient suffers excessively, and scarcely any discharge presents itself; and in

another class, severe dysmenorrhœa has existed for years before the physician is consulted. Now, there are not, perhaps, any diseases in which the ordinary courses of treatment are more unsuccessful; for long before we are consulted, the usual effects of such derangements have become well marked upon the constitution; the system has become reduced and debilitated; and the ordinary features of chlorosis or hysteria have become well established. In such cases, our treatment, however judicious, often fails completely; and we not unfrequently meet with disappointment, from the difficulty of enforcing on our patients an exact observance of our directions as to medicines, exercise, diet, &c. In other cases, the constitutional symptoms have preceded the uterine derangements, but in both, it often happens, that the disease becomes more and more confirmed; and little or no benefit being derived from the advice of the regular practitioner, the patient resorts to quack medicines and nostrums; and, after a waste of time, of money, and of health, the physician is again applied to. It is under such circumstances, and in such cases, that electro-galvanism acts with the greatest success; inducing a return of the menses, when arrested, or producing an easy and abundant secretion of them, in those cases where this process has been inefficiently and painfully performed, perhaps, for many years previous; and this change is soon followed by an amelioration of all the distressing symptoms under which the patient has laboured.

The best and most convenient method of applying electro-galvanism, is by means of the machine sold at New York, under the name of the "Vibrating Magnetic Machine," or with the apparatus made by Clarke of London, for a similar purpose. Each of these machines is accompanied by a short treatise explanatory of the principles upon which it is constructed, and containing directions for its employment. The former instrument will be found cheaper, more convenient, and less likely to go out of repair than the latter.

Two insulated wires are connected to the apparatus, one being attached to each pole; at the free extremities of these wires are two platina buttons. When the machine is in operation, one of these buttons is applied by the physician to the lower portion of the spinal column, corresponding to the point of exit of the sacral

* See Segaud, Lafond, *De l'Electricité Medicale*, and Manjuy, *Traité de l'Electricité Medicale*.