

back from these excursions digested information upon a special subject, which it is our duty to pour from time to time in the bosom of our reunions, focussing, as it were, these varied notions, so that every one should derive benefit from them.

This is what I intend to do this evening, gentlemen, choosing for my subject "Hysterectomy." We shall examine together, when is the removal of the uterus indicated; what conditions are required to successfully perform this serious operation; what results we obtain by it; and, at last, what is the best way of doing it.

Gentlemen, the poor gynæcologist has been of late the object of very bitter criticism, and excessive descants have been made upon the "operative delirium" with which we are supposed to be possessed. This criticism emanates from different sources; some of it being indulged in by those who ignore totally what they are talking about, finding it easy to condemn what they cannot perhaps do themselves. Other is made in good faith by some surgeons who, in the name of conservative surgery, try to put a stop to the "*prurigo secandi*," as they call it, and make a sentimental appeal to the principles of the citizen. "You needlessly mutilate your patients," they say: "you castrate without reason the women who seek your advice, and who certainly would be cured with time, patience, and less radical means. You make too little of such important organs as the uterus, the ovaries; and at that rate, in making such hecatomb of the reproductive organs, you will soon have reduced to its minimum the population of the whole world."

Indeed—I do not deny it—abuses are committed. The study of new questions is always surrounded with danger, and it is very difficult never to make a false step. We must confess, also, that the impunity which antiseptics confers to operators sometimes conceals a certain number of unnecessary surgical procedures. But do these few unavoidable errors—and which certainly are to be deplored—entitle anybody to generalize and to render the prudent and enlightened surgeon liable to these undeserved reproaches? If a certain number of patients have been wrongly operated upon by surgeons in too great a hurry to resort to the knife, how much more numerous are not the women whom an untimely reserve on the part of the surgeon allows to die or to lead a miserable existence!

The accusation which is caressed with the greatest predilection