Amenorrhea.

An Inaugural Dissertation

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The menstrual flux, being a constant object of attention to the female sex, has thus acquired a consequence which demands the notice of the Medical Practitioner, and as its suppression and overflow are continually assigned as the causes of disease, it is necessary that care should be taken least a power greater than it really possesses be imputed to it. Some pathologists have been so impressed with this idea that they excluded the influence of the uterine system from their theories on the origin of disease. However, the importance of the Catamenia
In preserving the health of the female is indispensable, and every thing which tends to maintain a regular return, and promote an abundant secretion, is of great moment.

One of the disorders of the periodical discharge is called Amenorrhea, and under this denomination are included retention and suppression of the menses; these have been termed by Cullen, Emancio Menoeum, and Suppression Menoeum. By the former we are to understand that the discharge has not taken place at the period it usually does in others; and by the latter, that after having appeared and continued to flow for some time it ceased without pregnancy.

Emancio Menoeum, or Retention of the menses comes under medical treatment, when a girl who has acquired the signs of puberty goes past the time at which the secretion generally makes its first appearance in health, and when her constitution becomes disorderly which is evinced by derangement of many functions—more particularly those of digestion and languifiction.

The period at which Menstruation commences
depends very much both on climate and the health of the individual, while in sultry regions sexual maturity takes place at eight or ten years of age; in cold climates it is deferred until eighteen or twenty. In this country, girls begin to menstruate about the fourteenth or fifteenth year, but if they be luxuriously educated, it often occurs sooner sometimes at an early age as ten. If a young woman although nearly twenty have still an infantile form, we may be sure that the uterus is not fully developed and that medicines cannot excite the secretion. Puberty may be delayed with another condition of body, as when the health and strength continue unimpaired, the growth proceeds as rapidly as in others and the frame is vigorous, but there are no protuberant mamma, no sexual proprieties, a beard grows on the upper lip, and the general characteristics resemble those of a male; in such a case as this it is probable either that the ovaries are absent, or from having become diseased these functions are entirely suspended or destroyed. Circumstances are however materially different, if about the age of seventeen a person who has never menstruated
begins to decline in her general health, and
tends into that state of disease which is
denominated Chloroses by the physicians.
This term merely signifies a greenish
colour of the skin, and therefore is applied
by some to different affections of either
but is generally confined to that form of
Amenorrhoea, which is attended by a greenish
yellow hue of the skin. But this is not only
characteristic, as the skin may be of a deady
white without a greenish tinge accompanied
with excessive debility of the whole frame,
by the patient losing her natural feelings,
and forsaking her usual amusements.
The becomes restless and irritable, feels
incapable of exercising her mind, complains
of weariness, lafitude and debility.
Her face is pale, her eyes dull, and appear
sunk in their orbits, a dark colour of the
skin for the most part of a semicircular form
is apparent beneath them, her lips and gums
lose their normal tint, the pulse is
small and weak, often, but not always
quick, it becomes difficult to keep the
extremities in a natural state of heat, particularly
The lower ones; the sleep is disturbed and unrefreshing, the breath fetid, the appetite impaired, the patients loathe food and is very much annoyed with dyspeptic symptoms. She often has a desire for indigestible substances, such as chalk, clay, magnesia. The bowels are constipated, often obstinately so and distended with flatus; the tongue coated, the urine with scanty or copious. When these symptoms continue for some time, effusions take place, not only in the extremities, but also into the abdomen, and the eyelids if not the whole face are found swollen in the morning. Whilst the strength and flesh thus gradually decay, other symptoms arise, such as severe headache, acute pains in the sides, legs and limbs, together with palpitations and a light cough. The least exercise occasions fatigue and accelerated respiration, and not unfrequently a sense of suffocation, which renders it probable that an accumulation of serum has taken place in the cellular tissues of the lungs. In the more advanced cases, the hair are brittle and break off; the hair is dry, falls out, and splits at its extremity; the bowels
formerly constipated become irritable and a continual diarrhea supervenes.

During the course of the disease, Hysteria, occasionally appears, and the medical attendant may be deceived by supposing the cough, pain of the side, palpitations, and headache, to depend either upon Esthias, Disease of the heart, or upon an inflammation state of the Pleura or Brain. It should be remembered that in this Malady as well as in others, pain may be owing to a state the reverse of inflammatory and that a frequent pulse does not always indicate a necessity for bloodletting.

The disease may continue in the state which we have above described, sometimes becoming aggravated, and if art or nature do not afford relief, the symptoms usually assume a more serious character. Anaemia, or hectic fever supervenes, or the pain sufferer may die of Consumption after having undergone a painful and protracted illness.

Chlorosis is sometimes complicated with Hematemesis, swelling of the glands, particularly of the Carotid and Submaxillary, and with chronic cutaneous eruptions. It occasionally
terminates in Dropsy of the Thoracic and Abdominal cavities; and in its more aggravated forms, Mania, and Epilepsy occasionally occur. Inspections of those who have died of Chlorosis Ammonioidea, have shown the soft solids to be flaccid and pale from deficiency of the colouring matter of the blood. The ovaries are frequently found in a spheroidal or dropsical state, the uterus imperfectly developed, the lungs tuberculated, the liver enlarged and pale, the stomach small and contracted, the mesenteric glands increased in size. Effusions of serous fluid are met with in the cavities of the pleura, pericardium, and peritoneum and sometimes in the ventricles of the brain. The blood is generally pale aqueous and deficient in fibrin. Disease of the pancreas, spleen, and kidneys, sometimes appears, with ulceration of the bowels. In some cases an exsanguinous state of the tissues is only to be perceived. The immediate cause of Chlorosis is not easily discoverable, it seldom arises after the age of twenty three. Some Authors have referred it to an obstructed function of the liver. Others, to a deficient and morbid state of the blood, and Hamilton considered it as arising from
tempor of, with an accumulation of feculent matter in the bowels. According to Burns and others, it depends upon a want of vigour in the system, by which not only a new action is prevented from being formed, but those actions which were formerly performed become impaired, or on a want of energy in the system, connected with general debility of the constitution. In the greater number of instances, the predisposing cause of this disease appears to consist in imperfect development of the sexual organs, or on their function being deranged; and this seems to be occasioned by a defective energy of the nervous system, retarding or arresting their development, and weakening their actions the whole frame being deprived of the necessary stimulus which they impart. The cause of this deficiency of vital energy may frequently be traced to circumstances which evidently tend to debilitate the body, as sedentary employments, want of exercise, bad food, and a vitiated atmosphere, and sometimes to depressing passions and affections, such as long continued grief and anxiety, separation from beloved friends, and unrequited love. Absence of the senses often depends on malformation
the organs of generation, such as total want of
the ovaries, imperfectly formed uterus, colic of the
vagina, and an imperforate state of the hymen and
the uterus. In the latter of these cases, there is sometimes
a gradual enlargement of the abdomen from the
fluid retained in the uterus, and unjust
suspicions of pregnancy may be raised.
Chorea may generally in its first stage be
subdued with little difficulty by removing or
counteracting, as much as possible, its predisposing
causes; by invigorating the system, particularly
the stomach and bowels, which posess an intimate
influence over the other organs which are supplied
by branches from the sympathetic nerve. And
when we have succeeded by this method in
strengthening the constitution, we may more directly
excite the torpid or imperfect actions or secretion
of the uterus.

If the uterus be considered
as a secreting organ, it is easy to conceive that
the administration of Mercurials in obstructed
or suppressed menstruation is likely to prove
beneficial, as they produce almost a specific
change upon the whole glandular system: the
medical treatments may therefore be commenced
by giving a small quantity of the Bistocholine.
with a few grains of ginger at bed time, and the
secretions will be more fully promoted by a dose
of Castor Oil on the following morning. After
the bowels have been freely evacuated, pills of
Alice and Myrrh with a grain of the sulphate of
Iron in each should be taken daily; in some
cases an enema may assist this operation.
Regular and gentle exercise, particularly out of
bed, a light nutritious diet, change of air to the
sea coast, and bitter and tonic medicines in various
forms should be recommended in addition to the
means before described. In the first instance an
infusion of Calumba or Cascarilla may be given,
and afterwards one of Gentian combined with
the diluted tincture of Iron; the sulphates
of Guinnea and Iron Chalybiate Water or
may be given with advantage. The forms of the
medicines may be frequently varied and
occasionally suspended from the general rule
of all tonics losing their effects by long continuance.
Warm clothing, and in the winter season a
flannel dress should be worn.
In Amenorrhoea accompanied by Chlorosis,
warm bathing is very useful and is frequent
at an early stage: the Cold Bath can seldom be used.
as it is generally followed by languor, headache, and shivering, it is only useful when the action of the heart is increased by it, and when a sense of warmth supervenes. Much benefit will be derived from the cold sea bath of the temperature of the warm sea daily by degrees lowered until the patient becomes able to bear it. The other object that of stimulating the uterine vessels may be attained by the semecuprum impregnated with mustard, succeeded by friction with dry flannel, or a horse hair glove, by the exercise of walking and dancing, and by those remedies which have received the title of enemagogues of these the following are in most repute at the present day: Electricity, Muriatic preparations, laurine, aloes, Myrrh, Aloe Fortide, Trag of Nye, Digitalis, Contharides. The introduction of a bougie into the uterus, injections of stimulating fluids into the vagina, Matrimony. The direct application of Electricity is only admissible when a torpid state of the uterus exists, indicated by a pale complexion and a languid state of the circulation. The quantity of the Electrical fluid should be very small when first applied, as the communication of a powerful one may occasion syncope in
various persons, its application is undoubtedly beneficial in those species of Amenorrhoea which depend upon loss of the secreting organ or debility of the system. Of the preparations of Mercury, the best suited for this purpose is the protocloride and when used to the extent of exciting moderate salivation it has produced the desired effects after every other remedy had been tried without success. It is generally supposed that salivation from its activity and from its liability to excite uterine hemorrage is taken into the circulation and carried directly to the organ. And thus is much caution necessary in its exhibition least it should excite inflammation of the uterus, it should only be used when there is a pale countenance and a feeble action of the heart and arteries. It may be given in the dose of from five to ten grains of the powder or from two to six grains of the oil combined with sugar.

The influence which the different abortive preparations possess upon the uterine system can only be referred to their actions upon the rectum thereby producing a syphilitic effect upon the uterus somewhat similar to that which is the result of a direct stimulation of
From the peculiar power which digitalis exerts over, and from the effects which it produces upon, the generative organs, it has been administered and is productive of the greatest benefit in Amenorrhoea. It may be prescribed for two or three successive days previous to the time when a change should occur, in doses of from one to three grains combined with calomel and followed by an Alcoholic purge. Some authors affirm that they have employed the tincture Consimixum as an Emnagogue and that the desired effects arose from its exhibition because it would appear to retard rather than accelerate the discharge as it acts upon the muscular contractility of the uterus and thereby constricts the vessels and prevents the supply of blood which is necessary to afford the secretion. The tincture of CODINE may be given in doses of from ten to thirty drops twice or thrice each day in a glass of water, and has been frequently found useful in Chlorotic Amenorrhoea especially when complicated with enlargement of the glands and with dropyceal effusions. The administration of CHANTHARIDES has been attended with much benefit. It should be commenced by giving ten drops of the tincture three
times each day and increasing the dose to forty
if occasion irritation of the Bladder or Urethra
is apt to be discontinued and Camphire and Hypertensins
along with diuretics may be recommended.

The introduction of a bougie into the Uterus has been
tried, when other remedies have failed, but its
effects are dubious. Stimulating fluids have been
injected into the vagina, and have succeeded in a
number of instances; for this purpose ten drops
of the liquor ammonios with an ounce of milk may be
made use of. The extracts of Asa Comica and
strychnia sometimes prove useful in Amenorrhea;
it is not perfectly evident, in what way they produce
their beneficial influence. Some ascribe their effects
to the power they possess of stimulating the vessels of
the uterus, and others to their improving the tone and
vigour of the system. Before prescribing any of
these it is necessary to be certain that the suppreesion
is not connected with pregnancy, as abortion
may be produced with inflammation of the uterus
and the foundation of a disease of that nature be
said.

The second variety of Amenorrhea is
suppression menstruum and, in considering this we
are not to look upon every obstruction of the
flux after it has once taken place as a case of suppression, because the secretion is not always established in its regular course when it first appears, and therefore if an interruption occurs during its first months it may be considered as an instance of retention. Suppression is generally acute or chronic; the former is generally produced by some cause acting either immediately before, or during the time of the discharge. This is remedied in the greater number of instances by a gentle diaphoretic, the pediluvium, and by the patient taking a warm drink when going to bed. But if there be symptoms of general fever such as violent headache, pains in the back and limbs, a quick pulse, flushed countenance, coated tongue, hot and dry skin, it will be necessary to administer an emetic, and afterwards an active purgative with a dose of the compound strychna powder. If she be of a phthisic habit, the lancet will be advantageously used.

Chronic suppression is of a more serious nature, and may be the result of weakness from loss of blood, of frequent abortions, of rheumatism and of various diseases both of the uterus itself and of other organs of the body. In cases arising from
these causes there is always a languid state of the circulation with considerable debility, and the symptoms resemble those described in retention, and therefore are to be treated in a similar manner. Suppression of the urine very often occurs in persons with strong and plethoric constitutions, and in such cases there appears to be a torpor of the uterine vessels or a constriction or spasm of their extremities. This condition is frequently produced by an indolent and sedentary life, by indulgence in the luxuries of the table, and by too much sleep. The treatment of amorous or in strong and rigorous habits should be commenced by abstracting blood, by low diet, and by saline purgatives, if much vascular excitement be present. Bleeding from the arm may be necessary, but the application of leeches to the pubic and inguinal regions is generally preferred. Some recommend opening a vein in one of the lower extremities which may be practiced, if one can be found conveniently situated. If the secretion does not appear after the plethora has been overcome, some of the menopause formerly mentioned may be prescribed, and this will be found more efficacious if used when the system
makes an effort to produce the discharge, which it generally
does at its usual monthly periods.
In the 51st volume of the London Medical and Surgical
Journal there is an account of three cases of suppression
of the Catamenia, being successfully treated by applying
Leeches and practices to the mammary glands, thereby causing
involution of them, and consequently of the uterus.
If the patient be of a choleric habit, and if the symptoms
increase or continue obstinate, it will be expedient to
remove her to a milder climate. When absence
of the Catamenia depends upon cohesion of the vagina or
an imperforate state of the hymen or os uteri, it
can immediately be detected by an examination,
and a surgical operation can easily remedy it.
When the secretion is prevented either by accidental causes
or by an indisposition immediately before the expected
period, a quantity of the blood forces away for itself
in some part of the body, and is frequently discharged from
the lungs, stomach, bowels, and nostrils, and sometimes
from the bladder, umbilicus, eyes, ears and so on.
Where. In such cases as these Leeches may be applied
to the groins and labia with benefit, and some of the more
direct emmenagogues may be employed.
Large and frequently repeated abstractions of blood either
for retention or suppression of the Catamenia ought to
be particularly avoided, as many inexperienced practitioners
have irretrievably ruined the constitutions of their patients
by such practices.