

and is unchecked by proper treatment, it may subside into various other diseases, as metritis, epileptic fits, hypochondriasis, amenorrhea, ovaritis, and several others, and thus become fatal. Sometimes it terminates spontaneously by profuse sweating, diarrhea, eruptions of the skin, or vomiting, and it has often been stopped by a sudden fright.

One thing should never be forgotten in regard to hysterical attacks, and that is the possibility of the female appearing *dead*, though still alive! There is no question but many have been buried alive while in this species of trance, and in several instances they have awaked during the preparations for their funerals. A celebrated anatomist (Vessalius) actually began to dissect a female in this state, who came to life again. I have a patient at the present time who was found sitting in her coffin, with her shroud around her, when the undertaker came to nail her up. The way to avoid such lamentable mistakes is easy; the supposed body should not be buried till there be unequivocal signs of decomposition. Very few days will elapse, in any case of death, before the abdomen turns *green*, and then there can be no mistake. I once saw a case myself of supposed death, in which some of the friends had actually proposed preparations for interment, but after *five days* of perfect trance the female woke perfectly unconscious of the lapse of time.

The causes of hysteria are as obscure as the symptoms are diversified. Probably some of the most frequent predisposing causes are, weak constitution, scrofula, indolence, a city life, bad physical and moral education, nervous or sanguine temperaments, the over-excitement of certain feelings, and religious or other enthusiasm. It is also most common between puberty and the change of life, but is nevertheless found in quite young girls, and in old women. Young persons just about being regulated are very subject to it, and those who have deranged menstruation, also widows, those who have no children, and those in whom the change of life is about to take place. Some of the immediate causes are, the first period, suppressed menstruation, late marriage, chronic inflammation of the womb, vicious habits, and long-continued constipation. Vivid mental emotions, and excited feelings, may also be specially mentioned, such as anger, fright, disappointment, particularly in love, reading sentimental and exciting romances, and disagreeable, painful, or sorrowful sights. Some authors also suppose there is an hereditary disposition to hysteria, and others that there is a peculiar temperament which disposes to it. It is certain that *imitation* has much to do with it, or, in common parlance, it is *catching*, for very often when one female is taken in an assembly, many others will also be attacked from seeing her. M. Andral mentions a case where a young lady was attacked with hysteria in a school, and so many of her companions followed in the same way, that it was found necessary to close the school for a time to get rid of it. The same thing has often been seen in churches and other public assemblages, and particularly at camp-meetings and love-feasts. At some of these places quite a number of persons may be seen raving, rolling on the ground, crying, laughing, and exhibiting all the usual symptoms of hysteria, simply from excitement produced by the preaching. I knew one young lady who went to a camp-meeting, and was there attacked with hysteria, which lasted nearly a whole day; the people around said she was *experiencing religion*, and evidently thought her very fortunate. She continued liable to a return of the attack for six months after, but gradually recovered from them by attention to her general health, and by avoiding all excitement.

Women disposed to hysteria are generally capricious in their character, and often

whimsical in their conduct. Some are exceedingly excitable and impatient, others obstinate or frivolous; the slightest thing may make them laugh, or cry, and exhibit traits which ordinarily they are not supposed to possess. Like children, the merest trifles may make them transcendently happy, or cast them into the most gloomy despair. Very frequently they are made much worse by seeing that those around them have no real commiseration for their sufferings, and perhaps even think they are not real. A delicate attention, and properly exhibited sympathy, will soothe and calm the excited feelings more than almost anything else.

Various other diseases, particularly of the uterine organs, may also produce hysteria, and many apparently slight causes, such as breathing a close, bad air, either in a public assemblage, or in a bed-chamber, and even particular odors! Thus, some will be attacked if they smell *musk*, or certain flowers, as *roses*, for instance; others again at *hearing* certain sounds, or merely *touching* certain substances. M. Orfila mentions the case of a young lady who fainted if she saw flax-seed tea made. M. Rostan says he has seen hysteria, with loss of voice, and strangulation, produced even by the *color* of a certain flower! And many such cases have followed from smelling orange flowers and violets. Particular pieces of music, or the reading certain passages from books, will affect some, and the sight of certain animals will affect others. A case is mentioned of a young lady who always had an hysteriform attack if she heard the clock strike *five*, her father having died at that hour; and I knew one who suffered in the same way whenever she saw a *ladder*, her husband having been killed by falling from one. In short, there is no end to such cases.

There are *several* other causes, both of a moral and a social nature, that have much to do with this distressing affection, but which I have hitherto only partially alluded to. They are so important, and so little understood or *suspected*, that I feel desirous of presenting them with other authority in addition to my own. I have, therefore, made the following extract from *Copeland's Medical Dictionary*. The extract is part of the article on hysteria, and is especially deserving the attention of *parents* and *guardians*! Its importance, I trust, will excuse its introduction, though some of the truths in it may be as painful as they are novel.

"There is perhaps no other malady which depends so much as this upon the *management* of childhood, and on the moral and physical *education* of early life. A luxurious and delicate mode of living and of rearing; a neglect of whatever promotes the powers of the constitution, especially of suitable exercise in the open air, and of early hours as to sleeping and rising; an over-refined mode of education, and the excitement of the imagination and of the emotions, to the neglect of the intellectual powers and moral sentiments; too great devotion to music, and the perusal of exciting novels; the various means by which the feelings are awakened and acute sensibility is promoted, while every manifestation of either is carefully concealed; and studied endeavors to dissemble desires which struggle to be expressed, all serve, especially at a period when the powers of mind and the conformation of the body are approaching development, to produce that state of the nervous system of which hysteria is one of the most frequent indications. About the period of puberty in females, various circumstances connected with their education tend to weaken their constitution, to excite their emotions and desires, and to cultivate their imaginative and more artificial faculties at the expense of their reasoning and moral powers. Whenever numbers associate previous to, or about the period of puberty, and especially where several use the same sleeping apartment, and are submitted to a luxuri-

ous and over-refined mode of education, some will manifest a precocious development of both mind and body; but in proportion to precocity will tone and energy be deficient, and susceptibility and sensibility increased. In these circumstances, also, organic sensibility, particularly as relates to the uterine system, often assumes a predominance powerfully predisposing to hysterical affections. There can be no question, although the subject has been but rarely approached by British medical writers, that indulgence in solitary vices and sexual excitements is not an infrequent cause of this, as well as of other disorders. Numerous writers have insisted upon the propriety of giving due consideration to this source of mischief, as well as to the ennui and chagrin attending celibacy and continence. I agree with Dr. Conolly in believing that English practitioners pay, perhaps, too little attention to these and other related circumstances; and that, in a country where the passions and emotions are so carefully suppressed or concealed, they sometimes seem to forget their silent operation on the frame, and charge the medical writers of other countries with being somewhat fanciful and extravagant.

“Besides the above, there are various circumstances connected with the *social state* that tend to develop these conditions of the uterine organs and nervous system, in which hysterical disorder originates. M. Georget remarks that the progressive steps of life, as youth passes away, are sources of painful moral affections, especially to the frivolous, the vain, and the unmarried of the sex. These affections increase the susceptibility of the nervous system, and, with numerous other circumstances yet to be mentioned, dispose to the nervous disorders of the more advanced epochs of life. There can be no doubt that pampered modes of living; an early or habitual indulgence of temper, or of the emotions and desires; the use of wines and liquors, even within what may appear the bounds of moderation; late hours, and late rising; insufficient modes of exercise, or the want of it, and of pure air, neglect of the requisite exposure to light and sunshine; and sedentary occupations, particularly in over-heated and crowded apartments or factories, more or less predispose the female constitution to this affection. Some writers believe that the use of tea and coffee has a similar effect; it is possible that the former, especially green tea, taken too frequently or in excess, will weaken the nervous system, and that the latter will sometimes excite the uterine organs. The influence of *climate* is not very manifest; temperate and changeable regions certainly furnish more numerous instances of nervous disorder in females than very warm or very cold countries; but as much is probably owing to the state of *manners* and *society* in the former as to climate. Even *dress* has some effect in the production of hysteria; inordinate compression of the waist by stays not only weakens and displaces the digestive organs, but favors local determinations and congestions, and deranges the uterine functions.”

Hysterical attacks are not of themselves dangerous, though they are sufficiently alarming, as they usually subside without much after disturbance, unless dependent on some other disease. Nothing, in fact, is so astonishing to some persons, as to see a delicate female immediately after an hysterical fit. Judging from appearances during the attack, they would readily suppose that the danger was really imminent, and that a slow recovery was the *best* thing to be expected. But when all passes off in a few minutes, with no indications whatever of the frantic violence so recently exhibited, they are naturally surprised, if not suspicious. It should be remembered, however, that an *imitation* of one of these fits, even if it were fully possible, would exhaust much more than the fit itself, or most likely would produce complete pros-

tration. There is no doubt, however, but that many females can work themselves into hysterics, and that many do so, particularly when angered, slighted, or disappointed.

In regard to the starting point, or original seat of hysteria, there seems to be no doubt of its being in the uterus, which becomes subject to a peculiar excitement, or disturbance, that exerts a wonderful sympathetic influence on the whole system. The uterus, it must be remembered, is the *controlling* organ in the female body, being the most excitable of all, and so intimately connected, by the ramifications of its numerous nerves, with every other part. The multitudinous and diversified symptoms attending its derangements need not therefore surprise us, nor need we wonder that they are not found in other diseases. The ancients compared the womb in the female body to *another living being*, controlling and directing the body in which it existed! It should also be remembered, in relation to hysteria, that it is most frequent at that age, and in those temperaments in which the uterine system is most active. In some instances, *men* are liable to similar affections, and when they are so there is always noticed in them more or less of what is termed the hysterical temperament. In fact, they much resemble females in their nervous systems.

In *treating* hysteria, the first thing is to relieve the paroxysm or fit, and then try to prevent its return. The first proceeding, if the attack be violent, should be to take care that the patient does not hurt herself by her violence. She must be held firmly, but not so as to injure, or unnecessarily restrict her motions. Every article of clothing should be removed that is in the least tight on any part of the body, and she should then be laid down, with the head elevated. Every person should be immediately sent away, except those whose assistance is really needed, and they should be careful not to hurry and appear confused, nor make unpleasant or desponding remarks about their patient, because she may both hear and understand them, though to all appearance insensible. Fresh air is indispensable, and it should play upon her as speedily and freely as possible. Strong odors, as ammonia, salts, vinegar, or burnt feathers, should also be applied occasionally to the nostrils, and cologne or cold water dashed on the temples, forehead, and cheeks. If the mouth can be opened, a teaspoonful of cold water should be poured in it, with about three drops of ammonia added, if it can be conveniently obtained. The hands and feet may also be chafed with advantage. In case the attack still continues, a small enema of cold water may be given, containing about twenty drops of laudanum, or cold water may be sprinkled on the chest and down the spine. Fifteen drops of sulphuric ether may also be poured into half a pint of water, and a large spoonful of the mixture given every three-quarters of an hour. In very violent or long-continued attacks, an enema of thin, cold starch-water may be used, with three grains of camphor, ten of assafoetida, and fifteen of laudanum added to it, after being well mixed in a thick portion first. The whole body may also be well rubbed, particularly down the spine, and mustard plasters applied to the abdomen, inside of the thighs and arms. Spirits of camphor, or oil and hartshorn, may also be used as a liniment, and the spine and limbs well chafed with them. As soon as ever she can swallow, let her have a drink of cold water, but don't ask her any troublesome questions, nor make any remarks.

After all the above means have been tried, we may resort to vaginal injections, as those of poppy heads, or starch and laudanum, recommended in metritis. Frightening the patient, or speaking harshly to her, has been recommended by some, but I much doubt the utility of such means. Other practices are also resorted to, the

character of which betrays a curious opinion as to the nature of the disease! I would, however, caution those who recommend them as to the probable *moral* consequences afterward, and I assure them that it is seldom or never the case that the same good cannot be effected by less objectionable means.

To prevent a return of the attack, we should employ what are termed anti-spasmodics and tonics. Various teas may be drunk, as those of mint, balm, mugwort, boneset, and camomile. Tincture of myrrh, assafoetida, musk, and castor, gum ammoniac, acetate of ammonia, and carbonate of ammonia may also be taken, various preparations of all which are kept at the druggists'. Vaginal injections should also be continued, of starch and laudanum, assafoetida and camphor, and the bowels must be kept free. If the shock be not too great, a shower bath every morning will be of great service, or a cold plunge. If the patient be very weak and debilitated, we may give her any of the preparations of iron recommended in chlorosis, particularly the carbonate of iron pill, or that of extract of gentian and sulphate of iron, and keep the bowels free with pills of iron and rhubarb. A little good port wine, with Peruvian bark in it, may also be of service, and an excellent effect is sometimes produced by repeated enemas of olive oil. Sulphur baths have also been recommended, and occasional blisters to the abdomen and inside of the thighs or arms, and on the spine.

The diet must, of course, depend on the condition of the patient. If she be of a full, plethoric habit, it should consist of vegetables, light soup, milk, rice, sago, and ripe fruits, with milk or water for drink. Meat should be taken sparingly, and never highly seasoned, and spices or pastry should be forbidden. If, on the contrary, she be thin and delicate, the diet may be more nutritious; meat may be used more freely, and a little wine allowed. Sea-bathing, traveling, riding horseback, and removal to a dry, warm climate, should also be recommended. The mind must be constantly but pleasingly occupied, and the feelings interested in some innocent, cheerful pursuit. All kinds of sentimental and romantic reading must be avoided, but amusing books of travels and descriptions of scenery may be allowed. Music or poetry, when indulged in to excess, and with those of an excitable temperament, is often highly injurious. *More domestic occupation, and less fanciful idling, would prevent numerous disorders in many young females.*

In the article already quoted from *Copeland's Dictionary*, are some further remarks on the peculiarities and predisposing causes of hysteria, whose great value must be an excuse for inserting them.

"*Hysterical disorders of the mental faculties* consist not merely of the states already mentioned, but of others of a less decided, but not less morbid kind. Hysterical females are not merely capricious or whimsical, but they often become enthusiastic for a time in the pursuit of an object, or in cherishing an emotion by which they have been excited. In many such cases, the nervous excitement and vascular turgescence of the uterine organs determine the character of the mental disorder, elevating certain of the moral sentiments, or of the intellectual manifestations, to a state of extravagance, passing in some instances into delusion or monomania. Many cases of puerperal mania are merely extremes of the hysterical disorder of the moral and intellectual powers or states of the mind. All these more extreme forms of mental affection are observed only where, in connection with much local or uterine irritation, there is great deficiency of nervous energy generally, and of mental power in particular, or where, with such deficiency, there has been either much injudicious culture, or perversion, or improper excitement of the imagination.

"Females sometimes become passionately attached to an object, and this passion may advance even to nymphomania or monomania. The same person, on experiencing a disappointment in her affection, or if she be placed in circumstances entirely preventing the enjoyment of her passion, often becomes enthusiastically religious, especially if strongly excited by powerful popular preachers. After field preachings, or other ministrations of an exciting kind, the most hysterical females, especially those who have experienced the fully developed fits on these occasions, have become, at least for a time, the most religious. In this, however, there is little to regret; there is no harm, and generally much good, from this direction of the feelings, unless, indeed, advantage be taken of this excitement by certain tartuffes—especially at love-feasts, etc.—a circumstance by no means rare.

"The hypochondriacal feelings, the desire to deceive, or to simulate various diseases, or the delusions which sometimes possess the minds of hysterical females, may be classed with the foregoing, as requiring a similar plan of treatment. In all of them the *indications of cure* are, to remove irritation or vascular turgescence of the uterine organs; to improve the general health; to strengthen the nervous system; to calm the imagination, and to guide the moral impulses of the patient. The means by which the physical portion of these indications are to be fulfilled have been sufficiently explained. The most efficient, however, of these means are not likely to be adopted by the patient if she is entirely uncontrolled by friends. Few will resort daily to the shower bath, or even occasionally to terebinthinate enemata, or submit to a course of tonics, or to a suitable regimen, etc., while she believes her health but little affected. Even when the hysterical disorder is of a very painful kind, the variability or capricious state of her mind leads her to run from one physician to another, before opportunity of administering aid is afforded to any. At last the most notorious charlatans, particularly those who either excite the body through the mind, or the mind through the body—the animal magnetizers, the homeopathists, the St. John Longs of rubbing celebrity, and the Campbells of celestial bed notoriety—fix her attention. At such medical bagnios, there is something promising gratification as well as excitement, and at such places hysterical as well as hypochondriacal patients 'most do congregate.'

"OF THE PROPHYLACTIC TREATMENT OF HYSTERIA.—*The avoidance of the occasional causes* is the chief part of this treatment, and this is very difficult. The moral emotions and desires constitute the principal of these causes, and the prevention of them is not in the power of the physician, and considering the general frailty of our nature, rarely in the power of the patient. A physician sufficiently acquainted with human nature and with human life and society, will frequently discover the connection of the complaint with the feelings and be able to give useful hints to the patient or her friends, as to the moral as well as to the medical management of the complaint. But his proper business is to correct the predisposing or constitutional cause, and to enable the patient to resist the exciting causes. An indolent, a luxurious, and an unoccupied life leads to late hours in bed, to an excited state of the imagination, to susceptibility of the nervous system, to irritation and turgescence of the generative organs, and to general or local plethora. It cannot be sanguinely hoped that females will relinquish ease, luxury, and enjoyment, for the dread of a distant and contingent ill. Most physicians of experience must have often observed the influence of these causes on the health, and have met with instances of females who, when in ease and luxury, were subject to hysteria, having become

entirely free from it when reverses of fortune obliged them to employ both mind and body.

“Much depends upon the *moral* and *physical* education of females about the period of puberty in preventing hysteria. If more time were devoted to air and exercise and less to mere accomplishments—if less strenuous efforts were made to cram much ill-assorted knowledge into the mind during a very limited period—than usually is the case at the present day, an improved state of nervous energy and of constitution generally would result. There would, consequently, arise a race of females possessed of stronger minds, and better able to make good wives and healthy mothers, than those too frequently met with in the easier ranks of life. Of all the physical influences by which the human constitution is permanently impressed in early age, there are none so powerful as *light*, *air*, and *exercise*. Females, while the frame is being developed, should strictly observe early hours, so that the *period of repose* should never be prolonged much after the dawn of morning. The propriety of *sleeping* in a large, well-ventilated room, cannot be disputed. It will be prudent, where more than one must sleep in the same apartment, to have separate beds, each no larger than is necessary for one person; and if the room is sufficiently large and airy, three, but no more, should sleep in it, preferably to two. When very early rising is enforced, the kind of bed on which growing females should sleep, is not very important, although a hair mattress is, perhaps, the best; but the bed-clothing should be light and the sitting as well as the sleeping apartments ought to be moderately cool and airy.

“The kind of exercise which is most serviceable is that taken in the open air, and in the light of day, and which brings into action the voluntary muscles generally, especially those of the lower extremities. It should preferably be on foot, and be regular, daily, and neither too little nor excessive. Sydenham, Fuller, Mandeville, and Manning advise riding on horseback, as affording the briskest motion, and occasioning the least fatigue. It ought always, however, to be used when the stomach is most empty, for, after a full meal, it retards digestion, rendering it uneasy and flatulent. It is most serviceable when hysteria is associated with retention of the menses, and a chlorotic state of the system, or when there is torpid action or obstruction of the digestive and abdominal viscera. In cases of this description, the advice given by Mandeville will be found of great benefit. This is, to rise before six, to have half an hour's exercise in a swinging chair, flying horse, or the common swing-rope, and then breakfast; some time afterward to get on horseback, for at least two hours, either galloping or trotting as much as her strength will permit her; and, immediately after this, to be undressed, and assiduously chafed or dry rubbed for a considerable time, till her skin looks red, and her flesh glows all over. Manning observes that frictions are useful, not only in the cure of the paroxysm, but also as a prophylactic. He directs them to be used on the extremities and trunk of the body, and especially on the abdomen, when the digestive organs are weak. If hysteria be attended with the anomalous symptoms already noticed, or assume an irregular form, friction applied daily and assiduously along the spine will be of great service. Sailing has been recommended by Dr. Gilchrist in the treatment of hysterical and other nervous complaints, and in certain circumstances it will be found useful.

“*Cold bathing*, particularly salt-water bathing, and the shower bath, will generally be serviceable at this period of life, if females have no particular dread of

either, and if the surface of the body be afterward well rubbed, and smart exercise immediately taken. For delicate constitutions, with a predisposition to the disorder, it will be preferable to commence with a warm salt-water bath, or with a tepid shower bath, the temperature being gradually lowered to the usual grade. Sponging the surface of the body also, every morning, with salt and water, or with water containing some vinegar or a little of the nitro-muriatic acid, the temperature being at first tepid, but gradually reduced to the usual mean of cold, will generally prove most beneficial, not only in preventing the complaint, but also in removing it.”

It has already been remarked that hysteria frequently depends on some other disease, particularly on deranged menstruation, or indigestion. These primary disorders must of course be removed before a real *cure* can be hoped for, no matter how successful the palliative means may have been. A careful study must therefore be made of the patient's constitution, habits, and general state of health.

An opinion prevails very generally that in all these cases *marriage* is advisable, and in the great majority this is perhaps true, but *not in all!* It is sometimes a very difficult matter to advise upon, and it must be recollected that, if the experiment is unsuccessful, *two* persons may be made unhappy instead of *one*, without any advantage to the patient! It is seldom, however, that a competent person, of sufficient experience, will fail to indicate the proper course, particularly if his inquiries be answered with truth and candor. With those of a lymphatic temperament, and in torpor of the uterine organs, I have frequently employed *galvanism*, with marked benefit, particularly to the ovaries and os tinæ. Some authors have recently recommended a sudden and unexpected burst of music, as a means of cutting short an hysterical paroxysm, and others have recommended a systematic use of music, suited to the case, as a means of *actual cure!* This is certainly a more pleasant remedy than many others, and may be in many cases quite as successful.

There are two peculiar forms of hysteria, or rather two kinds of hysteriform attacks, which, by some authors, are considered to differ from hysteria, properly so called. These are named *gastrospasm*, or spasm of the stomach, and *cerebrospasm*, or brain spasm. The first of these usually commences with severe pain, or spasm in the stomach, and there is little or none of the usual suffocation, or feeling of the ball rising. The general treatment is the same as that already given for hysteria, but in addition, if the pain continues, a teaspoonful of compound spirits of lavender may be given every half hour, till three or four are taken, and a mustard poultice may be put on over the stomach. If this does not relieve, and no fainting or convulsions ensue, an emetic may be given, such as a teaspoonful of antimony wine in half a teacupful of warm water every ten minutes, till it operates. In the cerebrospasm, a dash of cold water on the head, or a warm hip or foot bath, will be useful, in addition to the general treatment.

There is so little that is peculiar in these varieties, however, excepting what we have already mentioned, that any further attempt at distinguishing them is unnecessary.

HYSTERALGIA.

This disease is also called *neuralgia of the womb*. The *symptoms* are much the same as those of severe dysmenorrhea or metritis, but there is no inflammation or swelling. The pain, however, may be terribly severe, resembling that of *tic douloureux*, or neuralgia in the face; some persons have been made almost delirious by it. The

treatment should consist of bathing, narcotic enemas, and injections, purgatives, and mustard poultices or blisters to the abdomen and thighs—in fact, much the same course as for rheumatism of the womb and for metritis. If it comes on periodically, quinine must be used, the same as for intermittent fever.

The causes of hystericalgia are too obscure to be definitely stated. Very frequently it is produced by other uterine derangements, and also by *excesses*, and by violence, or by improper marriage. It is very rarely met with.

CHAPTER LVI.

GENERAL REMARKS ON FEMALE HEALTH AT EVERY PERIOD OF LIFE, AND ON CERTAIN PECULIARITIES OF FEMALE DISEASE, AND ITS TREATMENT.

Puberty and Menstruation.

PREVIOUS to the establishment of puberty, the female system presents no remarkable peculiarities to distinguish it from the male system, but when that event occurs a complete change takes place, many new functions being performed, which exercise a controlling influence over all the others. The nature and extent of that influence has already been pointed out incidentally, so that we need do no more here than refer to its importance as connected with female health.

The establishment of the menstrual discharge is an event which every mother should carefully watch for in her daughter, so that no untoward accident may prevent it. About the time when it is expected, the young person should be questioned as to the state of her health and feelings, and her occupation and mode of life should be regulated in anticipation of the change.

The objects to be accomplished are, to favor the development of the uterine system, so that its functions may be properly performed, and at the same time to prevent any undue excitement, either general or local. The regulation of the diet is here of the first importance; it should be sufficiently nutritious, but easy of digestion, and not stimulating. Milk, rice, sago, young meats, and ripe fruits are appropriate for food, with milk, water, or weak wine and water, for drink. All heavy meats, unripe fruits, pickles, strong beer, spices, spirits, coffee, and pastry must be forbidden. Tea may be taken occasionally, very weak, but is better left alone; and a little light sharp beer may be drunk, if there be sinking and debility, or claret wine.

Warm baths should be taken every other day, followed by a cold shower, and by good hard friction of the skin. Bodily exercise, in the open air, must be rigidly enforced, and of the most exhilarating kind. The young person should be encouraged to run, and to ride, to use the hoop, skipping-rope, and battledore, or other instrument of sport, as much as her inclination prompts. The body should be warmly clad, but *not confined* in any part, and the shoes should be thick enough to protect the feet from damp. Corsets and paper-soled slippers, if they have unfortunately been adopted, should be thrown aside, and the hair should not be bound in a close hard knot on the head, as that prevents perspiration, and keeps up a constant heat, which is a certain source of headache to many.

It is particularly important that the young person should know the reason for these cares, and that she should be told the nature and importance of the event which is about to occur. She will then be more disposed to observe all necessary regulations, and to communicate any symptoms she may have of its commencement. I have seen so many instances of the evil effects of keeping young persons ignorant

on this matter, that I am desirous of directing attention to it in a forcible manner. Many, in their ignorance, are dreadfully alarmed at the first flow, and fancy something dangerous, or disgraceful, has happened to them; they therefore endeavor to stop it, for which purpose some put their feet in cold water, or put cold wet cloths on their persons; others walk till they are exhausted, and others again even take drugs, which they are told of by older companions. The mischief which may result from such practices is incalculable; serious disease, with a life of suffering, or even death, may reasonably be feared. And even when such things are not done purposely, they may be unintentionally, by those who are ignorant of themselves, and with the same evil result.

I once saw a most lamentable instance of this kind. A young lady of a delicate constitution, and retiring habits, entirely uninformed respecting herself, was suddenly surprised by the first menstrual flow. Her alarm was great, but her diffidence prevented her from alluding to the circumstance to her mother, with whom in fact she had but little confidential communication. One of her elder companions however, taxed her with it, and she confessed the truth, saying innocently that she *did not know how to stop it!* Her friend unthinkingly said that *standing in cold water* would stop it, for she had done so one night when she wished to go to a party! The poor victim of ignorance did the same, and was not troubled with another appearance for near six months. During this time she became very unwell. She had a constant headache, with dizziness, dimness of sight, ringing in the ears, rush of blood to the head and face, with sickness at the stomach, and severe pains in her back, and in her abdomen, which was also much swollen. Her appetite was most capricious, her skin sallow, and her hands and feet almost constantly cold. She became at last almost too weak to walk, and so low spirited and dejected, that the slightest word made her cry, while her mind was so weak that at times she could scarcely be called sane. Ultimately she became delirious, and raved for about three weeks, when she partly recovered, but similar attacks afterwards occurred, more or less, every month. Many physicians of the greatest eminence had attended her, but no good whatever seemed to result from their prescriptions. I found, on inquiry, that they supposed it to be a case of *non-appearance* of the menses, with chlorosis. Being desirous of ascertaining the actual truth however, I requested a female friend to question her closely, during one of her rational intervals. She did so, and the poor sufferer made a full confession. I then at once recommended a course of treatment, which I thought likely to restore the suspended function. Her diet was made light and nutritious. She was taken to the sea-side and bathed regularly, and kept pretty constantly in the open air, on horseback. The only medicine given was a few pills of iron and gentian, and occasionally of iron and rhubarb, to keep the bowels free. A warm hip bath was administered every other day, and a warm injection at the same time. In addition to this, *galvanism* was applied to the uterus, in the manner indicated in the article on amenorrhœa, and also to the ovaries. No effect was observed for the first month, her delirious spell coming on as usual, and the other symptoms remaining much the same. About three weeks after, however, or nearly seven weeks from commencing the treatment, while she was riding out, the discharge came on quite suddenly and profusely. She was very sick and faint during the whole time it lasted, which was about four days, but after that she felt much better, and more lively. *No delirious spell followed*, and at the end of a month she menstruated again without any distress. From that time forward she began to im-

prove, her strength returned, her feelings became more under control, and her mind regained its original vigor. A little attention was bestowed, for some three or four months, for a few days before the periods were expected, to insure their appearance; and a regular mode of life was enforced, beyond which nothing further was done. She is now perfectly healthy, both in body and mind, though she came so near being a victim to absurd prejudice and lamentable ignorance.

It must be borne in mind however, as already stated, that there is considerable irregularity as to the time of appearance, duration, and quantity of the menses, so that it is very difficult in some cases to decide whether assistance is really needed or not. Thus the usual age at which puberty becomes established is *fifteen*, but in some it may be natural for it to commence two or three years earlier, or later. The usual time for the flow to continue is *four days*, though it may be occasionally not more than two, or one, or it may extend to a week, or more, without any injury. The average quantity discharged is probably about *six ounces*, and yet some perfectly healthy females never have more than a mere show, while others may have a pint or more. It should be observed, however, that these irregularities are comparatively rare exceptions; the great majority of females, when healthy, observe nearly the above rule, both as to time and quantity. The only directions therefore, which can be properly given are, *to observe well the general health*; if that suffers in conjunction with any of these irregularities, it is desirable they should be attended to immediately; but if the person remains well, it is best to wait a little and observe. With young persons however, it is necessary to be watchful, because many symptoms of disease may either be concealed by them, or pass unnoticed, till great injury is done. The moral condition of young females about the period of puberty is also a matter of great importance. All high-wrought excitement, produced by reading fictitious adventures and scenes, and all sickly sentimentality, from reading mawkish romances, or listening to romantic companions, are very injurious. I have no doubt but such things produce numerous cases of hysteria and hypochondriasis, if not more serious disease. I need not reprobate those books, or associates, of a still more objectionable character, as these will never of course be openly allowed; but I would wish to caution against the too frequent contamination, from both sources, which occurs unsuspected. In various ways these books are obtained, and read, by hundreds who are supposed to be totally unacquainted with them, their real character being unknown, except by those who read them. The dangerous excitement thus produced may lead to the most deplorable results, both moral and physical, as every physician of experience well knows. With some temperaments, a too frequent attendance at the theater, or ball-room, may be followed by similar results, and very frequently I have known irremediable mischief produced by the vicious teachings of elder companions, particularly at boarding-schools. A more direct allusion to these things is neither necessary nor desirable here, but it was my duty to *give a warning* about them! Suffice it to say, that the evil is more extensive than is supposed.

The most proper and healthy education is that which fully develops the body, giving it strength and beauty, and which occupies the mind with useful and pleasing *realities*, rather than with mere fictitious dreamings. Bodily idleness, and emptiness, or trifling occupation of the mind, combined with improper food, produce more licentiousness and disease than any other causes whatever! And active employment, with a well regulated diet, will do more toward preventing or removing these evils, than all the drugs in the materia medica, or all the moral precepts ever promulgated.

It is not generally known that the health of young persons may be seriously affected by too close contact with the old. Such is undoubtedly the case, however, and the fact should be stated. On this point Dr. Copland remarks as follows:—

“A not uncommon cause of depressed vital power is the *young sleeping with the aged*. This fact, however explained, has been long remarked, and is well known to every unprejudiced observer. But it has been most unaccountably overlooked in medicine. I have, on several occasions, met with the counterpart of the following case: I was a few years since consulted about a pale, sickly, and thin boy of about five or six years of age. He appeared to have no specific ailment; but there was a slow and remarkable decline of flesh and strength, and of the energy of all the functions—what his mother very aptly termed a gradual blight. After inquiry into the history of the case, it came out that he had been a very robust and plethoric child up to his third year, when his grandmother, a very aged person, took him to sleep with her; that he soon afterward lost his good looks; and that he had continued to decline progressively ever since, notwithstanding medical treatment. I directed him to sleep apart from his aged parent; and prescribed gentle tonics, change of air, etc. The recovery was rapid. But it is not in children only that debility is induced by this mode of abstracting vital power. Young females married to very old men suffer in a similar manner, although seldom to so great an extent; and instances have come to my knowledge where they have suspected the cause of their debilitated state. These facts are often well known to the aged themselves, who consider the indulgence favorable to longevity, and thereby often illustrate the selfishness which, in some persons, increases with their years.”

It is very important to caution young persons against carelessness during their periods, particularly against exposing themselves to cold in any way, taking too violent exertion, eating anything indigestible, or giving way to violent mental emotions. A quiet state, both of body and mind, is most favorable, with just as much exertion as feels agreeable. Cold baths may be injurious, unless regularly taken previously. I know many who use them *always*, not only without injury, but with benefit. As a general rule, it is best to make but little change, unless particular indications point out its propriety.

It should also be recollected that the mind and feelings of young persons at this age are naturally in a very peculiar and interesting condition, and require the most careful and delicate attention on the part of their parents and guardians. They begin to experience new sensations and wants, and to be troubled by new thoughts and vague ideas, which stimulate curiosity, and excite the imagination to the highest pitch. A forced state of ignorance is very apt to aggravate this dangerous condition by enshrouding with *mystery* everything which is desired to be known. Under such circumstances, the most exaggerated and ridiculous fancies are indulged, even if worse consequences do not ensue, and wrong notions are entertained respecting themselves, and their future condition, which may have a most lamentable influence on their health and happiness. *When nature prompts inquiry it is worse than useless to attempt to conceal!* The suppression of *useful truth* then, can only leave the mind open to receive *dangerous error!* A prudent parent or guardian will always know what to impart, and when to impart it, and will feel the obligation to instruct her charge to be one of the most sacred duties.

It is neither necessary nor advisable to treat all the vagaries and caprices of young persons with indifference, or deride them, but on the contrary they should be

respected, and *sympathized* with, or even judiciously *indulged*, rather than rudely condemned. It should be recollected that these fanciful notions are *realities* to them, and that it is not by harshness, but solely by kindness, and obvious interest, that we can so far gain their confidence as to convince them of their error. It should also be borne in mind that the female is always subject to certain powerful influences, unknown to the other sex, which modify her whole character, and which make it necessary to judge her with charity, and treat her with kindness and indulgence. Especially should this be remembered with the young and inexperienced, and with those who have been surrounded by unfavorable circumstances. I have known many an apparently severe indisposition, which had defied all medical skill, yield immediately to the condolence of trusted friendship; and in numerous cases I have seen kindness and sympathy effect a thousand times more than pills and potions! Nor need such a circumstance excite any especial wonder or unjust suspicion, when the peculiarities of the system in females are recollected. With them the extensively connected uterine organs are constantly exerting a paramount influence on the nervous system, either by their own functional activity, or by the stimulus they receive through the brain. Woman is therefore essentially a creature of impulse and intense emotion, and in justice should be so treated. With her an unhappy feeling, a capricious fancy, or a wrong idea, should be considered as real a cause of disease as a *tumor* or a *cancer!* This is true of women at all ages, and in all conditions, though sometimes more so than at others. With her also *moral* treatment is often more efficacious than medical, and is therefore more appropriate. A kind look, or expression of sympathy will light up the languid eye, send a healthy gush through the veins, and impart a wholesome stimulus to the whole system, while drugs will only produce greater prostration of the vital energies. The *nature* of many female diseases, therefore, particularly those of a nervous character, is essentially different from any experienced by the other sex, and their *treatment* should of course be different also.

THE CHANGE OF LIFE.

The uterine organs eventually lose their preponderance, their functions cease, and they exert but slight influence, either direct, or indirect, on the rest of the system.

This great change, called *the turn of life*, does not take place however without a struggle, and before it is fully brought about the female is liable to many serious accidents. The final stoppage of the menses being in fact as momentous, to some persons, as their first appearance, or even more so, and exerting as powerful an influence on their health.

Many diseases which had lain dormant before, sometimes break out with fatal virulence immediately the change takes place, and many others that had remained comparatively slight, may become seriously aggravated. These evils, however, are by no means necessary or usual results of the change, but mere accidents, resulting from disease or a bad constitution. The cessation of the menses is as natural as their first appearance, and the constitutional disturbance resulting from it is also as likely to be beneficial as injurious. In fact, many females when they fully get over it, seem to become much younger and more healthy. They regain their flesh, their color, and their strength, and actually appear more juvenile at *fifty* than they did at thirty-five or forty!

Much unfounded apprehension exists both as to the danger at the turn of life,