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Étude de la Stérilité chez la Femme. Par le Docteur Pr. Hutin. Paris. G. Baillière. 1859. 8vo. pp. 116.

Dr. Hutin's work comprises in its preliminary remarks a synopsis of those general circumstances which have an influence upon the act of generation, such as age, constitution, organic disposition, consanguinity, climate, races, alimentation, emigration, influence of seasons, and social condition. Among the special causes of sterility in woman, the author mentions, first, the imperforation of the hymen. The closure of this membrane may be absolute or imperfect; in the former instance it gives rise to the well known symptoms of retention of the menstrual blood, while a partial obstruction makes itself known by the obstacle it offers to a free consummation of sexual intercourse. In both instances a crucial incision into the hymen, and the introduction of an oiled pledget of lint into the opening thus made, is the procedure required under those circumstances. The congenital narrowness of the vagina, another source of sterility, may present itself in different degrees. Three cases are reported of constriction of the vagina, which were successfully overcome by the use of sponge-tents. Besides this congenital malformation, the capacity of the vagina may be lessened by circular or band-like membranes, which only need to be incised and mechanically dilated. They sometimes are remnants from intra-uterine life, sometimes the consequence of inflammation and cicatrization. In some few instances sterility seemed to be the result of a disproportion in the length of the sexual organs. Where the vagina is too long, as it happens in very fat women, the womb may be brought lower down by the use of a hypogastric bandage during connexion. If, on the contrary, the vagina is too short, so that the penis passes by the side of the vaginal neck, the husband must be instructed by his physician how he has to behave under those circumstances. Among the malformations of the uterus, Dr. H. briefly considers the obliteration of the os, as well as the obstruction of the canal of the uterine neck. The latter may be congenital, or produced by inflammation and ulceration. An instance of this kind is related, which was successfully treated by the use of sponge-tents. The extreme narrowness of the os uteri is often combined with a decided shortness of the vaginal neck. All that can be expected from treatment is a dilatation of the os tincæ. There are two kinds of elongation of the vaginal portion apt to cause sterility, one congenital, which requires amputation, one accidental, acquired by the employment of the ring pessary, which does very generally regain its former size after the use of the instrument has been discontinued. Three cases of partial hypertrophy were observed by Dr. H., one of which caused sterility. The amputation of the hypertrophied anterior lip was soon followed by conception. Congenital atrophy of the womb was encountered not unfrequently in connexion with sterility. In two cases the use of the warm douche, combined with succulent diet, preparations of iron, and the dilatation of the canal, succeeded in causing pregnancy. The uterine deviations, anteversion, retroversion, and lateroversion are caused, 1. By a relaxation of the uterine ligaments; 2. In some instances they are the result of increased weight of part or the whole of the uterus; and 3. In other instances the womb has been pushed into a wrong situation by an outside pressure, and, above all, it is the abuse of the corset which produces anteversion in a large number of cases. The anteversion, if it is not of too long standing, may be sufficiently reduced to permit conception by the complete suppression of the corset, the employment of an hypogastric supporter, the application of cold uterine douches, combined with a recumbent position during the night in such a manner that the pelvis be slightly supported and elevated. After repeated trials to bring about a change o

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position by means of pessaries, they were at last entirely abandoned, because they are often dangerous and almost always useless. Dr. H. applied instead the demi-speculum of Mordat, which was attached inside the vagina, where it remained during connexion. With regard to uterine flexions the treatment has to be directed, first, against the existing complications, and, after their removal, the malposition has to be cautiously treated by the use of the redresseur and a continuity of both cavities must be secured by sponge-tents. Amenorrhœa demands a general tonic treatment and local applications, among which the following are the most reputed: 1. Injections into the vagina of a decoction of mustard or ginger. 2. Injections of diluted ammonia. 3. Aloetic injections into the rectum. 4. Irritation of the uterine cavity by the uterine sound. 5. Very hot uterine douches. 6. Direct application of electricity. 7. The use of the waters of Plombières. The chapters on menorrhagia and dysmenorrhœa contain an exposition of well known theories and facts. The same may be said with regard to the chapters on fibrinous concretions, polypi, vegetations, hysteralgia, chronic vaginitis, catarrh, and engorgement of the uterus, ovaritis, and inflammation of the Fallopian tubes. In concluding, the author states it as his opinion, that diseases of the ovary, obesity, and nervous affections were very often the consequence of sterility.

This is a short abstract of Dr. Hutin's interesting little work on sterility. It is essentially of a practical turn, consisting of conclusions based on facts personally observed, a large number of which is reported. It is written in a plain, unassuming style, and is void of that idle phraseology so often encountered in works of this nature. We therefore recommend it to the profession, although it does not bear the stamp of scientific perfection. This latter remark applies more particularly to the chapter on uterine deviations, which is spare, and not thoroughly understood by the author. Sponge-tents are his hobbies, and the water of Plombières the never-failing remedy. But taken all in all it well repays an attentive perusal, inasmuch as it contains a great many practical hints and valuable suggestions for the treatment of sterility. E. N.

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