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ELONGATED NYMPHÆ,

A

SIGN OF STERILITY.

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With Compliments of the Author.



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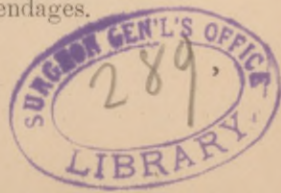
ELONGATED NYMPHÆ, A SIGN OF STERILITY.

BY CHAS. L. GWYN, M. D., GALVESTON, TEXAS.

Twelve months ago, in a paper before your honorable body, I suggested that there had been, in my practice, sterility almost invariably in cases of elongated, enlarged or hypertrophied nymphæ. Being in doubt whether this condition was accidental—a mere coincidence—or not, I have kept notes of twenty-three cases of enlarged labia minora in which the patients were sterile. some originally so, some acquired.

I think, when we come to study the anatomy of the reproductive organs of the female, especially in regard to their nerve and blood supply, that we will have but little difficulty in arriving at rational conclusions why, under exciting causes, these pathological conditions should exist.

The vascular system being under the control of the nervous, which, to these organs, is large, it is patent that any element that disturbs the one must disturb the other. "*Ubi irritatio, ubi flexus*" is an old but true saying, and is as equally true in these organs as in the rest of the economy. Our attention is often attracted to, and we are frequently able to diagnose, stone in the bladder, or cystic disease in boys, by their habit of pulling at their prepuce, which becomes elongated. The symptom of picking at the nose, or itching at the anus, is pathognomonic of intestinal irritation or parasites, from the fact that irritation along the course of a nerve is felt at its terminal branches. The same that holds good for the urethra and for the intestines, will hold good for the vagina and its appendages.



At the external orifice of the vaginal canal are placed the nymphæ, which, while they contain erectile, contain no retractile tissue. Irritation set up, from any cause, in the vagina, or uterus, is referred to the nymphæ. Handling or pulling at them permanently elongates them, and they do not retract, but the erectile tissue which they contain becomes engorged, and through nervous excitation we have a flow of blood to the genitals.

In illustration of this fact, I shall copy a case from my note book :

Mrs. K—, a German, aged 43 years, married, elongated labia minora, excessive hemorrhage. I was called to this case, a stormy night, by her husband, who stated that his wife was bleeding to death, and, at each monthly period, that she lost large quantities of blood, and had done so for the past three or four years. Digital examination revealed a tumor about the size of an English walnut just within the os tincæ. The use of ergot internally, and the salts of iron locally, soon checked the flow.

Two days afterwards the hemorrhage was renewed. Being called from my office, I carried my gynæcological bag, and was enabled to make a speculum examination, and found a hard, smooth, fibroid polipus attached by a broad base to the right lip of the cervix, dilating the os internum to the size of a silver half-dollar.

I excluded cancer from my diagnosis, from the facts (1) that the woman was barren, and cancer is a disease that follows in the wake of child-bearing; (2) that cancer is a disease of the fundus, not of the cervix, epithelioma excepted; (3) that, had it been cancer, the patient would have succumbed before this time, as cancer, untreated, usually proves fatal in from eight months to two years.

Under the internal use of ergot, the tumor necrosed and came away, the patient doing well, justifying my diagnosis.

I mention this case to show how an irritant in the womb,

or at its neck, might produce its effect on the nymphæ, which were, in this case, from repeated handling, protruding about three inches.

In nearly all of these cases, we have swelling of the mucosa, and frequently inflammation of the sub-mucous tissue. The mucosa swelling concentrically, practically occludes the os tinæ.

Excessive venery and masturbation are the most potent causes of engorgement of the mucosa, vaginitis, and of hypertrophy of the nymphæ.

Prostitutes rarely breed, because of continual sexual excitation and the excessive use of their genitals, and we are apt to find both a hypertrophy of their nymphæ and a turgescence of their vaginal walls.

The young married woman, who is twitted by her friends for the absence of the cradle from her bedside, exhausts her own and her husband's nervous strength in the effort to carry out Nature's law, "*Crecendo et multiplicando.*" In her you will find the same symptoms as in her "frail sister."

In all of the twenty-three cases which I have kept record of, none applied for treatment for this abnormality, but for troubles dependent upon a hyperæmic condition of the pelvic organs, and were all sterile; and I am not certain that the case of polypoid tumor related was not dependent upon a hyperæmic condition acquired in early married life.





