

## OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

WHAT IS MEANT BY (a) AMENORRHOEA; (b) DYSMENORRHOEA;  
(c) MENORRHAGIA; (d) METRORRHAGIA?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this month to Miss Jane McNeillie, R.G.N., Knockcoid, Ervie, Stranraer.

### PRIZE PAPER.

Each of these four terms means an abnormal menstrual state.

#### AMENORRHOEA.

(a) Amenorrhœa means abnormal absence of the menses (the flow of blood which is the outward and visible sign of the completion of the ovarian function of ovulation, or the full development of a Graafian follicle, its rupture and the escape of the ovum, and which generally occurs from puberty (varying from the 12th to the 17th year) to the ages of 45 or 50, every 28 days or at a longer interval (quite compatible with health), the discharge lasting from 3 to 7 days).

As there must be perfect relation of blood-supply—both in character and quantity—and healthful control of nervous influence for the normal menstrual act to occur without any aberrant sign or symptoms, probable causes of diminution and temporary absence of the menstrual flow are:—Anæmia and chlorosis; plethora; some accidental influence operating on the woman as mental shock, cold, fright, &c. (all these repressing causes have a more decided effect if they occur at or about the time of a menstrual epoch); the exanthemata; congenital. There are removal causes (excluding pregnancy); and irremovable causes, such as absence or congenital malformation and arrest of development of the ovaries, Fallopian tubes, or uterus; acquired disease of the ovaries or uterus. We speak of "primary" and "secondary"—the former frequently persistent (emansio mensium), the latter usually temporary (suppressio mensium).

Whether in the anæmic and chlorotic or in the reverse condition—the plethoric and full-blooded—the gynæcologist's aim is to restore to the sexual organs their normal blood supply and correct the constitutional vice predisposing to such morbid states, and by suitable treatment induce or re-establish the performance of their natural functions. Amenorrhœa is frequently associated with dysmenorrhœa.

#### DYSMENORRHOEA.

(b) Dysmenorrhœa (painful or difficult menstruation). The situations in which the pain occurs are: in the ovarian region and along the insides of the thighs, if the ovaries should be, as is frequently the case, at fault; pain in the back and over the pubes if the principal cause of the dysmenorrhœa be in the uterus; and in some chronic cases reflex pain in the head, chest or abdomen accompanying the local pain. The nature of the pain and the time of its occurrence are equally uncertain. It may precede the flow, cease as this commences or in a day or two, or it may last all through the period. In "congestive" and "obstructive" dysmenorrhœa there may be severe constitutional disturbance, headache, sickness of the stomach, attacks of uterine colic and spasm, and vicarious hæmorrhage

may occur elsewhere, as epistaxis, hæmoptysis, hæmatemesis, retinal infarctions and effusions. A characteristic form described as "spasmodic"—the neuralgic type—is of the nature of a neurosis. The "membranous" is a special form of uterine dysmenorrhœa; atresic; "ovarian" and "tubal" due to congenital abnormalities, adhesions, cystic disease; "uterine" due to such impediments as fibroid tumours, polypus, or to flexions and versions (requiring rectification, the application of a suitable pessary). Such operative measures as curettage, division of the cervix and internal os, the removal of polypi, uterine fibroids, and the "risky" removal of the adnexa—are sometimes necessary, and 10 days should elapse after the cessation of the period before they are undertaken. Where the local fault is contraction of the canal of the cervix, the gynæcologist will dilate with uterine bougies. The treatment indicated by the constitutional aspects of the case is to correct any constitutional vice, such as anæmia, general plethora, dyspepsia, gout, hysteria, constipation and those habits which lead up to depraved blood conditions and interfere with the general health.

#### MENORRHAGIA.

(c) Menorrhagia means excessive flow of the menses—a simple, exaggerated menstrual flow, too frequent and too profuse—due to physiological excess attendant upon ovulation. In this disorder of menstruation (especially if with attendant dysmenorrhœa) the patient soon becomes exhausted mentally and physically. So the control of the excessive flow is necessary, probably by treatment along the lines above-stated (attention to the general health, local treatment, &c.)

#### METRORRHAGIA.

(d) Metrorrhagia means an abnormal flow of blood during the intervals between the menstrual acts, or bleeding from the uterus, other than at the period. The hæmorrhage occurs independently of menstruation. Metrorrhagia may be due either to disease in some other organ than the uterus, or have a strictly local origin.

#### HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss Amy Phipps, S.R.N., Miss Gertrude E. Weeks, S.R.N., Mrs. Farthing, S.R.N., Miss A. Worcester. Miss Doris Hickley.

Miss Amy Phipps writes:—"Amongst the causes of dysmenorrhœa may be mentioned anæmia, inflammation or misplacement in some part of the genital tract, chills, exhaustion and overwork of certain kinds, constipation, and when certain constitutional diseases are present, such as gout and rheumatism. Any affection of the nervous system, or spinal nerve strain, from any cause, may also have a marked effect upon this condition."

#### QUESTION FOR NEXT MONTH.

What do you know of smallpox, the method of infection and its treatment?

Will competitors note carefully the conditions of the competition? Some are disqualified for the prize because their papers fall short of the number of words required. Articles should be written on one side of the paper only.

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