

AN

INAUGURAL DISSERTATION,

ON

Catamenia.

SUBMITTED TO THE

PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, AND MEDICAL FACULTY

OF THE

University of Nashville,

FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF MEDICINE.

BY

R. C. Walker

OF

Alabama

1858

CHARLES W. SMITH,
BOOKSELLER AND STATIONER,
NASHVILLE, TENN.



The Catamenia.

The Catamenia generally appears about the age of fifteen, and ceases about forty-five, or fifty, which renders these two periods of life very critical to females. About the first appearance of this discharge, the constitution undergoes a very considerable change, generally indeed for the better, though sometimes for the worse.

The greatest care is now necessary, as the future health & happiness of the female depends in a great measure upon her conduct at this period. If a female at this time of life be confined to the house, kept

constantly sitting, and neither allowed to romp about, nor employed in any active pursuit, which gives exercise to the whole body; she becomes weak, relaxed, and feeble; her health, spirits, and vigour decline, and she sinks into a coltudinarian for life. Such is the fate of numbers of those unhappy females, who, either from too much indulgence, or their own narrow circumstances, are, at this critical period, denied the benefit of exercise and free air. A sluggish, indolent disposition proves likewise injurious to females at

2

this period. One seldom meets
with complaints from ~~ob-~~
structions amid the more active
and industrious classes of the sex:
whereas, the indolent and slothful
are seldom free from them.
They are in a manner eaten
up by Chlorosis, and other dis-
eases of a like nature. We therefore
advise all who wish to escape
these calamities, to avoid indolence
and inactivity, as their greatest
enemies, and enjoy as much as
possible free air. Another thing
which proves injurious to females
at this period, is unwholesome food.
A kind of all manner of trash,
they often indulge in, till

their whole humors become quite vitiated. Hence ensue indigestion, want of appetite, and a numerous train of evils. Accordingly we find, that such females as lead an indolent slothful life, and eat great quantities of trash, are not only rendered obnoxious to obstructions of the Cotunnaria, but likewise to glandular obstructions. A dull Disposition is also injurious to females at this period. It is a rare thing to see a quick, sprightly girl who does not enjoy good health, while the grave, mooping, melancholy creature, proves the very prey of Dropsy and Hysteria. Youth is the season

for mirth and cheerfulness. Let
it therefore be indulged, it is
an absolute duty. To lay in
a stock of health in time of
youth, is as necessary a piece
of prudence, as to make pro-
vision against the decay of old
age. While therefore, wise Nature
prompts the happy youth to
gain in the gay and sprightly
amusements, let not the severe
dictates of hoary age forbid the
useful impulse, nor damp, with
serious gloom, the season de-
stined to mirth and innocent-
festivity. Another thing very injurious
to females at this period of life is,
"straight clothes." They are fond of

a fine shape, and foolishly imagine that this can be acquired by tight-lacing. Hence, by squeezing the stomach, they impair Digestion, and occasion many incurable maladies.

After a female has attained the age at which the Catamenia begin to flow, and they do not appear, but, on the contrary, her health and spirits begin to decline, we would advise, instead of shutting the poor girl up in the house, and dosing her with nauseous drugs, to place her in a situation where she can enjoy the benefit of free air, and agreeable company.

4
There let her have wholesome
food, take sufficient-exercise,
and amuse herself in the
most-agreeable manner: and
we have but little reason to
fear, that Nature, thus assisted
will do her proper work.

This Discharge in the beginning is
seldom so instantaneous as to
take females unawares. It is generally
preceded by symptoms which
foretel its approach: as a sense of
heat, weight, and dull pain in
the loins, distention, and hardness of
the mammae, headache, loss of appetite,
laxitude, warmth of the countenance,
and sometimes a slight Degree of
fever. When these symptoms appear about

the age at which the Catamenia
usually begin to flow, every thing which
may obstruct that necessary and
solitary evacuation, should be
carefully avoided, and ~~all~~ means
used to promote it. After the
Catamenia has once made its
appearance, the greatest care should
be taken to avoid ^{everything} that may
tend to obstruct it. Females should
be very cautious of what they
indulge in, at the time they
are labouring under this Dis-
charge. Every thing that is cold,
or apt ^{to} cause acidity of the stomach,
should be avoided. All kinds
of indigestible food should be
carefully avoided. Cold is very

pernicious at this particular period.
More of the sex take their Diseases
from colds "caught," while the
Gout comes upon them, than
from all other causes. A Degree
of cold, that will not in the
least injure them at other times,
will at this period, be sufficient
to impair their health for the
remainder of their Days.

Attention should likewise be paid
to the mind, which should be
kept as easy and cheerful as possible.
Every part of the animal econ-
omy is influenced by the passions,
but none more so than this.

Anger, fear, grief, and other affections
of the mind, often occasion obstructions

of the Catamenia, which proves incurable. From whatever cause this flux is obstructed, except in the state of pregnancy, proper means should be used to restore it. For this purpose we would recommend sufficient exercise, in a dry, open, and rather cool air: wholesome Diet, and if the body be weak and languid, generous liquors, also cheerful company, and all manner of amusements. If these fail, recourse must be had to medicine. When obstructions proceed from a weak, relaxed state of the solids, such medicines as tend to promote Digestion, to brace the solids, and assist the body

in preparing healthy blood, should
be used. When obstructions proceed
from a viscid state of the blood,
as for women of a full habit; evac-
uations, and such medicines as os-
tinate the humors, are necessary.
When obstructions proceed from af-
fections of the mind, as grief, fear,
anger, &c. every method should be
taken to amuse and divert the
patient. And that she may the
more readily forget the cause of
her affliction, she should, if poss-
ible, be removed from the place
where it happened. A change of
place, by presenting the mind with
a variety of new objects, has often a
happy influence in relieving it-

from the Dupuy-Listref. A soothing,
kind, and affable behavior to females
in this situation is also of the
last importance. An obstruction
of the Catamenia is often the
effect of other maladies. When this
is the case, instead of giving medi-
cines to force the Discharge, which
might prove dangerous, we should
by all means endeavor to restore
the patients health and strength.
When that is effected, the other will
return. The menstrual Discharge
may be too great as well as too
small. When this is the case, the
patients becomes weak, the color wan,
the appetite and Digestion impaired,
to which oedematous swelling of

the feet, Dropsies, and consump-
tions often ensue. This frequently
happens to women about forty-five
or fifty, and is very difficult to
overcome. It may proceed from
an sedentary life, a full diet, con-
sisting chiefly of salted, high-
seasoned food, the use of spiritous
liquors, excessive fatigue, relaxation,
violent passions of the mind, &c.
The treatment of this Disease is
to be varied according to the cause.
When it is occasioned by any
error in the patients regimen, an
opposite ~~the~~ course to that which
induced the Disorder, should be
pursued, and such medicines ta-
ken as have a tendency to restrain

the flux, and counteract the morbid affections of the system from whence it proceeds. That period of life at which the Catamenia cease, is likewise very critical to the sex. The stoppage of any customary evacuation, however small, is sufficient to derange the whole economy, and often to destroy life itself. Hence it comes to pass, that so many women ^{either} lapse into chronic Disorders, or die about this time. Such of them, however, as survive it, without contracting any chronic Disease, often become more healthy, and hardy than before, and enjoy strength and vigour to a good old age.

If the Catamenia cease suddenly, in women of a full habit, they should abate somewhat of their usual quantity of food, especially that of the more nourishing kind. They should likewise take sufficient exercise, and secure themselves against constipation.

It often happens that women of a gross habit or this period of life, have ulcerous sores break out upon their ankles, as in other parts of the body. Such ulcers should be considered critical, and should either be suffered to continue open, or have artificial Drains substituted in their stead. For those who have them dried up, are often even after carried off by

acute disease, as lapse into those
of a chronic nature.

R. C. Walker

Vice-Chairman

RESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES,
AND MEDICAL FACULTY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF NASHVILLE,

Doctor of Medicine.

Louis Byron Mitchell

Red Cross - Memphis

1858

W. L. BERRY AND CO.,