

**PREVENTION OF CONCEPTION.**—Dr. Charles Ambrook, of Boulder, Colorado, writes: I most cordially thank you for publishing Dr. O. E. Herrick's article entitled, "Abortion and its Lessons." It is time that medical men took a new departure upon this question; we may as well accept and act upon the fact that abortions will be stopped as soon as there is found a safe and legitimate method of preventing conception.

The sexual appetite in its way is as powerful as that for food, and as long as men are *men*, and women are *women*, that fact will assert itself. Women do not marry eunuchs, and Battey's operation is a bar to matrimony. Every person concedes that no family is complete without children, but when they swarm like rats and worry their overburdened mother to the grave, as every physician can testify is a common occurrence, there becomes apparent the wisdom of the motto, "Fewer children and better ones." A woman to hold her husband must gratify this sexual appetite, but it does not follow that she must become a mother at the will of her husband; that function should be voluntarily exercised or not at all, hers the pains and perils and she should be free to decide. Physicians know too well the bitter heartburning, scalding tears and domestic trouble that arise from involuntary maternity. We have been too much in the habit of putting the question aside as one for religion to deal with, but from the fact that religious people are as prone as the infidels to dabble in the abortion business, we can infer that religion has no effectual remedy for the evil. If this is true, let us as physicians set ourselves to find one, and in the prevention of conception I believe it will be found. The statutes of the United States make it a states prison offense to send through the United States mails anything for the prevention of conception; so do the statutes of some States forbid dissection, and punish ignorance of anatomy.

Involuntary maternity is closely interwoven with crime, intemperance, pauperism and domestic discord. A solution of that question and one that excludes celibacy (see Chas. Fayette Taylor's article in the *American Journal of Obstetrics*, January, 1882, "Effect on Women of Imperfect Hygiene of the Sexual Function,") will ameliorate them all. Think of a consumptive woman bearing children with the knowledge that she is certain to leave them to the care or neglect of strangers; what must be her feelings! Involuntary maternity is the greatest outrage that can be inflicted upon a woman. See the numbers of poor women with large families and worthless husbands that are in every community; hardly a day passes but a physicians feelings are appealed to, to prevent their burdens from increasing.

I believe it possible to discuss this question from a natural stand point, to reason from facts and not accept namby pamby theories. Dr. Herrick has started it on the right basis; let it be kept there.

E. H., writes as follows on the same subject: Dr. Herrick's article in last number of the News, is a valuable one and the people as well as the profession ought to be better informed than they are on that subject. He is mistaken, however, when he says that "injections properly used, are an absolute protection." All means will fail in some cases. I think the "skin covering," worn by the male is almost an absolute protection. I have known the "Comstock Syringe" to fail in at least one case where it was used by intelligent and careful parties, (carbolic acid being used.) I think the "Molesworth Syringe," better than the "Comstock," as it has no "sponge attachment."

It has been proved that, in some women at least, during the "orgasm" there is a movement in the neck of the uterus tending to "draw up" the semen within the womb. For this reason, any syringe is liable to fail, although I have known different kinds to be used with success for years. Very simple means will prevent pregnancy in some women, while with others it seems almost impossible to avoid it.

The editor says "for a certain time between the menstrual periods the female is not liable to conceive." No doubt that is true of most women but I have high authority for my belief that it cannot be relied upon.