

EFFECT OF REMOVAL OF THE UTERINE APPENDAGES ON THE SEXUAL APPETITE.

This vexed question bids fair to be settled in the near future by evidence gradually accumulating in the hands of surgeons who extirpate the appendages. It came to the surface in the Imlach persecution, in Liverpool, three years ago, showing that such men as even Grimsdell, of that city, were filled with the old superstition that the ovaries control the sexual appetite. The revelations of that inquiry (?) were, however, far from confirmatory of the old notion. Then Mr. Lawson Tait gave the vexed problem his attention by pushing inquiries among a large number of women upon whom he had done the operation of extirpating the appendages. His conclusion, as announced to the British Gynæcological Society, was that, in his opinion, "a woman's ovaries have nothing more to do with her sexual appetite than have her front teeth." This view has about it the positivism characteristic of Tait, which the "slower coaches" of the profession have a tendency to discount. The latest expression on the subject is from that very conservative clinician, Goodell, of Philadelphia, whose utterances on any subject in gynæcology, carries weight with both conservatives and radicals in surgery. In a recent clinical lecture (*Philadelphia Medical Times*, December), he states: "As far as I am aware, there is no case on record of the ovaries having been removed before puberty. When they are congenitally absent, the woman continues juvenile in her manners and disposition. There is no development of hair on the pubes, the breasts do not enlarge, and the pelvis remains that of a child. After puberty, if the operation has been performed for the relief of ovarian disease, the patient at once improves in health and general appearance. Her sexual appetite, which had been in abeyance owing to the pain attendant on the act, is greatly increased. The breasts become full, and do not wither, as was supposed. After a time the sexual desire declines, and is finally lost, as in the menopause, which I believe to be an analogous condition. It is absurd to think—though the idea is very prevalent among the laity—that a woman whose ovaries have been removed becomes a man in her instincts and inclinations and appearance—that hair grows on her face and that her voice becomes deep; that she loses all affection for her husband and for her children. A medical man was sued a couple of years ago by the husband of a woman from whom he removed the ovaries, on the plea that the operation

had alienated her affections from him and from his children ; but I believe the case to have had no foundation whatever."

It would seem, indeed, as if the sentimental opponents of rational surgery in diseases of the uterine appendages, would have to fall back on something more forcible than the now exploded cry of asexualization.

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