ART. XI.—*Case of Curious Inflammation and Hypertrophy of Womb.*

By CHARLES D. MEIGS, M. D., Professor of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children in Jefferson Medical College: [With a plate.]

I BEG leave to hand you a drawing, representing, with much faithfulness, the appearance of a preparation in my cabinet at the Jefferson Medical College.

I trust you will deem it of sufficient interest to deserve a place in your valuable journal. To me it is interesting as exhibiting appearances that have not been described, so far as my information enables me to speak, and as showing why the ordinary modes of treating affections of the uterus must sometimes result in disappointment. I here allude to the treatment of chronic inflammation of the os and surgical neck of the womb, by topical bleeding with leeches, and by the application of various escharotic articles.

Most generally, the practitioner is satisfied that his duty is fully done by cauterizing the parts just named with the nitrate crayon, or with a solution of nitrate of silver, or acid nitrate of mercury, conveyed by means of a camel-hair pencil, a plumasseau of lint, or by vaginal injection. And true it is that when these means are judiciously employed, the happiest effects are generally found to ensue as to the re-establishing of the patient's health.

The drawing represents a womb which is rather more than four inches in length, while its greatest breadth is over three inches. Its thickness is excessive; in short, the disease of its interior walls has developed a state of hypertrophy of the organ, as is evidently the case when we compare it with the normal womb, two and a quarter inches long, by one and three-quarters wide, and half an inch thick.

A medical man having charge of a case like the one here represented, and examining it by the touch, and also by means of the metroscope, would be sure to discover upon the os tincæ, and within the os, those appearances usually denominated *inflammation framboïde*, or raspberry-coloured inflammation of the os. He cannot possibly diagnose the condition of the tissues lining the canal of the cervix uteri, because they are inaccessible; and should he expect a cure by repeating his contacts with the nitrate crayon, &c., he could not fail to be disappointed, since his antiphlogistic or his destructive cauterizations would not even approach the points where their therapeutical power is most needed.

I do not pretend to say that, in a case like the present, any mode of treatment devisable by the physician could be relied upon; for it appears that the changes in the character of the tissue are so great as to leave little prospect of a happy result of the treatment, however judicious.

The drawing exhibits a section from the fundus to the os, laying open the cavity of the womb proper, and also the whole canal of the cervix.

If you will look at the cut surface, you will see that it has, near the inner wall, the appearance of a collection of pencils or brushes, the extremities of which look into the cavity. One might almost suppose this striated or pencil-like tissue is an enormous hypertrophy of the tubular glandules of the uterus, described by Mr. Goodsir, Prof. Coste, Sir Franz Kiwisch, and others; and I think it probable that such is the fact. Be this as it may, the metroscopic examination of it would scarcely fail to mislead one as to his prognosis, at least under the ordinary modes of treatment.

I repeat that an assured diagnosis is impossible. Nevertheless, let the physician, in doubtful cases, nay, in all cases, determine the real longitudinal diameter of the womb. If that be not augmented considerably, the case will not be like this one. If it be augmented, with all the signs of a general hypertrophization of the organ, then let him make use, not of the brush, the crayon, or the vaginal injection, but of the port caustic of Prof. Lallemand, by means of which he can make contacts of nitrate of silver as he may prefer; I mean whether merely antiphlogistic ones, or destructive and disorganizing ones. This he can effect by regulating the duration of the contact, or by the quantity of the salt with which the groove in the platinum rod shall be provided.

As I presume the drawing may be understood without farther description, I shall now bring this notice to a close, assuring you of the respectful regard of, dear sir, your obedient servant.

C. D. MEIGS.

To Dr. HAYS.