

III.

History of a Case of Inverted Uterus terminating successfully. By Mr. John White, Surgeon, Paisley.

ON the 26th of June 1793, about ten o'clock at night, I was desired to visit a married woman, twenty-seven years of age, who was delivered of a fine healthy child, about five o'clock that same evening. The delivery took place while she lay on a couch. There was nothing unusual in the progress of the labour, nor was the birth of the child remarkably sudden; but the midwife having found difficulty in extracting the placenta, had employed much time and force in pulling at the navel-string, and had caused the woman to cough, sneeze, and even to vomit, by tickling her throat with a finger, before she was able to accomplish her purpose.

The delivery of the placenta was immedi-

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ately followed with an hæmorrhage from the uterus, and violent forcing down pains, similar to those which accompany labour. But as in all her former labours, (four in number), a flooding to a certain degree had likewise occurred, this circumstance, on the present occasion, gave no great alarm; and as the pains, she was assured, were no ways uncommon; she endeavoured to endure them with patience and fortitude.

She had been nearly five hours in great agony when I saw her. Her countenance was pale and ghastly; her extremities were cold; her pulse at the wrist was scarcely perceptible, quick and irregular; and her voice was so feeble, that it could scarcely be heard. She had great pain in her thighs, and the lower part of her belly; but the pain in her back and loins was, she said, quite unsupportable. The hæmorrhage from the uterus had, however, been pretty moderate for some time; but the bearing-down pains continued so violent, that, to use her own expression, she thought her whole bowels would be forced out.

On applying a hand to the abdomen, I

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was certain she had not another child to bear; and from the account I had just received, and nature of the present symptoms, I immediately suspected there was an inversion of the uterus.

Without delay, I therefore examined her *per vaginam*, and found the whole cavity of this organ filled with a large, round, and pretty firm fleshy tumour, rugous on the surface, and having the shape of a printer's ball, or the bottom of a large bottle of the elastic resin. This I considered as evidence sufficient.

I would instantly have attempted the reduction of the uterus, but the poor woman was so very faint and weak, and all the parts concerned so tender and irritable, that I thought it could not be undertaken for some time, but with considerable risk. I therefore gave her forty drops of laudanum, and the same number of elixir of vitriol, in a glass or two of wine, to recruit her strength a little, and to moderate the violence of the pain and irritability.

The midwife having left her as soon as she thought she had done her duty, she was again
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immediately brought ; and having, at my desire, made the necessary examination, was very soon convinced of what had happened.

After waiting about twenty minutes, to allow what she had got to take effect, I gently insinuated my hand through the os externum ; and grasping the tumour firmly for some time, to diminish its bulk, I began then to push at the middle of the fundus, and, as nearly as I could, in the direction of its mouth ; employing sometimes a single finger, sometimes two or more, or the whole fingers and thumb collected into a cone-like shape, as I found upon trial could best suit my purpose. I likewise tried, from time to time, to dilate the os internum, by insinuating a finger between it and the body of the uterus ; but from the contracted state in which it was, and the great bulk of the tumour, it could not be done but with considerable difficulty.

By a due perseverance, however, in one or other of these methods, I at length had the good fortune to reduce it completely ; and as I gradually withdrew my hand from the cavity of the uterus, into which it had at last fairly

fairly passed, I gently irritated the os internum with a finger, to excite its contraction. And having enjoined rest and a recumbent posture, and ordered some light nourishment, I took my leave.

My patient continued in a weak and languid state for many weeks. Her legs were œdematous for a long time after she could go about; and the quantity of milk in her breasts was so small, that another woman was required to suckle her child; but by the use of suitable cordials, tonic medicines, nourishing diet, and moderate exercise, in the course of a few months, I had the satisfaction to see her recover completely.

REMARKS.

The inversion of the uterus is one of the most formidable and alarming accidents which can happen in delivery; for if not soon known, and speedily reduced, it is apt to prove fatal in a short time. It ought, therefore, to be well understood, and particularly guarded against, by every person practising midwifery.

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That the inversion, in the present case, was occasioned by the very forcible and injudicious means employed to extract the placenta, there can, I think, be little doubt; particularly when it is considered, that the extraction was made while the woman stood upright; and of the numerous instances of the like kind on record, by far the greater part of them appear to have been the result of a similar rash and inconsiderate practice.

As in making the reduction in the above case, I experienced much inconvenience from the shortness and smallness of my fingers, I would beg leave to propose the trial of the following simple instrument, if the like difficulty should ever happen to any other practitioner. It consists of a bit of light wood, about fourteen inches long, not quite cylindrical, but slightly tapering from the ends to the middle, and the ends rounded, like the head of a walking cane. The diameter of the one extremity is an inch, and the other an inch and three quarters; the one or the other to be employed as the particular circumstances of the case may seem best to suit.

suit. The whole of it is covered with smooth and soft leather, and the ends are thickly stuffed with wool or soft hair; so that they can hardly do any injury to the uterus, unless employed in the most inattentive and improper manner.

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