



OBSERVATION LX.

The Delivery of Twins, one of them in its Natural, the other in an unnatural position.

JANUARY 5th, 1674, I was sent for to a shoemaker's wife in the White-mantle-street. I deliver'd her of twins; one a boy, the other a girl; the first in a natural, the second in an unnatural position. I found but one womb-cake, or after-burthen, but two navel-strings and four membranes fastened to it, *viz. Two skins with its peculiar water to each child.* This observation contradicts the before-mentioned Mr. Viardel's assertion, when he says in his 6th chapter, page 35. *That, whenever a woman is deliver'd of twins of the same sex, there is but one after-burthen belonging to both; but if they prove of a different sex, there are no less than two after-burthens; and this he alledges as a peculiar piece of providence in nature.* I shall have occasion to say more hereafter of this error of Mr. Viardel; it being certain, that each child is always enclosed in its peculiar membranes and water, without which it cannot subsist in the womb; but as for the womb-cake, or af-

ter-burthen, it happens frequently that there belongs no more than one to two children. The child swims in its water like the yolk of an egg in the white ; an egg also has its proper membranes ; the first, which becomes hard, is like the *chorion* of the fœtus ; and the interior one, like that called the *amnios*.



OBSERVATION LXXIV.

The Delivery of a Dropsical Woman big with Twins ; one come to its Perfection, the other of betwixt four and five months, quite putrified in its membranes.

JUNE the 1st, 1681, I was sent for at two o'clock in the morning to a dropsical woman, who reckoned herself big with child full nine months: as she was speechless and scarce able to fetch her breath, I found her confessor there to take care of her soul. It was Mr. Hageard, a person of known probity, who having given her the extream unction, he as well as I, were of opinion, that nothing but an extraordinary chance could save the woman's life. But as at so unseasonable a time we could not get a physician, I felt her pulse, which beating pretty lively, I let her blood, and succeeded so well, that she recover'd her speech, and somewhat of her strength ; so that Mr. Hageard and I went home.

But the same morning about seven o'clock, being sent for again, I found her actually in labour, the child with its right buttock foremost, which may easily be discern'd thro' the

membranes during the intervals, when the pains cease and the membranes slacken, which is quite otherwise, whilst they are extended by the pressure of the water downwards: within a moment after they broke, and the water came away; I convey'd my fingers thro' the passage along the child's buttock and leg to the foot, which I drew out gently (to spare the mother, who was very weak) and baptiz'd it. I wrapp'd it up in fine linen cloth, and as I pulled towards me the other leg follow'd, and the woman was deliver'd of a perfect well-shap'd daughter, but dead, tho' without any signs of putrefaction.

As I was advancing with my fingers thro' the passage to look for the after-burthen, I perceived there was a second child behind, enclosed in its peculiar membranes, which proved a foetus of betwixt four and five months, and so putrefied, that the limbs could scarce adhere to one another, which necessitated me to pull it out by pieces, taking effectual care to save the mother, as much as possibly I could. There were two after-burthens, but joined together, both very much shrunk together and hard, like the rind of bacon; both the navel-strings appear'd very well, and in their natural stations. It seems surprizing, that one of these children should be perfect and entire, come to its maturity without the least putrefaction, and the other in such a putrefy'd condition, as we have described it; perhaps it died

betwixt the fourth and fifth month, and proved the cause of the dropfy in the mother. And tho' each of these two children remained all the while in their peculiar membranes and water, and had its peculiar after-burthen, without any communication with one another, yet it seems hard to be conceived, how in the same concavity, such as the womb is, there should be contained at once two children, and one of them to appear sound and perfect in all its parts (tho' dead) and the other quite putrified. I will leave the full decision of this problem to the physicians; yet if I may be permitted to tell my opinion, I look upon this preservation of the dead child like what we see in dead bodies under water, which, unless they are exposed to the air, will remain there uncorrupted a great while. Add to this, that the child remains in its proper natural water and place it has had its beginning in and substance, and consequently is not exposed to any thing heterogeneous to its nature.

But to return to our observation: the woman being deliver'd, expected every minute would be her last; but the flooding proving very kind and natural, she mended a-pace. I gave her immediately the juice of four oranges with some fyrrup of maiden hair, which I seldom fail to give to such child-bed women, as are under my care, if the same is to be had at all. The next morning she had an emollient and dissolvent clyster apply'd to her, and another

at night, with two ounces of oil of sweet-almonds, but without honey. The same was repeated the following day, being Tuesday, when she felt somewhat feverish, but would eat bread and meat broths; nay, meat itself, in spite of all our persuasions to the contrary. To tell my opinion in this case; *A woman lately delivered (provided there appear no symptoms of a fever) may eat immediately after her delivery, as well as the beasts do (be it spoken without comparison) as sheep and such like, who return immediately to their natural pasture; I see no reason, why a woman, who is a rational animal, should not in the same manner make use immediately of such a proper diet as God has allotted for that purpose.* And for my part, I freely confess, I never did deny those under my care the use of a little solid meat (unless they were feverish) and I never observ'd any inconveniency in it, till the time the milk begins to stir, when I order them for three days to abstain from solid meats, and to feed upon broth and eggs.

The Wednesday and Thursday she had the same clysters as before. On the Sunday she must needs eat some strawberries, tho' we opposed it, and her legs continued much swell'd. Monday she had a clyster again of the before-mention'd decoction, with three ounces of honey. Every morning and night she used a fomentation of the decoction of barley and chervil. The Wednesday following she sent

the navel-string of the first born babe, which I cut thro' betwixt the two knots, without which the mother as well as the child would have been much impaired by the loss of blood. The knots are made by the means of a four doubled twisted yarn, having a knot on each end: this thread you must wind twice round the navel-string, and then tie very close with a knot, so as to stop the passage of the blood, for in case it should loosen, it may endanger the life of the child.

If you find more than one child, you must infallibly take care to tie these knots in two places in the navel-string, viz. one above two inches breadth above the navel of the child, and the other two inches farther towards that part of the navel-string which is fastened to the after-burthen, cutting afterwards the same betwixt both these knots, to stop the effusion of blood, and this must be done before you fetch out the after-burthen. Both these knots are intended for the same purpose, the first to prevent the loss of blood in the child, which would occasion its death, whereof there are several instances. The second answers the same end in stopping the blood from flowing out of the other part, to the prejudice of the mother; besides that, in case of twins, the last child would be very much weakened or perhaps perish by the loss of blood, and the mother fall into swooning-fits, or be in danger of her life. There

are instances enough of many women that have been lost by the cowardice of their midwives, who wanting courage to deliver the second child, have left the poor mothers destitute to their utter destruction. These two knots have also this further use, that by keeping the blood in the after-burthen, the same appears more florid to the sight.

But to return to the second child: I found the membranes swell'd by the pressing down of the water, to the bigness of a child's head, or rather like a pig's bladder filled with water. These being born down below both the orifices of the womb, I opened the same with a pin, contrary to the opinion of many midwives, who commonly make use of a grain of salt to make an opening; for these membranes have little or no sense; and it is so far from being dangerous to open the same after they are born out or into the passage or *vagina*, that in many difficult cases we open them without fear within the womb itself, which by my own reiterated experience, I have found so advantageous to the woman, that by two or three pains after such an opening, the head of the child has appear'd very forward towards a happy delivery. However this obtains not in all women, for in some the water is voided a long while before the delivery, which therefore proves more tedious.

The membranes being opened and the water gone, I laid hold of one of the feet of the

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