

An Account of a Case of Uterine Hemorrhage ; and the Delivery of four Children at a Birth. By DR. JOSEPH L. THOMAS.

Quakertown, Bucks County, June 20th, 1805.

SIR,

HAVING observed by perusing the Medical Museum, your assiduity in collecting the most efficacious modes of treating diseases, and all such important cases as occur to practitioners, which would be useful, in improving the science of medicine ; I am induced, from the general invitation given, to communicate the following singular case that occurred to me, June 16th, 1803, merely to shew the possibility of nature far exceeding the narrow limits of mankind's increase by one or two at a birth.

I was called upon to visit Mrs. L——, of this county, being then pregnant the fifth time ; I found her in an extremely debilitated state ; being reduced by a severe flooding that had taken place twenty-four hours before I came. It was first occasioned from an injury she received eight days before, by a sudden jolt, being almost thrown from a horse, which caused immediate pain in her back, and a slight hemorrhage from the uterus ; but on the 13th she was so well recovered as to be enabled to walk out to her husband, working on the farm. It being a very warm day, the heat, and the exertions and agitation of body in walking, brought on a return of the complaint more severe than at first. A midwife was called upon, and every mean was used to check it, without effect, until the person appeared to be sinking fast. On the 14th I found her so reduced by the loss of blood, and the hemorrhage still continuing at each slight pain, occasioned by the small beginning of the uterus to contract ; with extremities cold, and the pulse scarcely perceivable, as to make the case appear very doubtful.

I did not make any examination, being informed that she (by her reckoning) was between her seventh and eighth month ;

and not observing any certain symptoms of labour, and considering nothing forward of that kind, I thought it proper to keep her in the most perfect tranquillity possible. I ordered warm flannels to the extremities; at the same time a bladder filled with cold water, with some crude sal ammoniac dissolved in it, was applied to the pubes. I then gave her small and repeated doses of pulv. ipecac. comp. designing it as a gentle sudorific anodyne, rendering the circulation more uniform and equable. In a short time all the alarming symptoms began to abate, and she became composed; a gentle moisture and warmth were felt over the extremities and system in general; the slight contractions of the uterus moderated, and the hemorrhage almost ceased. I then examined by touch, and found a small dilatation of the orificium uteri, but nothing presenting; she remained easy and composed; all the symptoms were favourable in the evening, and her strength gradually returning, enabled her to take at different times some weak nourishment.

It being a number of miles from the place where I live, I was fearful that my returning home at that time might prove unfavourable to the safety of the woman; expecting that if a return of the complaint should take place, the life of the person would be in imminent danger, if there should be no one present to effect a speedy delivery; as I suspected a partial separation of the placenta to be the cause.

I stayed there during the night; and next morning was awakened by one of the persons present, and informed that a return of the flooding had taken place, and that she complained of bearing down pains with regular intervals. By the touch I found the orificium uteri considerably dilated, and a small portion of the membranes presenting; I then proceeded to expedite delivery as soon as possible. The feet presented, and by an attempt they were brought down; the contractions of the uterus then increased; and as soon as the child entered the passage completely, the hemorrhage ceased, and she was delivered in the usual time required in such cases. Having separated the

cord I found that the placenta could not be brought down by gentle means, and the size of the abdomen being very little diminished, made me suspect another child, and on examination I discovered that my apprehensions were well founded: regular labour-pains came on, and she was delivered of the second by the feet. I still found that the bearing-down pains continued; and the placenta resisting being brought down, together with the bleeding of the cord, after the usual time, and the size of the abdomen but little diminished, made me suspect the third; she was in a short time delivered of the third male by the feet presentation, (the three being attached to the one placenta), it then came away without any difficulty. By the size of the abdomen there was reason to suspect the fourth. She was, however, so extremely reduced, as to make me fear for her safety. Regular pains soon recurred afresh, which induced me to delay placing her in bed. By examining I found the membranes of the fourth child protruding, and she was delivered by a natural presentation of a female child with its placenta. The placenta to which the three males were attached, was much larger than the other. The four were born alive, but lived only a short time. The males appeared to be nearly of the same size; the girl was not so large as the three sons.

A person seeing them afterwards, was so curious as to measure them, and found the largest to be seventeen inches from the top of the cranium to the soles of the feet.

She was, from extreme debility, restored to a moderate state of health; she became pregnant again, and was delivered of a male child in about fourteen months after the former singular case. The mother and child are in good health.

I am, sincerely,
Your well-wisher,

JOSEPH L. THOMAS.

DR. JOHN REDMAN COXE.