

## DR. ROSE'S CASE OF UTERINE HEMORRHAGE.

*Remarks on a Case of Uterine Hemorrhage communicated by JOHN ROSE, M.D., in the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal of February 6th, 1833. By J. K. L., of Albany Co., N. Y.*

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THE DOCTOR tells us that he was called to attend a lady in the seventh month of gestation, with her fourth child; that she had active pains for several hours, and some hemorrhage, before his arrival; and that soon after, the ovum was expelled, which was followed by profuse hemorrhage. This is the substance of the history of the case reported. As the treatment adopted differs essentially from the most approved modes of practice in such cases, and as he supposes 'the good of mankind' would be promoted by copying after it, it will be well to inquire whether the danger arose from the nature of the case itself, or was caused by using improper or neglecting to use proper remedies. Novelties in medicine are dangerous, especially when spread among the younger members of the profession in the pages of a reputable Journal. It is meet, therefore, that truth should be established and error exposed, and that the poison and the antidote be carried abroad in the same vehicle.

The plan of treatment pursued, to suppress this profuse hemorrhage, consisted, first, in enjoining 'quiet, and gently rubbing the abdomen, which caused some pain.' This was abandoned, I infer in consequence of the 'pain,' and cold applied to the pubes, and warmth to the feet and legs. To this was added 'a dose of catechu, soon followed by a second,' and afterwards 'a full dose of acetas plumbi.' During all this time the hemorrhage continued, and the patient was reduced to a state of almost continued syncope, but was resuscitated a little by 'light cordials.' It is rather surprising, after the light which has been thrown on this subject by the labors of Baudelocque, Rigby, Leroux, Ryan and others, and above all by the lucid and emphatic lessons of Dewees, that any practitioner should adopt such vague and erratic practice! In no department of the profession are correct principles, and promptitude in their application, more obviously necessary than in this. Yet we see members of the profession—men who so frequently have the 'issues of life and death' in their hands—apparently unacquainted with the physiology of the uterus, and that simple and almost mechanical economy by which alone floodings are suppressed. This economy is the 'tonic contraction;' to promote and secure which, should be the only aim of the accoucheur in all cases of uterine hemorrhage.

What could have induced the Doctor to desist from his frictions over the abdomen, when he was on the point of success, as manifested by the 'pain;' to leave the bed-side of the patient, and consume valuable time in preparing catechu and acetas plumbi—remedies having scarcely any efficacy in such cases—I cannot see. If he aimed to promote the 'tonic contraction' of the uterus, he had remedies of acknowledged power in external frictions, and even introducing the hand to stimulate its internal surface. Acetas plumbi, no doubt, is a good secondary agent. It is a valuable remedy in many chronic discharges. It serves to astringe and

brace up (if I may so express it) the living fibre, relaxed by the debilitating effects of protracted and less copious hemorrhages. But it never can be relied on, in any sudden and formidable case of flooding. If a large artery is divided, the surgeon never attempts to control the 'gushing tide' by astringents; his resource is the ligature. The ligature is not applicable to the uterine vessels; but there is fortunately that inherent contractile power in the uterine fibre itself, which, if properly called into action, is amply sufficient to arrest the effects of any lesion of vessels which may happen after delivery. Besides, the time employed in preparing and administering astringents, with the slowness of their operation, would frequently leave the patient to perish.

The foregoing remedies being unavailing, and the patient in 'articulo mortis,' the Doctor next introduced the 'tampon' in vaginam, which he says completely stopped the hemorrhage in a few minutes. This is an uncertain mode of medical induction. There is only one way in which the tampon in this case could have any influence whatever. The irritation of the vagina and os uteri might have had a tendency to stimulate the uterus to contraction; but had that failed, as it frequently will, what would have been the fate of his patient? It is true the blood did not flow externally, nor was it so unsightly to the optics of friends; but was not an uncontracted uterus, in the seventh month of pregnancy, capacious enough to contain as much blood as would drain out the vital fluid from a patient already in 'articulo mortis'? The truth is, the action of the tampon is generally and almost universally mechanical. Its utility and powers are fully known by a large part of the profession. It is applicable to but few cases; such as hemorrhages occurring in the unimpregnated uterus, or in the early stages in the impregnated—in placental presentations also, and occasionally when the uterus has contracted to a certain size after delivery at the full time. But no practitioner, who values the life of his patient, will apply it to suppress flooding in the uncontracted uterus at the latter stages of pregnancy.

J. K. L.

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#### INFLUENCE OF OCCUPATION ON HEALTH.—NO. X.

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**CLASS X.**—*Occupations injurious from the inhalation of the dust produced by the articles employed.* A very considerable number of trades include manipulations, by which the articles employed are reduced to fine filaments or powder, or involve operations on substances in this state; and in all of these the dust or filaments, being suspended in the atmosphere, may gain admission to the mouth, lungs, or stomach, and produce some inconvenience or suffering. The trades included in this class are susceptible of a threefold division, according to the nature and origin of the substances employed, as being animal, vegetable, or mineral; and according to this division, I now propose to consider them.

1. Trades involving annoyance from animal dust, are not very numerous. Inconvenience is experienced from this cause in some of the processes of the woolen manufacture, particularly in those of picking