

A case of fibrous tumour of the uterus / by T.H. Tanner.

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A C A S E

OF

FIBROUS TUMOUR OF THE UTERUS.

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LIMITED & Co. AUTHOR.

THE case which I am anxious to bring under the notice of the Fellows of the Obstetrical Society has been so long under my care, and has so often been the cause of much anxious consideration, that its details may possibly seem to me to have a greater importance than they really merit. But however this may be, I cannot help thinking that there are at least two or three points in the following history which deserve attention; and therefore I shall relate the chief features of the case, condensing the facts from the record in my note-book.

Mrs. H—, æt. 34, has been married seven years; applied to me on the 6th June, 1855. She says that "she thinks she has been pregnant twice, but on both occasions has

miscarried at the end of a few weeks." Always enjoyed good health until the last two years. Three years ago she first noticed that the catamenia were more abundant than she had been accustomed to, but no remedies were used until twelve months since, when she began to have attacks of flooding. There has been scarcely any interval between these attacks for the last nine months, and for the past four months she has not been free from a discharge of blood for a single day. She is a fine, tall woman, and very stout; but of course the hæmorrhage has weakened her considerably, and she looks now quite exsanguine. There is no history of any particular disease in her family, and she is unable to account for her present sufferings.

On a careful investigation a few days afterwards, I found her very feeble and nervous. The pulse was weak, and frequent attacks of palpitation of the heart were complained of. Auscultation of the heart detected a systolic, anæmic, bellows-sound; while a venous bruit was heard in the neck. The abdominal parietes were loaded with adipose tissue, so that it was difficult to learn the condition of the viscera; but there was greater dulness over the hypogastric region than elsewhere, and such a sense of resistance as would be communicated by a solid tumour. On examining per vaginam, the uterus was found very high up, so that the cervix was reached only with difficulty. The os uteri was seen by a long speculum to be very small, so that a small bougie could not be passed through it. I told her that from my examination I did not consider she had ever been pregnant; and she acknowledged that she thought it very probable that clots of blood had been mistaken for the result of gestation. She told me that occasionally the uterine discharge was like dirty water, and of a very offensive smell. She had also had excellent medical advice without deriving any benefit. Appetite was very bad, so that she quite loathed food. The diagnosis which I made was to the effect that there was some small foreign body in the uterus, but what the exact nature of this substance might be was doubtful; while there was also some tumour—probably ovarian or uterine—

occupying the lower part of the abdomen. She was ordered to keep very quiet in bed, to have plenty of nourishment and stimulants, and to take a scruple of ergot of rye every six hours.

Under this treatment she slowly improved, and in about ten days the bleeding ceased. Quinine and acid mixture was then given, with a full animal diet, and she went on until the catamenia again appeared on the 9th July. Astringents were immediately commenced, and all discharges stopped in ten days.

Now it would serve no useful purpose to give even a monthly report of this case; for all the important facts of it from this time, July, 1855, until the patient's death, on Friday, 28th December, 1860, can be summed up in a few sentences. The flow of blood from the uterus was always checked with great difficulty; and generally a few days after it was controlled, it was again excited by the return of the catamenial period. Astringents of all kinds were freely tried on various occasions, but at no one time did they effect any good whatever. Amongst the remedies which proved useless, it may be as well to mention the acetate of lead, ergot of rye, the mineral acids, gallic acid, cinnamon, iron alum, the sesquichloride of iron, &c. Opium was of no value, and the infusion of digitalis did harm. Neither was any benefit derived from galvanism, or from the application of ice, or from plugging the vagina with cotton wool. With regard, however, to the tampon, it may be mentioned that the patient was so irritable, and the vagina was so sensitive, that she never could bear an efficient plug for more than twelve hours, even though opium was administered to diminish the uneasiness. The only agent which had any effect in checking the hæmorrhage was mercury; and to this agent Mrs. H— owed her life on several occasions. It is important to remember, that the good effects of this mineral were obtained as soon from the bichloride of mercury, in doses of the sixteenth of a grain every six hours, as from calomel given to the extent of producing salivation. During the last few months of the year 1860, however, the patient became extremely exhausted by her long and depressing

illness ; while at the same time she suffered much from irritability of the stomach, so that there was sometimes an inability for several days to take stimulants and nourishment by the mouth. She gradually became weaker and weaker, but did not lose flesh ; and at length died on December 27th, 1860, from pure anæmia.

At the *autopsy*, a few hours after death, the body was found quite bloodless. The adipose tissue on the abdominal walls was two inches in thickness, while the vaginal labia looked like large folds of fat. On opening the abdomen the lower part of the cavity was seen to be occupied by an oval cyst nearly nine inches broad, which was apparently formed under the peritoneum, stretched upwards from the fundus uteri ; it contained about a pint and a half of urinous-looking fluid. There was also a smaller cyst, holding two drachms of serum. By means of the large cyst (which rested upon the expanded wings of the iliac bones) the uterus was kept out of the true pelvis. On examining the cavity of the womb, it was found to contain a fibrous tumour, about the size of a very small orange cut in half. The tumour was seated in the posterior wall of the uterus, its base or attachment being its broadest part, while it projected into the uterine cavity for fully three quarters of an inch. The other organs of the body were healthy.

On afterwards making a slight dissection of the cyst, it was made out that the larger one had in all probability commenced in the right broad ligament, and had gradually distended it along with the Fallopian tube. On the left side the Fallopian tube was found dilated, and containing some pus, which did not appear of recent formation. The preparation has been put up in the museum of University College by Dr. Harley.

DESCRIPTION OF PLATE I.

The drawing exhibits the cysts, with the cavity of the uterus laid open, showing the tumour.

a. Portion of the bladder ; *b.* Urethra ; *c.* Os uteri ; *d.* Interior of uterus ; *e.* Fibrous tumour ; *f.* Cysts.



