

[Extraordinary account of the state of the pudendum of a female ... Four children delivered at one birth].

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An ingenious correspondent in the Island of Grenada, has favoured us with the following extraordinary account of the state of the pudendum of a female, imported into that island from Africa.

A stout young athletic negro-driver, having made choice for his wife of a neat young negro girl, just brought out of a cargo, with equal rapture and vigour, attempted the completion of hymeneal bliss, but without success. The flattering opinion of virginity reconciled him to disappointment on his first essay; but a second and third being equally fruitless and mortifying, from a consciousness of his own ability, he was led to examine the parts, and with astonishment informed the manager, that his wife was neither woman nor man. This intelligence the manager communicated to my partner and me; and, sympathising tenderly

derly with the disappointed husband, he wished to know if any thing could be done.

Upon examination, we were astonished to find hardly a trace of clitoris, nymphæ, or even labia pudendi. The parts were as flat and as smooth as the palm of my hand. Upon more narrow inspection, a cicatrix could be traced, from the mons veneris down to the perinæum. At the lower end of this cicatrix, a small hole was discovered, scarcely large enough to admit a common probe. Through this opening, we were witnesses to her making water, guttatim; and we were informed that she menstruated in the same manner.

As we found the obstruction to consist in a simple adhesion of the integuments, being able to pass the probe up higher than the urethra, we judged it proper to divide the cicatrized parts, for the purpose of facilitating the natural discharges, which, confined as they evidently must be, in the obstructed passage they now had, particularly menstruation, might have occasioned the most serious evils.

Having secured the woman, in the same manner as is practised for the operation of lithotomy, a grooved probe was introduced, on
which

which the integuments were divided, as high up as it was thought proper to go. But it was afterwards found, that the opening was still small; and there was reason to believe, that it would become more straitened and rigid when fully cicatrized. Another incision was therefore made downwards, for about a quarter of an inch; and proper dressings were applied to keep the parts from closing.

Upon visiting her some days afterwards, we found, that little attention had been paid to the directions given, and that the parts had begun to coalesce. We then again dilated both upwards and downwards, to prevent any unfortunate event in case of pregnancy; a condition, which there was reason to expect might occur.

In labour, there would be the greatest dread of danger, from the rigidity of the parts when cicatrized, and their want of dilatibility. On this ground, our advice had been rather against giving the means of coition, which might prove fatal to her. But her entreaties, as well as those of her husband, and repeated attempts which he had lately made, notwithstanding the vigilance of those to whom she was entrusted,

rendered it now a matter of prudence to dilate as much as possible. But, on healing, the parts coalesced considerably, so as to make the opening much smaller than was intended. From this reason, or perhaps from caprice, she was afterwards deserted by her husband; upon which she fell gradually into a state of melancholy, and died a few months after.

Her own account of this phænomenon, corroborated by many of her nation, was, that when a child, she underwent a circumcision, practised in some parts of the coast of Africa. Her mother died, soon after the operation was performed, and no proper attention was bestowed upon her. In this way, it is reasonable to suppose, that the above coalescence may have been formed.

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With the following well authenticated instance of four children delivered at one birth, we have been favoured by an ingenious gentleman,

tleman, Mr J. Spencer, from the Island of Dominica, who had himself an opportunity of seeing both the mother and children.

A negro woman, named Benebah, was brought from Africa to Dominica in the year 1782, and soon after was married to one of her own countrymen. By him she had one child. But, this husband dying; soon after that, she married another of her countrymen, with whom she lived for several years without having any children. But at length she became pregnant; and had no other reason for suspecting a plurality of children, excepting an uncommonly large size. On the 22d of February 1789, when, according to her own computation, she had been about nine months pregnant, she was seized with labour-pains; and, by the assistance of a negro woman on the estate to which she belonged, who officiated as midwife, she was delivered of a boy, to appearance healthy, and of the ordinary size. But no placenta coming away, and marks of pregnancy still continuing, an accoucheur was sent for, who, about 24 hours after the birth of her first child, delivered her of three girls, all of
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the ordinary size; after which, he extracted a placenta of an enormous size, which he computed would have weighed about fifteen pounds. After this she had a very good recovery, and was able to walk about by the eighth day. She gave suck to all her four children, also employing, however, with them at the same time a good deal of spoon meat. Mr Spencer saw them when about five months old. At that time they were all stout children, and, as well as their mother, in perfect health.

When Benebah was delivered of these children, she was about the 30th year of her age. She measured five feet two inches in height. Her husband, who was in his 35th year, was a stout well-made man, about the middle size: and it may perhaps be mentioned as a singularity, that both she and her husband were twins.

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