

The history of a case of a foetus found in the right ovarium / by Dr Forrestier.

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VIII.

The History of the Case of a Fœtus found in the Right Ovarium. By Dr Forrestier, Chevalier of the Order of the King of France, Physician to his Army in North America, and First Physician to his Royal Highness Monsieur.

I WAS called on the 18th of March 1784, to see the wife of a porter who had been troubled with colic pains from the month of November preceding. I found her considerably emaciated, with a feverish, small, and hard pulse, frequent retchings without effect, and a continual tenesmus. She told me she had not menstruated since the month of September last; that at that period she fell much in the same way she had done formerly in four preceding pregnancies, which had all terminated happily; that for the two first months of this, she had enjoyed perfect health, but upon a journey to Fontaine-Bleau, where she had business,

business, she was seized with violent colic pains in her lower belly, which had continued ever since; and that at that period her pains were considerably increased.

After this account, having no doubt of the patient being in a pregnant state, I ordered a man-midwife to be called, who confirmed my diagnostic; and we prescribed a proper treatment, in consequence of which the pains were quieted during three weeks.

On the 8th of April following, the pains returned, with a violent shivering, a great degree of fever, and a considerable loss of blood, very black, and mixed with hard clots of a fleshy appearance.

Upon examining the uterus, its orifice did not appear to be dilated. I ordered a bleeding at the arm, and afterwards a second, after which she passed a tolerable quiet night. As the circumstances of the patient left us in great uncertainty what to conclude, we continued to question her very particularly, when, to our great astonishment, she told us she believed she passed these clots by the anus. We immediately ordered a glyster to be administered, which

was

was soon followed by a stool of black blood, in which there floated two clots of the same nature with the former ones, although during the discharge the precaution was taken to shut the passage from the vagina.

No longer doubting of the fact, the next question was, to discover from what vessels the blood came. The matter discharged had not the appearance of the morbus niger, and had still less resemblance to the hæmorrhoidal flux. Could the phenomena be accounted for, by supposing an adhesion of the rectum to the uterus?

In this state of doubt respecting the true nature of the disease, it was still impossible not to see the danger attending it. The continuance of the hæmorrhage, and the fainting fits with which it was followed, terminated in the death of our patient, on the 10th of April, about eight o'clock in the evening.

We proceeded next day to examine the body, by dissection, assisted by Mr Gauchez surgeon and man-midwife, and Mr Villète apothecary. We found the liver, spleen, stomach, and small intestines, in the ordinary
found

found state. But both the right and left iliac regions contained each a tumour. The uterus lodged in the left was of the size of a new-born child's head. It was of a whitish colour, all the blood-vessels appearing obliterated. Having opened it through its whole extent, we found its coats about an inch thick at the fundus, and gradually diminishing to its cervix. This organ, though a little dilated, approached a good deal to its natural state, and the cavity would hardly have contained a small hen's egg.

We then proceeded to examine the tumour which occupied the right side. It had the form, and was nearly the size of a large hog's bladder distended with air. It had a general adhesion to the neighbouring parts, which began from its bottom, to the intestinum cæcum, and embraced the whole of the colon to its sigmoid flexure, where it appeared engrafted in the tumour. It was also attached to the mesenteric part of the large intestines. The epiploon was slightly united to it, and as it were laid upon its superior and anterior part.

part. In short, it seemed to have attached itself intimately to all the neighbouring viscera. These had preserved their natural colour, except the intestines, which, from the cæcum to the rectum, were black, and filled with blood.

After having easily separated the adhesions of the tumour, except at the point corresponding to the sigmoid flexure of the colon, where a very firm adhesion was formed, we proceeded to examine the Fallopian tubes. The left was in its natural state. Its opening into the uterus was free, though a little more difficult than in the sound condition of that organ. We then passed to the right tube, the canal of which was obliterated, and resisted the introduction of the smallest probe. The instrument seemed likely to penetrate into the tumour, but the resistance it met with was too strong not to make us afraid of occasioning a forced passage, which would have thrown uncertainty upon the result of our researches.

Having made this examination, and being convinced that this tumour was nothing but the right ovarium prodigiously dilated, we
opened

opened it through its whole length. We found it filled with blood, and with clots resembling these which the patient had voided by the anus.

Having directed the hand to the point of adhesion of the intestine with the tumour, we drew from it a very considerable clot, which had formed itself there. This confirmed us in the opinion of the existence of a communication between the tumour and the intestine. Prosecuting our researches farther with regard to the contents of the tumour, we felt bones which we discovered to be the entire skeleton of a foetus almost totally putrid. The membranes, however, of the umbilical cord were not entirely in a state of putrefaction. By means of these, we arrived at the placenta, which was placed to the right upon the bottom of the tumour.

The extreme foetor of this new matrix, and of the intestines, would not permit us to continue our researches any longer. But the formation and existence of the foetus in the right ovarium were incontestibly proved; and this was the essential object.

The new matrix, with the foetus, removed

ved from the body, were made to undergo several washings with camphorated vinegar, being previously put into a basket, to prevent the disjoining of the parts, the extremities and trunk of which were held together only by their ligaments.

The foetus was almost in a complete state of maceration. All the muscles, except a very small part of those which belong to the linea alba and the tendinous extremities, were totally destroyed, as were likewise, the liver, the spleen, and the lungs. There remained nothing of the heart but its coverings. The membranes of the brain were fallen into the cavity of the cranium. There was no vestige of the parts of generation. The nails of the fingers, however, were preserved.

The skeleton was fifteen inches long, the upper extremities were five inches and a half, and the lower five inches in length. The ossification was as perfect as that of any infant in the womb. The cotula, the sternum, the iliac bones, and even the parts which generally are last formed, were all perfectly complete.

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