

The history of an ovarium, wherein were found teeth, hair, and bones, by James Cleghorn, M.B. : vide Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy for 1787.

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VII.

*The History of an Ovarium, wherein were found
Teeth, Hair, and Bones. By James Cleg-
horn, M. B. Vide Transactions of the
Royal Irish Academy for 1787.*

GENERATION is a subject so mysterious in itself, that any fact which may serve to throw light upon it, cannot be considered as unimportant. Dr Cleghorn is of opinion, that no appearances have tended so much to elucidate this subject, as the formation and growth of foetuses without the womb; and he thinks none are so deserving of particular attention as those which have been formed in the ovarium. He here presents us with a very striking example of this kind, which exhibits several particulars, equally curious and interesting.

Before, however, relating the history of the case, which fell under his own inspection, he

states,

states briefly the most remarkable instances of the same kind which have been related by some other authors; particularly some instances in the Memoirs of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Paris, in the Journal de Medecine, in the Edinburgh Medical Essays, in the writings of Ruysch, Baudeloque, and others. But among all the instances that have been recorded, one of the most extraordinary cases is that, of which he here gives us an account. The first part of this account, did not, indeed, fall under his own observation; but he had it from authority which he had little reason to doubt. And, after relating the information he received from others, he gives an accurate description of the parts of generation in his own possession, illustrated by an elegant engraving.

The woman who is the subject of this paper, died in the fiftieth year of her age, about ten days after being tapped for a tumour, which was suspected to be a dropical collection in some part of the abdomen. When in health, she was a tall and well made woman; and she had born a child about twenty-five years before her death. She continued in

good health for several months after her delivery, and nursed the child. While on the breast, it was seized with violent and frequent convulsion fits; but, after some time, it recovered so as to be perfectly healthy. But, from this period, the woman herself was observed to decline in her health, and she continued weak and sickly for a year or more. At last, however, she regained her usual good state of health in every circumstance, excepting that her menses never again appeared, and her belly increased in size as if she had been big with child.

Notwithstanding this appearance of pregnancy, she was known to walk lightly, to labour hard, and her legs were never observed to be œdematous. She appeared, in other respects, to be in perfect health, and never once complained of any uneasiness, excepting the inconvenience of carrying so large a belly. In this state, she remained for upwards of twenty-three years; at which time she was advised to be tapped, and submitted to the operation. Upon withdrawing the canula, a considerable quantity of viscid matter flowed out, mixed with hair and bits of fat. But, in
place

place of obtaining any relief, she died ten days after the operation. The gentleman who performed the operation, opened her body after death. Upon cutting into the abdomen, the first thing which presented itself to view, under the peritoneum, was a large seemingly muscular sac, which extended across the abdomen. Upon opening this sac, it was found to contain balls of a fatty substance, mixed with hair, and likewise with several bones. The operator, struck with the singularity of the appearance, cut out entire the bladder, rectum, and uterus with its appendages, together with some portion of the labia pudendi and podex. These parts were given to Dr Cleghorn; and he here presents us with a very particular and accurate account of the appearances. As the nature of our work does not admit of engravings, we cannot convey to the reader the same accurate idea as he would obtain from the original. But we presume, that from the following account, the intelligent reader will have no difficulty in understanding the principal morbid affections which here took place.

The bladder appeared to be of the natural size, and, when laid open, shewed no morbid
 G 4 affection,

affection. The vagina, os tinæ, and uterus, were in a perfectly natural state. On the left side, the Fallopian tube, with the ovarium and other appendages of the uterus, were also in a natural condition. On the right side, the Fallopian tube and round ligament were very evident at the part next the uterus; but, at the other extremity, they were attached to a large bag or cyst, which, there could be no doubt in concluding, was the ovarium of that side enlarged to an immense size. To obtain some idea of the capacity of this bag, Dr Cleghorn endeavoured to fill it with water, and concluded, that it would, if fully distended, hold from ten to twelve quarts. But, upon laying open this cyst, its internal parts were what chiefly deserved notice. A considerable portion of the internal surface was even and smooth; but, at its lower part, it was made very irregular and rough, by a great number of small pouches of different sizes, and several piles of bone.

The contents of these pouches were as various as their size was different. Some contained a gelatinous kind of mucus, while others contained a cretaceous matter. In some,
he

he found a brownish black stuff like bone, which had been melted down, and corrupted by putrefaction. In others, the contents resembled fat, and felt like it when rubbed between the fingers. In some were hairs; in others small fragments of bones. Some were attached by small peduncles; others adhered by their coats. The bones were very irregular; nor could it be said that they resembled, in every respect, any one bone of the skeleton, although some of them had a good deal the appearance of being portions of the jaws. One in particular resembled the os maxillare superius, having something like a palate plate, an alveolar process, and having teeth incased in it. There were other bones of considerable size; some round, some flat; but none of them could be likened to any of the bones of the skeleton. They were all covered with a tough, tense white membrane, which adhered very firmly to them, and much resembled the common periostium. This was again covered by a production of the internal coat of the cyst; and, upon feeling the bones through this thick coat, Dr Cleghorn once imagined that the flat ones were ribs, and that the round ones

were

were the skeleton of a foetus's leg and foot, as there was a joint. But, upon laying them bare, he could not discover any resemblance to these bones. As to the teeth, they were perfectly regular in all their parts, having cases and fangs, and being almost all of them encased in an alveolar process and sockets. They were forty-four in number, and the greater part were distinguishable into some of the species. There were eight incisores, three canini, four bicuspides, and sixteen molares; the others were doubtful. Several of them were of the first crop of teeth; while the greater number were evidently such as are found in the jaws of persons of fourteen or fifteen years of age. Sixteen of these teeth were encased in the bone formerly mentioned, resembling the maxilla superior; the others were scattered without order, excepting that it did not happen that teeth of different species were close one to another. But some of the incisores were in so close contact, that their fangs even grew together. In one part of this sac, there was a distinct cell, in which was contained a quantity of hair, resembling the hair of the head, and which was matted

matted into a cake by some matter, probably such as filled the cavity of the sac. Some little tubercles which lay in the sac, were also beset with small hairs.

After giving an accurate account of the particulars of this extraordinary case, Dr Cleg-horn next lays before the reader, two opinions which have been offered with the view of explaining such phænomena. Ruysch, in his *Adversaria Anatomica*, treating of *Atheromata*, delivers it decidedly as his opinion, that tumours of this nature, whether found in the ovarium or not, will give rise to the growth of hair, teeth, and bones. In proof of this, he relates a very uncommon case indeed, of a young man whose body was examined after death, and in whose stomach there was found an *Atheroma*, within which was a bundle of hair like the hair of one's head, and likewise a piece of bone, of an irregular shape, about the size of an almond. There were also four real dentes molares, such as are found in the human jaw; two of these teeth grew together, while two others were separate. But, what was still more astonishing, the thigh of a small African deer was found in the same
sac.

fac, or something exactly resembling it, excepting that its hoof was not cloven, but covered with a nail at its end, like a human finger. In opposition to this case, however, Dr Cleghorn observes, that it is only related by Ruyfch on the authority of others. And he, with great justice, adds, that even granting that hairs and bones were really found in Atheroma's of the stomach, it is more probable that these substances were swallowed accidentally, and generated the Atheroma, than that they were generated in such a tumour.

In opposition to the opinion of Ruyfch, Dr Cleghorn states another, which is supported by the authority of the sagacious Astruc. In his treatise on the diseases of women, he observes, that besides the common incysted tumours found in the ovaria, as well as in other parts, there is one peculiar species formed there by the putrefaction of embryo's, which have been there conceived, and have perished. When steotomata and atheromata, with bundles of hair in them, are found in the ovaria, he supposes that they have been parts of a foetus which has died there, and that the hairs have continued to grow after its death, as they

they are known to do in dead bodies; and he imagines that teeth may grow in the same manner. It is not however, necessary, Dr Cleghorn thinks, to give the teeth and bones a kind of vegetable growth, such as hair is supposed to have, in order that the teeth should grow even to the maturity of adult bones: he imagines that an inosculation of blood-vessels may take place between the membrane which covers the bones, and the coats of the sac. In this manner, he thinks the bones will be supplied with blood, and will grow. And he considers this opinion as supported by the numerous observations, which prove, that parts of animals which have been separated one from another, and afterwards brought into contact, do frequently unite, and, by their vessels inosculating, have a free circulation of fluids through them.

In the case Dr Cleghorn has described, it would appear that the patient had borne the tumour and its contents for the space of twenty-four years previous to her death. And he thinks it a very curious subject of enquiry, How long Nature will preserve a fœtus in its mother's belly, without creating any other inconvenience

