

Obstetrical researches, by Maurice Onslow, M.D.

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ART. II. *Obstetrical Researches.* By MAURICE ONSLOW, M.D.

Dr. O. has two MS. copies of Dr. Wm. Hunter's Lectures on Midwifery, the one dated 1768, the other 1775. In the first of these he deprecates all interference with the placenta, the delivery of which, he says, may always be safely left to nature; and very emphatically adds, that the introduction of the hand into the uterus, for the purpose of extracting the placenta, is a "d—mn—ble practice." In the latter lectures, he says, he would prefer bringing it away artificially, if it does not come away in an hour or two, because the uterus will sometimes contract so as to prevent its extraction.

A case is given from a MS. in the hand-writing of Dr. Bromfield, describing the consequences of leaving the placenta too long after delivery, which exhibits but an unfavourable specimen of the practice of midwifery fifty years ago. The patient had been delivered of a dead child, after having been in labour for 43 hours. The Doctor saw her nineteen hours after delivery, when the placenta was still retained, with a full and rapid pulse, anxious and difficult breathing, with occasional delirium and tenderness of the parts. It was considered that the proper time for fetching away the placenta was then elapsed. Some slight examination was afterwards made, but though the os uteri was dilated, no attempt was made to remove it, and it was left to come away on the 4th day, (between sixty or seventy hours after the birth of the child.) With full pulse at 150, hot skin, great tenderness and tension of the abdomen, the practice consisted of one dose of rhubarb, mithridate, clysters of chickens' guts, with common emulsion and manna! We are not, therefore, surprised to find that the patient died on the morning of the ninth day, with a distended abdomen, frequent vomiting, and difficult breathing.

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