

During the year 1839 the number of women delivered in the Midwifery Institution of Vienna, I can certify from my personal knowledge to have been, from July 1839 to July 1840, Natural Labours, 4901; Twins, 5; Three at a Birth, 1. Presentation: face, 30; breech, 56; foot, 42; Turning, 14; Instruments, 24; Perforation, 1.

21, College-street, Chelsea,
December 9, 1840.

POLYPUS IN THE UTERUS.

By P. L. BURCHELL, Esq., Surgeon to the Royal Maternity Charity.

MRS. LAZARUS, residing at No. 25, Union-street, Kingsland-road, of a spare habit of body, and of the melancholic temperament, ætat 33, was delivered of a seven-months' child, far advanced in decomposition, on November 4th, at nine o'clock, P.M., by Mrs. Hopkins, one of the midwives attached to the Royal Maternity Charity; and as the placenta was retained, I was requested to visit her. There was no hæmorrhage, nor had there been any; neither had there been many pains since the birth of the child, which had taken place upwards of an hour previously. In consequence of the lapse of time, I immediately proceeded to extract the placenta; I found it adherent to the anterior part of the uterus. The contraction of the organ opposed considerable resistance to the easy removal of the mass; but with care I succeeded in taking it away, together with the whole of the membranes; it was very putrid; no hæmorrhage succeeded. Whilst my left hand (which I always use in these cases) was in the uterine cavity, I could distinctly feel something in contact with the back of it, which appeared like a tumour, and I mentioned the circumstance to the midwife; but as the woman expressed herself tolerably comfortable, and as no hæmorrhage was going on, I did not think myself justified in interfering further. The uterus contracted favourably, and the patient went on well for eight days, but in the evening of the eighth day after delivery, the husband came to request me to see her. I went immediately, and found her on the bed complaining of a pain at the lower part of the abdomen; she stated that she was unable to remain in the sitting posture in consequence of feeling a pressure downwards, as if of a heavy lump; she said that she had experienced this inconvenience in a slight degree for a day or two, but did not think it of any consequence; she had been cheerful in the morning, and engaged in her usual domestic occupations. She appeared exceedingly low and dull, not caring to exert herself sufficiently to answer my questions; the skin was clammy, though warm, the

tongue moist, her bowels had been relieved in the day, but the bladder had not acted; according to her statement, indeed, she had not passed any urine for two days. On making an examination, per vaginam, I found a substance presenting at the upper part of the canal, but ascertained that the greater bulk of it remained within the cavity of the uterus. I tried to bring it lower with my finger, that I might have an opportunity of examining it more accurately; this I partly succeeded in doing, causing a small portion of it to protrude through the os externum; it appeared about the size of a small melon, it emitted a very offensive odour, and about an ounce of grumous fluid escaped from its substance; the uterus was in its natural position, and contracted upon the tumour. The bladder was not much distended. Not liking to exert any force in order to get the tumour away, as I was not satisfied to what part of the uterus it might be attached, I left her for the present, after ordering small doses of ammonia to be given at short intervals, and a solution of chloride of lime to be applied to the part, for the purpose of correcting the foetor. I saw her again in about an hour, accompanied by my friend, Mr. Baird; we found her in the state in which I had left her; we both of us used gentle traction to the tumour, but as it did not descend we desisted from our endeavours to remove it; we could now distinguish that it was of a fleshy character, and that large blood-vessels ramified on its surface. As she had not voided any water for two days, though the bowels had been well relieved, I introduced the catheter; there was a little difficulty in passing the instrument, as the bladder appeared to be pushed towards the left groin, probably by the pressure of the tumour; about ten ounces of offensive urine were drawn off. I ordered a persistence in the medicine at first prescribed.

November 13, nine, A.M. Had passed a restless night, was bedewed with a clammy perspiration, pulse very feeble, tongue dry, was very dull and heavy, her countenance assuming somewhat of a leaden hue. The tumour had undergone no alteration, either in appearance or in situation. I again introduced the catheter, and took away a small quantity of very turbid offensive urine. I requested Dr. F. H. Ramsbotham's attendance, who kindly saw her with me at two o'clock. She had not spoken since I last saw her; was gradually sinking, and the breathing was somewhat laborious, and accompanied with a slight stertor. It was agreed that she should continue the ammonia, and that small quantities of brandy should be administered frequently; she never rallied from this state of depression, and at eleven o'clock, P.M., breathed her last, about thirty-four hours after the symptoms first appeared.

Post-mortem Examination.—I made a post-

mortem examination sixteen hours after death, but in consequence of being pressed for time, I did not institute a general investigation, confining my inquiries to the abdomen. I found, as I suspected, the bladder rather to the left side; it contained about six ounces of turbid urine. The uterus was much larger than it should have been, so long after delivery; its size being about that of an uterus at the fourth month of gestation. There seemed to be a putrid tendency throughout the peritoneal covering of the viscus, which was of a greenish hue. Its substance was firm: on making a V incision into the anterior surface, and turning up the flap, a membranous or fleshy polypus was discovered, attached firmly by a broad base to the posterior part of the internal surface; just above the cervix, the tumour was quite putrid; it was rather torn at one place, most likely by the pressure of the finger when attempting to bring it down; the whole of the lining membrane of the uterus assumed a dark gangrenous appearance. The ovaries were of the usual size, but not healthy, containing several small tubercles; there was a corpus luteum in the right. I have presented the preparation to Dr. F. H. Ramsbotham.

Previous History.—This was the seventh confinement, she had aborted two months previously to this pregnancy; the last is a healthy child, two years of age; she had alternately borne living and dead children. From her history, prior to delivery, I cannot glean anything that could have indicated the gradual development of the polypus. She did not appear to have suffered more pain in this than in her former pregnancies, nor had she experienced any unusual symptoms. Her bowels were habitually constipated, did not act without castor-oil; and after this delivery, the operation of aperient medicine caused distressing feelings of depression.

This case is interesting, as it shows what an extent, and for how many months disease may exist in the uterus, without interfering with the natural process of utero-gestation. It is also singular, that there should have been no symptoms indicative of the mischief that was going on until a few hours before dissolution took place.

The growth of the tumour must have occupied some considerable period; and the probability is, that it must have existed before impregnation, since its size would forbid the supposition that it could have acquired such a magnitude within seven months.

ON THE POISONOUS EFFECTS OF LABURNUM SEEDS.

By T. A. B. BONNEY, Esq., Surgeon,
Brentford.

THE following occurrence, though neither unprecedented nor yet very serious in its results, is, perhaps, sufficiently rare and important to be worth recording in the pages of THE LANCET:—

On the 3rd of the present month, eleven little boys, of the Juvenile Establishment in this neighbourhood, belonging to St. James's, Westminster, ate, *immediately after dinner*, of the seeds of a laburnum-tree growing in their playground. I was sent for about an hour afterwards, and then found the children as follows:—

1. W. D., aged 9, had eaten but one seed, which had produced vomiting and purging; was now pale and nauseated, with pulse scarcely perceptible at the wrist; drowsiness, and sluggish pupils.

2. M. E., aged 9, ate one seed; no vomiting or purging; pulse weak; drowsiness and great dilatation of pupils.

3. T. B., aged 9, pulse weak and rapid; pupils sluggish. This boy had eaten four seeds.

4. W. B., aged 8, had eaten four seeds, which had occasioned vomiting and purging; was now very pale, and had weak pulse.

5. T. G., aged 6, had eaten five seeds; was pale and nauseated, with a weak and rapid pulse.

6. R. T., aged 9, ate one seed; had pain of stomach and a weak pulse.

7. J. M., aged 9, ate five seeds, which purged him considerably. Now feels well.

8. J. E., aged 8, ate one seed, which made him vomit, and he is now well.

9. E. L., aged 7, ate one seed, and looks pale and heavy, but makes no complaint.

10. T. P., aged 8, ate one seed, and has had no symptoms.

11. J. P., aged 7, ate one seed, without any ill effect.

Though it will be observed that only three of these cases presented any cerebral symptoms, it can hardly be doubted that the action of the seeds was truly narcotic; for in one of the worst cases (that of M. E., No. 2,) the drowsiness and dilatation of pupils were very distinctly marked, notwithstanding that neither vomiting or purging had preceded, so as to have occasioned such head symptoms by inducing exhaustion.

The treatment consisted in a salt-and-water emetic to those who had not vomited; a warm bed, with a few drops of aromatic spirit of ammonia, to the faint; and, for the three who had the head affected, a high pillow, a cold lotion to the forehead and temples, and hot bottles to the feet. A few