FIBROID TUMOR OF THE UTERUS.

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M. V. C., forty-four years old, a mulatto, though with considerable Indian blood (the latter perhaps contributing the stoicism which the patient manifested throughout her tedious and painful illness), had been married twenty-two years, and was of naturally robust constitution. She had menstruated regularly since fifteen years of age, and had never been pregnant. About eight years ago she first noticed an enlargement of the lower portion of the abdomen, accompanied with pain, heat, and soreness about the left iliac region. During this time her menses were regular but profuse, occurring at intervals of three weeks. Within a year she had taken her bed and had been most of the time confined to it by prostration and exhaustion resulting from almost constant hæmorrhage. She had consulted several physicians, who after examination gave various opinions in regard to her case, the last consultant having treated her for ovarian dropsy, giving no hope of relief.

I was called to see her on the 22d of July, 1874, and found her in an alarming condition, from loss of blood, and suffering from great pain in the abdomen; the latter was increased at intervals by the expulsion from the vagina of a solid substance of the consistency of liver and having an offensive odor. The size of the abdomen was nearly that of a woman at full term. It was plain that the patient was slowly sinking, and that unless some measure was adopted death must soon follow. Dr. Beach saw her in consultation with me the same afternoon, and upon examination of the vagina and rectum found a large, nearly solid tumor of somewhat irregular shape, involving the left half of the uterus from just above the os to the fundus, and compressing the rectum and bladder. The abdomen was quite tender and the pulse very weak. Any operative interference was out of the question on account of her low condition. The treatment agreed upon was to keep the uterus firmly contracted by ergot, with the view of cutting off the supply of blood to the growth, checking the hæmorrhage, promoting the expulsion of clots and sloughs, and assisting the process nature had already commenced; meantime supporting the patient's strength by concentrated extract of beef, muriated tincture of iron, and stimuli. This course was strictly followed for over three months, commencing with fifteen drops of the fluid extract of ergot alternating with the same quantity of the muriated tincture of iron, every three hours, when awake.

The patient bore the ergot remarkably well, and it had the immediate effect of controlling the excessive hæmorrhage and of diminishing the amount of serous fluid which had always accompanied the passage of portions of the sloughing tumor. Six weeks after the treatment had been commenced, the patient began to change for the worse. The

pain in the region of the tumor became almost intolerable, and was controlled only by Battley's sedative and subcutaneous injections of morphia. Frequent fainting spells began to supervene, and it seemed as if the patient must gradually succumb to the combined effects of the enormous drain upon her system and the presence in the uterus of a large mass of suppurating material, which by this time began to make its existence unmistakably known, portions of broken down tissue as big as a tea plate and of an extremely offensive odor passing frequently, and always attended with excruciating pains resembling those of labor; the stench required vaginal injections of carbolic acid and chlorinated soda in solution. The appetite began to fail, and there was great difficulty in swallowing.

The pulse ranged from 120 to 130, was weak and threadlike. The tongue was dry and heavily coated. The dose of iron was increased and quinine was added to it in five grain doses.

On the 14th of November, after having passed a very miserable day, she was awakened about three in the morning by a severe paroxysm of pain. This was immediately followed by a discharge from the vagina of a large fibrous mass, accompanied by a torrent of clear fluid which drenched the bed-clothing and ran down upon the carpet in streams. The mass weighed over three pounds, had a number of root-like appendages, and on one side presented a raw and bloody surface. The tumor was much firmer in texture than anything the patient had previously passed, and gave forth a most sickening and disgusting odor. No hæmorrhage followed.

From that time the patient began to improve, and at present is performing her ordinary household duties. She has had a return of her catamenia twice within two months, the discharge being normal in appearance and quantity. The uterus, on examination by Dr. Beach and myself within a month was found contracted to its normal size.

The interest in this case seems to centre in the fact of the tolerance of the system to the long-continued use of ergot; the exhibition of the drug no doubt keeping the uterus sufficiently contracted to enable it at the proper moment to throw off a large mass of slough, at the same time controlling the hæmorrhage and preventing the absorption of elements that might induce septicæmia. Of the preparations of iron, the muriated tincture was selected from its well-known styptic and tonic properties to assist in the prevention of hæmorrhage and to improve the character of the blood, which had become impoverished from a long-continued drain. The patient has stated within a week that she is as strong as she ever was, and has taken a walk of between four and five miles without ill effects.