

TWO CASES OF UTERINE HYDATIDS.

By John Evans, M.D., of Attica, Indiana.

UTERINE hydatids seem to have attracted attention as early as the fifth century, as an allusion to them is found in the writings of *Ætius* ; since which time numerous authors have successively given a more brief or extended description of the disease. But until *Madame Boivin* wrote, no full or systematic account was given of it. And since the publication of her memoir on the subject, in 1827, however erroneous some of her opinions may prove to be, authors seem to have contented themselves with her statements, and to have concluded that there is little else to do, than "to verify and strengthen her inferences." Even *Prof. Gross*, in his great work on *Pathological Anatomy*, has adopted, without dissent, her opinions.

As we are yet in the dark in reference to the cause, mode of development, and, to a great extent, the nature and proper treatment of the disease, the following cases are reported with a hope that they may add something to the amount of facts already gathered on the subject. They are interesting in their bearing on the subject of the origin of hydatids, as it is a question of much forensic importance.

I am led to believe that uterine hydatids are much more common than the student of *Dewees* would suppose ; as that veteran, in the course of a long life and a more extensive practice in midwifery than has fallen to the lot of any other American, found but a single case of the disease. I have had an account of several cases, falling under the observation of professional acquaintances, in addition to those here reported. And when we remember the amount of obstetrical practice which is attended to by those who are too ignorant, or too careless in their observations to notice a case of the kind, we may consistently conclude that many cases of uterine hydatids exist without being detected at all.

CASE I.—*Mrs. B.*, aged 25 years, of lymphatic temperament, light complexion and light hair ; who had two healthy children, and enjoyed tolerable good health until the summer and fall of 1842, when she suffered from repeated attacks of intermittent fever ; observed a gradual tumefaction of the abdomen, which led to the conclusion that she was pregnant.

At a period which she supposed to be the fifth or sixth month of gestation, she was seized with labor, and I was called to treat the threatened miscarriage. Before I arrived there had been expelled from the uterus a quantity of semi-transparent gelatinous fluid, which on cooling became more tenacious, until it was of the consistency of the white of an egg, which was completely filled with hydatids of all intermediate sizes, between that of a grain of wheat and a hazel nut, and numbering many hundreds. I preserved, for office inspection, a quart, which was about half the quantity discharged. There were no membranes observed.

The labor speedily subsided, and was attended, at the time, with but little hemorrhage or other unpleasant symptoms, and she was soon able to sit up most of her time, but did not entirely recover, owing to a torpid

condition of the liver, an atonic condition of the stomach, and an occasional attack of uterine hemorrhage, which last was generally arrested by a decoction of ergot, or the use of sugar of lead and Dover's powder.

Cholagogues, alteratives and tonics were used, as they seemed to be indicated, for six months, without any permanent advantage, and the system gradually gave way. The attacks of uterine hemorrhage became more frequent, more profuse and more difficult to control, until anemia and general anasarca were induced. This decline was attended with almost constant pain in the iliac region, and in the regio-pubis, without a corresponding tenderness, no doubt produced by the hydatids in the ovaries and uterus. Early in June, 1843, the flooding became profuse, and she sunk into a deep coma, with insensibility, the breathing became stertorous, and she died.

Autopsy 20 hours after death.—Brain presented a healthy appearance, except that, contrary to the apoplectic symptoms of which she died, it partook of the general anemia, a case in illustration of anemic apoplexy. The thoracic and abdominal viscera presented nothing worthy of remark until the ovaries were examined, which were enlarged to the size of a quail's egg, and on being divided were found full of hydatids of various sizes. The fimbriated extremities of the Fallopian tubes were highly injected with blood, and of a bright florid color.

The uterus was slightly enlarged, but presented a normal appearance externally. Within its cavity, near the middle of the posterior wall, there was a regular tumor of the size of a peach-stone, from the centre of which a polypus of gelatinous variety, about the size of a pea, was suspended by a narrow foot-stalk. Upon dividing the tumor it was found to contain a number of small hydatids, with two or three bodies containing all the characteristics of the above described polypus. On making further division of the posterior parietes of the uterus, there were found embedded in the substance, four or five isolated hydatids, which, like those expelled by labor, those found in the ovaries, and those of the tumor, presented all the appearances of the genuine acephalocyst.

This is, perhaps, the first case reported of a polypus being attached to the side of the uterus. The hemorrhage, which was the cause of the death, was not attributable to the hydatids, but to the polypus. The irritation produced by the hydatids may have caused a greater determination to the uterus, "*ubi irritatio ibi affluxit*," and this have increased the bleeding of the polypus.

CASE II.—Mrs. B., æt. 55 years, of robust constitution, bilious temperament, dark complexion and dark hair; of German extraction and a native of Pennsylvania—had raised a family of healthy children, the youngest of whom was twelve years old, when she observed a gradual tumefaction of the abdomen, which excited suspicion that she had become pregnant in her old age. At the usual age, she had undergone "the change of life," and for a number of years had no sign of the catamenial flux, during which period she had enjoyed good health.

On the 1st of August, 1841, I found her in moderate labor, with slight hemorrhage. Prescribed a free use of acet. plumbi and pulv. Doveri, which arrested both.

August 2d. Labor returned; and when I arrived, she had been delivered of a mass of hydatids, in a jelly-like substance of about the consistence of the coagulum of blood. I attempted to preserve a quantity as a specimen, but did not succeed. For two days, small quantities of this matter were discharged at intervals; there was but little flooding, and she speedily recovered.

About a year afterwards she informed me that she had enjoyed good health, and regularly menstruated since the hydatids were discharged.

We find Valesneri, Desormeaux, Mad. Boivin, Prof. Gross, and others, concurring in the opinion that uterine hydatids are always the product of impregnation, are a degeneration of the placenta, ovum or membranes, while Percey saw fit to acquit "a young religieuse" of a charge of incontinence, by declaring, that "vesicular moles are merely hydatids." And the only case Dewees found, was in a widow lady, of good character, whose husband had been dead three years. But here we have one case in which hydatids are found in the texture of the uterus, forming a tumor within its cavity, while a copious crop were formed rapidly and discharged without any sign of ovum or membranes; and another occurring at an age which is almost beyond the period of susceptibility to impregnation.

These cases are sufficiently strong in opposition to the theory of hydatids of the uterus being the result of impregnation, to justify a jury in leaning to the side of mercy. For although the impregnated ovum is sometimes the seat of hydatids, as Dr. Atlee's case and many others clearly prove, that fact is not quite broad enough to justify the conclusion that they are only found in connection with it.—*Illinois Medical and Surgical Journal*.

MONOPOLY OF ANATOMICAL "MATERIEL."

[THE editor cannot in every instance sympathize with, or always precisely understand, the grievances of correspondents. It is a rule, however, in the management of the Journal, to give each one an opportunity of being heard on all subjects of a general medical interest. Articles, therefore, written in a proper spirit, from all respectable, responsible sources, are freely admitted, even when not in accordance with our own individual views. In the following paper, which is from such a source, the writer expresses himself strongly, and is evidently under the conviction that a growing spirit of monopoly is interfering with the rights of country practitioners, who are as ambitious to keep pace with the progress of science, as the more favored residents of cities. It is needless to say that we shall cheerfully admit any suitable reply intended to show that the charges of "R." are groundless.]

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—This is, to a wonderful extent, the age of puffing. Everything goes by the steam of unbounded, never-hesitating adulation. Cer-