

Now, then, by the natural food of man, taken as he is, as a race—not as certain fastidious individuals or fastidious ranks or classes may be—I mean that food which is best adapted to the character and condition of man externally, which promotes the most healthy action of all the internal organs, and enables them to fulfil, in the best possible manner, their varied and various functions. I call not that the natural food of man—however it may once have been—which hurries his circulation, disturbs his breathing, checks suddenly or promotes too rapidly the perspiration; or which dims or otherwise disturbs the eye-sight, or causes any other injury. Nothing is better proved than that farinaceous vegetables and fruits are least likely to do this; and that animal food, condiments, crude vegetables, &c., hardly fail to cause more or less disturbance of the kind, if not to induce positive ill health.

But I have dwelt too long, perhaps, on the natural food of man. In my next, which will, I trust, be much shorter, and which will be entitled “Temperance and Excess,” I shall endeavor to notice, still farther, your correspondent’s errors.

W. A. ALcott.

Dedham, Nov., 1839.

CASES OF UTERINE POLYPI.

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[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

THE history of the following cases would seem to justify the remark often made, that much suffering and protracted disease would be prevented, were we more thoroughly to investigate the nature and causes of our patients’ sufferings, before attempting a remedy.

Miss B. R., aged 50, enjoyed good health from childhood till she was 14 years old, when she began to be troubled with obstinate leucorrhœa, and, as she expressed it, “a frequent return of great weakness with color.” The catamenial returns were irregular and profuse, appearing at uncertain periods, attended with severe uterine pains, that were always followed with hæmorrhage, sometimes profuse and alarming. Notwithstanding the use of the most powerful astringent injections, and the whole routine of medicines for the “turn of life,” there was no improvement. The return of hæmorrhage was more frequent and more profuse, seldom ceasing till faintness supervened, when the uterine pains and flowing subsided at the same time. In November of 1837 I first saw her, in consequence of an unusually severe attack of profuse flooding that followed the usual return of pain. The severity of the pain at this time almost equalled in intensity a violent parturient paroxysm. On examination I found the vagina occupied by a small tumor, not larger than a common-sized pear, the neck of which was firmly embraced by the os uteri, and any attempt to pass the finger around it excited stronger uterine contractions and increased flooding. The whole trouble was now manifest, and the cause of all this protracted suffering seemed easily remedied. The tumor was of a soft, placenta-like substance; the os uteri acting on its neck like a ligature, but not with sufficient

firmness to stop the flow of blood into its substance. The attachment was high up in the uterus. Not having the proper canula with me, I contrived, by means of a straight catheter, to convey a ligature round it, and succeeded in removing it in a week. The operation was troublesome and protracted, on account of the imperfection of the instrument. All her complaints left her without further remedies, and she now (Nov. 1839) enjoys perfect health.

Case 2d. Mrs. S. enjoyed good health till the birth of her last child, in 1823. There was nothing unusual in her labor or "getting up." After weaning her child, her health gradually declined. There was "constant weakness, either with color or without," as she expressed it, attended with much pain. These discharges became profuse and offensive. Her flesh and strength gradually wasted, and she experienced all the sufferings usually attendant on the most severe uterine irritation. In March of the present year (1839), her family physician was called to relieve her of obstruction of urine. On attempting to use the catheter, he found a large tumor occupying the whole pelvis, compressing the urethra, and bearing some resemblance to a child's head in an advanced stage of labor. I did not see the patient till next day. Severe expulsive pains during the night had pressed the tumor hard against the perineum, rendering any attempt to include the whole tumor in a ligature difficult if not impossible. The os uteri could only be reached at one point behind the pubis. How the growth of such a tumor could have continued so many years, and have obtained this enormous size, and its presence be unsuspected, was very surprising. As much of the lower portion of the tumor as could be encircled by a ligature was removed, in about a week. This made room for a successful operation on the remainder. The double canula, armed with a strong ligature, was passed through the os uteri to the fundus. One tube of the instrument was then held stationary by an assistant, while the other was carried round to the other side, thus completely encircling the whole mass. The ligature was tightened daily, and her water drawn off with the catheter night and morning. The discharges for ten days, during its separation, were profuse and offensive. The left leg became affected with phlegmasia dolens, and afforded as perfect a specimen of that disease as is ever met with in puerperal confinement. So large was the tumor, that after the ligature came away, it could not be removed from the pelvis, only in portions, being torn away with the fingers. It is now nine months since the operation. The patient has resumed her usual domestic avocations. On examination, two weeks since, no vestige of the complaint remained. From the nature and appearance of the discharges several weeks after the operation, there is reason to suppose that large masses of diseased substance, not included in the tumor, sloughed off and came away.

Case 3d. Mrs. R., mother of several children, the youngest 10 years of age, never has enjoyed good health since her last confinement. She says that "something was by the side of the child's head that burst when she had a hard pain, and threw blood all over the doctor." After she ceased nursing, the catamenia appeared as usual, but was attended with "great weakness," was less regular in its periods, un-

naturally painful, accompanied with discharges of coagula, and always followed "with an offensive weakness, without color," that did not leave her entirely till another monthly period. This is her own account of herself till October of 1837. The abdomen was now found to be unnaturally prominent, uterus occupying as much space as at the 5th month of pregnancy, but much harder and less elastic. The os uteri was distended to the size of a crown piece, and very tender. The gentlest examination produced a discharge of bloody foetid matter. Nothing was prescribed but some trifling medicines to improve the general health, and injections to wash away the offensive discharge. I did not see the patient again till August, 1838. Her health had somewhat improved, although the morbid growth within the uterus had increased; the abdomen was more prominent, and a tumor began to protrude from the os uteri, yet the system had so far accommodated itself to this state of affairs that the patient was able to attend to her usual domestic avocations, except during the week of her "monthly turn," when from pain and profuse discharge she was confined to her bed. During the eight months next succeeding this examination she suffered much more from severe uterine irritation. She has accustomed herself to large doses of opium to allay the severity of bearing down pains, and was in the daily use of chloride of soda injections on account of the foetor of the discharges. On examination of this patient, June 27, 1839, I found a soft tumor protruding from the uterus, apparently the size of a pint measure. Uterus itself hard and distended as a year ago. The gentlest touch of the tumor causes it to bleed. On account of the tenderness and excoriated state of the external parts, the application of a ligature was very painful. The tumor proved to be attached to the uterus by so broad a surface (extending down even to the os uteri), as to oppose a serious obstacle to a successful operation. No part of the tumor within the uterus could be included in the ligature. The portion within the vagina only was removed. The remaining portion was torn and lacerated as much as possible, to destroy its vitality. This was attended with no pain to the patient, and seemed to be followed by the desired effect, as putrid masses, in very foetid discharges, came away during the next three weeks, and in September, nearly three months after the ligature came away, the os uteri is closed and appears natural. Although the uterus, probably, is not free from morbid growth, yet there is no pain nor leucorrhœa, and the patient enjoys a degree of health and comfort not before experienced for ten years.

Case 4th. Mrs. P. married at the age of 20. After the birth of her first child she was never free from leucorrhœa, with occasional discharges of blood, till a second pregnancy took place. During this state she suffered very much, far more than usual. After the birth of this second child the uterus never resumed its customary unimpregnated size, and she was constantly liable to severe bearing-down sensations, with offensive leucorrhœa, and sometimes bloody discharges. Symptoms of uterine irritation increased to a degree to confine her to her bed a considerable part of the time. Notwithstanding all these unfavorable circumstances, a third pregnancy took place, which, after much suffering,

terminated in the birth of a healthy child. After three months lingering illness, from the same source as heretofore, during which she was unable to sit up but a small part of the time, a substance, she says, dropped from the vagina during severe pain, of the size and shape of a large pear, having a stem to it larger than a goose quill; since which she has enjoyed comparatively good health, all symptoms of uterine disease having left her. The above is the patient's own account of her case.

Concord, N. H., Dec. 4, 1839.

BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

BOSTON, DECEMBER 11, 1839.

SMALLPOX IN BOSTON.

AT the last session of the Massachusetts Legislature, the law, which had been a considerable time in force, that made it imperative on the authorities of towns and cities to place those infected with smallpox, in places remote, with a view to the safety of those who were liable to contract the disease, was repealed, and such patients are now permitted to remain in their own dwellings, wholly regardless of others—the law contemplating the security by vaccination, which is within the reach of every person.

For more than twenty years past, whenever cases of smallpox occurred in this city, they were at once removed to Rainsford Island Hospital, at all seasons; but the community had for a long time manifested a displeasure at this act of forcing people from their comfortable dwellings, to be carried eight miles over the water, in storms, perhaps, interrupted by ice and snows, as frequently happened. Females and young children, who naturally felt the utmost reluctance to such a voyage, and who were known, occasionally, to have suffered intensely from sea-sickness, were as often the subjects of removal as the hardy seaman who was accustomed to the commotion of the surging ocean. The provisions at that hospital are by no means neglected, but are most ample and complete; they are in the best possible condition for seamen—those who have no home. By the laws of the United States, in the government of the marine hospitals on the Atlantic coast, no person laboring under an infectious or contagious malady can be admitted. Thus shut out from the only place which they are accustomed to consider a port in a storm, the support of which is a direct tax on the sailor's earnings, the quarantine regulations of all the seaports in this country have humanely kept the poor seaman's bed always in readiness for occupancy. It was to that establishment that smallpox patients have heretofore been conveyed. But when the statute law on this subject was changed—instead of being circumscribed, as before, cases began to multiply in Boston; and from the first of October to this period, a considerable number have been confined with it. In the month of November there were 15 deaths; and thus far in December, 10 deaths have occurred. Cases of variola have been quite numerous, and may now be considered pretty common.

In every city of the magnitude of this, there is necessarily a multitude of thrifless, broken-down, intemperate individuals, who, on any indispo-