

AN
INAUGURAL DISSERTATION

ON
*Diseases
incident
to Pregnancy*

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Diseases incident to Pregnancy.

Pregnancy is purely a physiological function.

Notwithstanding it seems to give rise to certain conditions which if not properly controlled would prove detriment - at both to the mother and her offspring. If these conditions, however, should be present in no very marked degree, no very serious consequences are to be apprehended; since, nothing in pregnancy is more common than the presence of nausea and vomiting, ptyalism, acidity, anorexia dyspepsia and constipation. Indeed, so frequently are they present, that they are regarded as "signs" of pregnancy. But, should they pass beyond their ordinary bounds which they frequently do, they become pathological in their character, and require treatment. They belong to the digestive system and will ^{be} first treated of.

Nausea and vomiting, morning sickness, occurring in the early months of pregnancy, and ordinarily requiring no treatment. The vomiting of the ingesta may occur day after day, for a considerable length of time and no serious consequences

may follow. The irritability of the stomach upon which the vomiting is dependent, is no doubt owing to the antecedent irritability of the uterus; hence, the first indication of the treatment, is, first, to quiet that organ by giving 30 drops of the Aromatic tincture of cicuta, or one grain of the leaves three times per day, increasing if necessary. This will generally suffice to arrest the vomiting.

If it should not, an enema of half pint of starch, one tea spoonful of laudanum, one of the tincture of cicuta, in all probability, will; if the vomiting depends upon the sympathetic irritability of uterus.

In cases in which the above remedies, or something equivalent thereto, has not been given, the vomiting may increase, the woman will become weak, more or less exhausted, dryness of the mouth and fauces, tongue furrowed and red, tenderness of the epigastrium, extremities cold, all these symptoms increasing - Gastritis is now present. The treatment is antiphlogistic, but it would be proper to first, give the enema of starch, laudanum and cicuta, to quiet the uterus. Venesection at the arm,

cups over the epigastrium, or sinapisms, calomel and magnesia to correct the secretions, acid water, or in pills, cold acidulated drinks, or whatever else would tend to subdue the inflammatory condition of the organ. Sometimes the inflammation is so persistent, and the consequent vomiting of the ingesta so constant, that she may, and does, frequently die of inanition; or in a more limited degree, abortion only may be the consequence. Hence, it is seen that although morning-sickness is often the subject of jeers and oblique remarks, if it be suffered to proceed to ~~xxx~~ undue bounds and extent, the very worst consequences may follow.

In advanced stages of pregnancy, the stomach is mechanically compressed, and sometimes much irritation may be the result; but as the cause cannot be removed, the treatment must be palliative; consisting of anodynes, revulsives &c. And should this mechanical pressure cause abortion, and the above remedies be put in requisition, the dangers attending abortion will be much lessened.

Acidity and Pyrosis, depraved secretions reacting upon themselves. Limewater and sweet milk will correct the acidity, and at the same time give nourishment. Some cordials as champagne wine, compound Spirits of Lavender may be of service.

Pyrosis is characterised by acid, burning uctations, and is said to depend upon the same causes as acidity, to which it is very nearly allied. To remove this condition take

Bicarbonate of Soda, 1 dr.
Comp. Spirits of Lavender, 1 f. dr.
Water, 6 oz.

dose, one table spoonful when necessary. Should the above remedies fail, a blister should be applied along the spine. Dry cupping might be of service.

It is said abortion may be the result of excessive acidity and pyrosis.

Anorexia is attributed to a peculiar nervous condition of the stomach, or torpidity of this organ, and the intestines, or upon irritability of the uterus.

It is very easy to understand how this affection, produced to great extent, can bring on various ill consequences by cutting off the source of nutriment.

If it is found to be dependent upon the nervous condition of the stomach, some antispasmodic infusion, ether, Hoffman's anodyne, may be exhibited.

If upon torpidity, of the stomach and bowels, castor oil, rhubarb and the neutral salts, and such alteratives as would increase the general tone and vigor of the system; as the Extract of Gentian, and Blue Mass.

For the flatulence which accompanies anorexia, some aromatic infusion, but this will subside under the treatment for anorexia if it be successful.

Gluttony and Longings. That the tastes of pregnant women do really become changed, there can be no doubt. Hence, they have very capricious appetites, both as regards quantity and quality of their food. In either case, where no serious effects are observed, need they be interfered with. If however, they should proceed to far, the

treatment required, would consist in the restriction of the food to the proper quantity and quality; and, at the same time such remedial agents, as would be best calculated to break up the inordinate crav-
ings.

Dysphragia, as it occurs in pregnancy, may depend upon an inflammatory condition of the stomach, resulting from imperfectly digestible food. The secretions of the stomach are alkaline, and, by eructations, will inflame the œsophagus, fauces, mouth, and nostrils. Blue mass, followed by a mild purgative, will generally be adequate for the removal of this condition. Should it not, volatile liniment to the front of the throat, and sinapisms between the shoulders will—perhaps.

In *Neurosis* (?) and *gastralgia*—The former is said to depend upon a nervous state of the stomach, therefore, an *Anodyne*; the latter, upon a peculiar impregnment of the pylorus; and for it, *quassia*,

~~Columbo~~, gentian, have been recommended.

Ptyalism,—dependent upon an irritable, exalted, state of the uterus. In this condition the gums are not inflamed, the salivary glands are simply excited. Quiet the uterus by *Opium*; bleed the glands by leeches, and a gentle purge, will generally suffice for its reduction to the normal condition.

Constipation is one of the most frequent concomitants of pregnancy, and is more or less dependent upon the pressure of the uterus on the rectum, or it may be produced by a derangement of the stomach; and various other causes. It should be very carefully and vigilantly observed. The mechanical pressure, spoken of above, causes impaction of the feces in the rectum, which may result ~~in~~ in hemorrhoids, or oedema of the lower extremities. In this impaction, efforts at defecation may bring on hemorrhage which

may cause abortion.

The treatment should consist of the mildest purgative, as Rheubarb 5gr. dose; or 10gr. if very costive; and to keep a laxative state of the bowels, 3gr of Rheubarb every other night. Cold water should be used as an injection every night till this condition is removed.

Should the rheubarb not prove competent, a small portion jalap might be combined with it. Sometimes the impaction of feces is so great, that injections cannot be used; in that case, the scoop might be advantageously employed. This condition (constipation) should never be suffered to exist for any considerable length of time, on account of the many and various ill consequences which it may superinduce.

Diarrhœa is sometimes an attendant on pregnancy, and is explained by saying, that the various sympathetic relations

superinduced by pregnancy, may end in the production of diarrhoea. If it should be periodical, in its character, it should not be checked too suddenly; or indeed, if it should be supplemental of menstruation, it should not be interfered with. If it should not depend upon ^{vicarious} ~~the~~ menstruation, the usual remedies. Should diarrhoea come on as a consequence of phthisis only, palliative treatment should be put in requisition: — restrained by the common methods, as the nature of the case would seem to demand.

The respiratory organs also are frequently ^{found} to be disturbed in their function by the pregnant state. Dyspnea sometimes amounts to almost a disease. In the first months of pregnancy, it is said to be dependent upon congestion in the lungs; in the latter stages of pregnancy, upon mechanical pressure of the uterus on the diaphragm. It can be distinguished from other

grave conditions of the lungs by auscultation.

The sense of suffocation is frequently so great, that the recumbent position cannot be assumed.

The respiration sometimes becomes much embarrassed, considerable pain, pulse somewhat accelerated,

If these symptoms should progress, and depend upon congestion of the lungs, a small bleeding

from the arm - but generally the treatment of

dysnea consists in keeping the woman in as erect a position as possible, or compatible; and the

exhibition of asafoetida, musk &c. If the dysnea should occur at regular periods, the Sulphate of

quinia. The dysnea is frequently accompanied by cough, which may ^{be a} result ^{of} the mechanical

pressure of the uterus against the diaphragm.

In this case ordinary expectorants will exert no beneficial influence - Anodynes are the proper

remedies as the cause cannot be removed. It is

said, that this cough may be so severe as to bring

on abortion, by the rupture of the membranes.

Great irritation of the stomach may also produce cough.

Hæmoptysis may also be a result of the congestion of the lungs. It may be vicarious of the menstrual periods. In the first condition, a small venous bleeding from the arm, cups &c. In the latter condition, anodynes.

Palpitations of the Heart. Frequently occur in pregnancy and is more pathological in its character than hysterical. Auscultation will reveal the organic lesion, if any be present. If the palpitations are found to arise from anæmia, no serious danger may be apprehended— if from plethora, bleed, and regulate the diet. When syncope takes place she should not be moved till she recovers. The pelvis should be elevated— the head should not be— volatile substances to the nose, sprinkling the face with cold water, or striking the face with the hand, will generally suffice to recover her.

Varicels may be dependent, either upon the

gravid uterus passing upon the vessels at the superior
strait, or upon a relaxed condition of the blood vessels.

The former condition will apply to varices as found
in the plethoric, the latter, in the anæmic. The "varices
are situated in the superficial veins, and are soft, knotty,
unequal, indolent, and livid" no pulsation, readily yield-
ing to the pressure, but returning when the pressure is
removed.

The treatment consists in the application of the
roller bandage up to the groins; or laced stocking.

Phlebitis after delivery, it is said, is more apt to occur, than
when varices are not present.

Hæmorrhoids arise from constipation. They
may prove fatal by repeated hemorrhage; or aortion
may be the result.

The treatment will consist in first removing the
constipation, and then keeping the bowels in a suitable
condition, by the sulphate of potassa and senna
tea; and cold water injections. When the tumors have
assumed considerable size, they should be scarified

and an enema of the acetate of lead and laudanum should be used to arrest the hemorrhage, if too profuse, and to allay the pain. The ligature should be employed if the hemorrhage cannot otherwise be restrained.

Oedema. If it appear early in pregnancy general anasarca may be feared. In connection with plethora, bleeding would be of service, if in connection with anæmia, the bleeding would be very bad practice.

Puncturing should not be performed, unless the woman be in good health. The roller bandage is one of the best remedies. By its application, in a few hours the swelling may be considerably reduced. This condition should be carefully watched, as those who suffer most in this way are most liable to convulsions; especially, if they are primiparus. If this serious infiltration is very great, and has resisted all treatment, is still on the increase and, ^{great} apprehensions of the safety of the woman, artificial premature delivery should, it is said, be induced, "by means of a small cone of prepared sponge introduced into

the orifice together with the use of ugat."

The hysterical, ^{and} epileptic convulsions, and apoplexy are regarded as nervous, effects; and epilepsy and apoplexy are referred to some lesion of the Brain.

The precursory signs of convulsions are very important. The two most noticable are headache and vertigo. If upon enquiry, it is found that they were frequent before pregnancy, not so much danger is to be apprehended; but if not, there is great danger.

In the latter case the treatment should be commenced by quieting the womb, from which it may be safely estimated the irritation producing the headache and vertigo depends. This can be done by the means already pointed out, the abstraction of blood by cups and quieting the nervous system.

Every symptom should be assiduously watched. A bleeding at an improper time may bring on convulsions, at the proper time they may prevent their occurrence; and the very best means ^{too} that can be put into requisition for their prevention.

It is always to be remembered, and never to be forgotten, that, in ~~all~~ the treatment of all the diseases incident to pregnancy, the conditions of the patient, as regards plethora and anæmia, must never be lost sight of. At times it ^{is} exceedingly difficult to draw the differential diagnosis between them. What is anæmia?

Weakness and debility are not always its measure, nor is a ~~weak~~ soft pulse, palor of countenance, lips, gums, tongue, fauces, ~~and~~ fluttering of the heart so many unerring pathognomies by which it is always to be recognised, any more, than that, the contraries of all these are to be regarded as pathognomies of plethora. The very vitality upon which anæmia preys may induce the false belief that plethora is present. The most villainous specimen of mortality can destroy ~~the~~ man's highest perfections of art, or Heaven's best, best, greatest, gift to man. How easy to pull down, how hard to build up. ~~The~~ "life is the blood." Any boy can bleed, purge, and purge, till death close

the scene. "There is no sort of doubt about that."

The whole world knows that iron is the great remedy for anæmia, But iron will produce abortion, one of the great vices to be avoided. The mildest tonics, good nutritious food, fresh pure air, and moderate exercise, the removal of all moral depressing influences, might exercise great beneficial influence over the anæmic condition — but "nutritious food, without air and exercise, will cause local congestions, and feelings of depression."

If there be great doubt as to which condition of the system, the plethoric or anæmic, be present, the treatment might be compromised — cups to the head, bowels open, and the proper treatment to each of the implicated organs. If the vertigo and head ache should increase toward the period of confinement, great apprehension of convulsions may be entertained. If no positive indication should forbid it, a greater abstraction of blood might be ventured on than in other cases.

Insomnia — dependent upon plethora ~~or~~ anæmia

Sometimes there is loss of vision, hearing and taste; and if they are found to exist in connection with plethora, great danger is to be apprehended, in as much as they are indicative of compression, at the origin of the nerves of sense. The abstraction of blood in the plethoric state - If anæmic the treatment proper in that condition.

The intellectual and moral faculties are frequently implicated, dependent upon some unknown, hidden, cause. The treatment should be appropriate and hopeful - The pains in the abdominal parietes are in consequence of the distension of muscles, or pressure of the nerves - if tedious, an anodyne liniment may be employed.

Hysteria is usually found to be present during the first three months of pregnancy. In hysterical convulsions, there is not total loss of the intellectual and sensorial functions. Upon the application of light, the pupil of the eye contracts

The contraction of the pupil ~~is~~ ^{under} the influence of light, the not total loss of the intellectual and moral functions, are the three signs by which ^{the} hysterical can be distinguished from the epileptic variety. Most of the other symptoms of the hysterical, are common also to the epileptic variety, and will then be discussed.

As the hysterical convulsions may depend upon a great number of causes and conditions of the system, the treatment must be varied according to the indications of those conditions.

If there be reason to believe, that there is great irritation of uterus, it should be quieted by the cicuta. - If irritation of the stomach, Hoffmann's anodyne - if plethoric wet cups - if anæmic - dry cupping to the sacrum - an enema of laudanum, asafoetida, and starch - leeches to the nape of the neck if there be engorgement of the brain - and the best antispasmodics.

The epileptic variety is much more common than the hysterical or apoplectic varieties. There seems to be no marked difference between the common and pregnant epileptic convulsions. ^{Epilepsy} ~~They~~ differs great in different persons and in the same person.

Epilepsy may depend upon lesions of the brain, or upon the changes of the system superinduced by pregnancy.

The precursory symptoms are of much importance — that the fit may be avoided if possible — full sensation in the head, a pain, often, in a small circumscribed spot, pain in the epigastrium, disturbance of vision, sparks passing before the eyes, embarrassment of speech, and pain in the spine — here again the treatment, must be for the removal of these symptoms, must depend upon what is judged to give rise to them — a small venesectio if allowable, neutralize the acidity of the stomach, gentle purge, and sinapisms along the

Spino. It is said that disturbance of the stomach in such cases may produce Convulsion in the same way that worm do in children.

Should the above symptoms not be arrested, the Convulsion comes on, and may be recognised by throwing about the hands, frothing at the mouth, protrusion of the tongue, fixed countenance, pupils dilated, cornea turned ^{up} to the right or left, interrupted respiration, *~~partial~~ ^{very great} loss of the intellectual, and sensorial functions, Spasmodic twittings, forced pronation of the superior extremities— at the close of the fit there is stupor, but some degree of consciousness; the pulse, frequent and irregular. The paroxysm may last from one to ten minutes or much longer— some say twenty-four hours. There may be only one paroxysm or several— sometimes in rapid succession— there may be coma between the fits. The treatment should commence at

* very great— Sometimes, perhaps most frequently, entire loss &c.

the close of the convulsion. Venesection at the arm should be speedily resorted to, cups to the head, and active cathartics as may be admissible—anti-spasmodics are of doubtful propriety, and in no case should anodynes be resorted to; “Regard the temptation to give ~~xxx~~ anodynes, as from the devil, to Kill your patients— I do hope and trust, you will keep hands off, from anodynes of all sorts.” Sinapisms along the whole course of the spine, or cup— if the convulsions continue to recur, abortion will be brought on.

Apoplexy may occur before pregnancy, and sometimes delivery has no influence over it. There is total loss of sensibility, in general, loss of vision, of hearing, and of smell and of taste— a total suspension of the intellect— unconscious of passing events— paralysis of the functions of animal life— in some cases rigidity of the muscles— “of the buccinators, the chucks

are alternately puffed out, and sucked in, during the act of respiration. The functions of organic life, however, still continue to be performed, the heart beats, respiration goes on, and the power of sensation remains; but, ~~after some time~~, the functions of organic life are also suspended, and the patient dies. In some of these cases we observe evident signs of the determination of blood to the head, the face is swollen, and the lips are livid; there is considerable turgescence of the vessels of the neck, with heat of the head, the skin is hot, and the pulse full and strong."

Although the tendency of apoplexy is to death, the treatment should be hopeful, as it may be dependent upon sanguinous engorgement, which is deemed remediable; but if it be ~~consequent~~ upon effusion of blood or serum

into the ventricles, no relief can be given. It is said, that the treatment may encroach more on the anæmic condition, ^{here} than in any other condition. If the plethoric state be present - free abstraction of blood from the arm as can be justified - or cups or leeches to the head - free purgation as the nature of the circumstances would permit - enema of warm turpentine - strong stimulating fomentations to the legs, ankle, and feet. The whole treatment must be revulsiv in its character, in order to draw the blood to other parts.

Hæmorrhage. Whenever this condition is present, it is indicative that abortion may, or is about, to take place. In the early period of pregnancy it may take ^{place} from the whole cervical surface - in the later periods, from a portion, or the whole of placental surface. as the attachment of the placenta may be

more or less broken up. ~~These~~ causes which are capable of producing abortion, from what has been stated, must produce hemorrhage as a consequence. But it is said that all these causes which act day by day, and month after month, are annihilated predisposing, while those which act immediately are exciting causes of hemorrhage. There ^{are} a thousand and one causes assigned as capable of superinducing this condition. In the first two or three months of pregnancy, before the placenta is formed, when the blood is determined to the uterus in consequence of the new function, which it is performing, this continual afflux of blood may be predisposing in its character. Again, after the placenta is formed, its connections by vessels which ramify amply through it

The large and increasing size of the vessels of the womb, are also powerful predisposing causes to hemorrhage. The parietes of the vessels of the placenta are fragile, and are therefore easily ruptured, which is another predisposing cause to hemorrhage. The chorion is very thin and delicate and by sudden shocks, frights, may ^{be} ruptured which circumstance would be predisposing and exciting. The delicateness of the chorion predisposing to the rupture; the sudden shock determining the act; and hemorrhage, the consequence; and if great, a vertigin, the final result.

The symptoms of hemorrhage are hot flashes, flushed face, vertigo, pain in the head, uterine pain, which last should be carefully regarded, especially, when there is not an equilibrium of the circulation;

as when epistaxis or hæmoptisis is present to-day, there may be uterine hæmorrhage tomorrow. Even when there is an escape of blood from the vagina it must not ^{always} be regarded as pathogn^omonic of uterine hæmorrhage, as it may be menstrual in its character. It may especially be regarded so, if it is periodical in its afflux, and is not ~~to~~ be regarded as ~~a~~ dangerous unless it be present in the primiparous female. But, it is a plain hint that there is too full a habit, and a moderate depletion might with propriety be had recourse to. The seat of this hæmorrhage, if it may so be called, is in the lower segment of the vagina.

The treatment of hæmorrhage should be dependent ~~upon~~ the conditions of the plethoric or anæmic states. If uncertain as to which condition is present the

Treatment should be compromised. The horizontal posture; rest of body and mind is indispensable; the hips should be elevated on a firm cushion, and higher than the chest and head—cold acidulated drinks, dry friction of the arms, breast and along the spine, large cups to the breasts, aspersions upon the abdomen and inner part of the thighs with cold water by the addition of ether, vinegar, or ammonia, tight ligatures to the limbs— If the woman is of full habit, take twelve or sixteen ounces of blood— correct the Stomach and bowels with the superacetate of potassa, enema of rhubarb and warm water, prepare the patient— then anodynes, and not before. Should the hemorrhage be alarming, the tampon should be employed. It has been said, that

the tampon should never be used during the pregnancy— What there is to be done— If the hemorrhage continues it will certainly end in abortion— and the death of the mother— certainly the tampon could do nothing more; and as the tampon does afford chances of relief it ought to be employed, only though, as one of the means last resorted to. The objection to its use is, that, it excites contractions of the uterus.

Is not that the very condition that is desired? How else could the hemorrhage cease? It is not the mere plug that arrests the hemorrhage— Were this so, there would always be internal hemorrhage whenever the tampon is used, but as the internal hemorrhage is not by any means a universal conse-

quence of the use of the tampon, therefore two things may be inferred, first that the tampon does not always cause internal hemorrhage; and, second, that it exerts its beneficial influence not by mere bulk but by producing a tonic contractions. It ^{should} not remain longer than a few hours, for fear of producing inflammation, which it has been known to do, when suffered to remain too long. The removal should be cautiously done, and cold water injected into the vagina. When the os tincæ is found to be dilated, no remedies for the arrestment should be employed as abortion now is inevitable. Ergot should not be employed till abortion be certain, and could a better article be found to produce it?