

## GENTLEMEN,

**T**HE following case of extra-uterine foetus, especially as it is attended with some circumstances tending to the relief of others (who may happen to be in a similar situation) at an earlier period, may not be deemed unworthy of a place in your useful publication.

Mrs. COOPER, of Lakenham, sent for a midwife on the 25th of December 1798, who informed her she would be delivered in a very short time, and caused her great pain, with a small discharge of blood, which continued for some days; I suppose, by endeavouring to rupture the membranes, mistaking the vagina, pressed down before the head of the child, for the membranes.

She was, at that time, at the full period of her reckoning. On the 7th of January 1799, I was sent for, and as she had no pain, I waited a considerable time, and on examining her, found a globular substance very low in the pelvis, which I supposed to be the head of the child, but I could not discover the os uteri. I staid with her some time longer, and told her nothing could be done; but desired they would send for me if her labour came on. She was at that time past what she reckoned her full time, had bore children before, and had been accurate in her reckonings. Said she had felt the child, but thought it different from her former pregnancies, and had felt nothing of the child since Christmas-day.

The very deep snow of 1799 falling soon after this time, rendered the roads from Norwich to Lakenham impassable for some days, and I thought she had been obliged to call in such assistance as could be procured in the town, till I was informed by one of her relations, whom I attended, that she was very unwell, but not delivered. I therefore called upon her on my way to Caistor, as I thought there must be something singular in the case. She told me, she had felt nothing of the child since Christmas-day; but, that she was certain she had previous to that time, although different from her sensations on similar occasions. The body had nearly the same appearance as in natural pregnancy, with an unevenness a little above the os pubis. The whole had not exactly the usual globular form of the impregnated uterus, She had, at this time, exceeded her reckoning more than two months. I found the child's head pressing down very low, and could not discover the os tincæ in its usual situation, but thought I discovered it above the os pubis. On endeavouring to pass the finger towards the sacrum (the usual situation

of the mouth of the uterus where it lies high), it could not pass, owing to the vagina obstructing it in every direction backwards. I could pass the finger very high by the pubis, in which situation I found the os uteri as before described. I mentioned my suspicions of its being 'an extra-uterine fœtus to Mr. COOPER, surgeon of the third Lincoln militia, and requested him to see her with me: he thought it was the os uteri above the pubis, which could not be felt very distinctly, as it was situated very high. I examined her again, and concluded it was an extra-uterine fœtus, lying between the rectum and the womb, pressing the uterus up against, and chiefly above the pubis.

Mr. RIGBY (whose opinions upon these subjects are much to be respected) having seen her in the earlier part of her pregnancy, I mentioned the case to him, and asked him to see her with me. I was prevented being present at the time appointed, but requested he would examine her; his opinion was, that there was something extraordinary in the case, but was not fully confirmed that it was extra-uterine.

Her health was very much impaired, being affected with diarrhœa, for which she occasionally took opiates and astringents. I was sent for, early in the morning, on the third of May, she being now more than four months past her reckoning. I found her very weak and low, her mouth sore, pulse quick, and the diarrhœa continued; she had ejected during the night a considerable quantity of fetid, bloody water. On examining her, I found an opening unlike the os uteri, and my finger passed immediately into the head of the child; she had no pain except what I gave her, as I used some force, pressing upon the inside of the bones of the cranium, and endeavouring to dilate the opening. I left her, and told her I would call again, which I did, and took Mr. Rigby with me, who examined and brought away a portion of the cerebrum, which was very offensive. I afterwards brought away one of the parietal and the occipital bone, and also one of the temporal; she was very much exhausted and faint; we therefore left her, fearing it would be impossible to extract the whole of the fœtus. Mr. Rigby called on me on the fourth, and after some conversation, I saw Mrs. Cooper, and found the other parietal bone in the situation it was left on the third, or nearly so, which I with difficulty brought away. By introducing my fingers into the opening in the vagina, and fixing them upon the vertebrae of the neck, I brought two of them away; but finding the shoulders obstructed by a part of the vagina, I pushed my hand past it, got my finger into the arm-pit, and at last succeeded in bringing away the remaining part of the fœtus, in a highly putrid state, no portion of the naval string remaining. It appeared to be a male child, at full time when it died, both from

the formation of the bones, and the size of the fœtus: the woman was so faint and exhausted, that I thought it more prudent to desist from introducing my hand to examine for the attachment of the placenta; concluding, that the least evil would be, to trust to nature for its expulsion, if it was not already dissolved, and in a state to come away with the discharge.

On the fifth I called, with Mr. ALDHOUSE, and found her very low and faint; she had purged, and her mouth was covered with aphthæ, the discharge considerable and very offensive; the womb was nearly in the situation before described, but lower; the opening in the vagina, through which the fœtus was extracted, extending nearly to the neck of the uterus; we could now distinguish the neck of the uterus, and the uterus itself, by the touch; the finger passing backwards into the large cavity from which the child was extracted. There was no doubt of a communication between the bowel and the cavity, as some seeds from a cake, eaten the day before, came away on Mr. ALDHOUSE's fingers, with a portion of fæces; some fæces passing likewise daily by the vagina, although she had a natural evacuation every day. She remained in the greatest danger for some time; her mouth very sore; purging at times; part of the excrements passing by the opening in the vagina, and part naturally by the rectum. Her plan of medicine was cordials, astringents, and opiates, as occasion required, with wine and nourishing soups, as the stomach would bear them.

She is at this time, August 16, 1799, able to manage her domestic affairs; she passes her stools naturally, but is obliged to wear a cloth, as some fæces pass by the opening in the vagina: the quantity which passes the latter way being much lessened within the last month, makes one entertain hopes that the opening into the bowel may close.

There are a sufficient number of cases on record of extra-uterine fœtus, both in English and French authors; and to render useful the publication of such occurrences, some rules might perhaps be established for the relief of those who may labour under such extraordinary cases, at the earliest period possible.

Great part of the distress and danger seems to arise from what the constitution suffers in ridding itself of the impediment, and the judgment obso- large a mass of putrid matter within the body. In the present instance, the woman, I think, must have died before the bones could have been dis- charged, as this opening into the bowels must have been very high, and there could be no natural effort to propel the bones through the vagina.

If a case were to occur where the fœtus was situated the same as in Mrs. Cooper's, would it not be prudent to make an opening in the vagina, suffi-

cient to admit the extraction, by first perforating the head, and extracting by the crotchet and blunt hook ; by which means, probably, the opening into the bowels might have been in this case prevented, and the woman not brought into such imminent danger by the putrefaction of the child ?

NORWICH, *Aug. 20, 1799.*

E. COLMAN, *Surgeon.*