

*Case of Complete Prolapsus of the Gravid Uterus.*

By DR. M. H. BIGGS, Santa Barbara.

There being so few recorded cases of complete prolapsus of the gravid uterus, I thought a short description of the following might be found interesting:

Was hurriedly called upon by an old woman one night about 10 P. M., who said her daughter (aged about 20) was suddenly taken sick and seemed to be dying. Without further explanation I hurried to the patient's bedside and found her almost in a state of collapse; cold perspiration all over; pulse small, quick and scarcely perceptible. Administered brandy at once, and after two or three good doses she recovered sufficiently to whisper that "something had dropped out" and "was hanging between her legs." Upon introducing my hand under the bed clothes, it came in contact with a round, hard, pendulous tumor, extending to within about four inches of her knees. It was about six inches in diameter, and was in fact the prolapsed womb hanging by the relaxed and everted vagina, which could be distinctly clasped between the labia externa and fundus uteri; but why so large?

The patient was not in a condition to answer any more questions, and the old lady had left us alone, probably suspecting more of the cause of the trouble than she wished to communicate. Of course the first thing was to replace the organ, and this was accomplished by using steady pressure applied by the hands, smeared with oil during about an hour, after which time, to my infinite satisfaction, it popped into its place with an almost audible "flop." Then there was a most acceptable period of repose, during which, after I had made her swallow some broth and more brandy, insisted upon her communicating to me some of the ante-

cedents of the case, she told me that her courses had stopped—she had missed four periods—and that within the last month she had enlarged so much that her mother had noticed the alteration in her form and charged her with being pregnant, which she of course denied. Mother continued to threaten in case she were so, etc., etc. This made her desperate and she conceived the idea of starving herself, thinking in this way to kill the child and thus produce abortion. She had in fact refrained from all food for the last three days, allaying the cravings of hunger by incessantly smoking cigarettes, and feeling her strength to fail on the afternoon of the third day, had made a last attempt to gain her end by lying on her back on the floor and pulling over on to her belly a “metáte,” which is a slat of stone used by the native Californians for the purpose of grinding corn, and weighs about thirty to forty pounds. This “metáte” she kept in motion, with the little strength she had left, by pushing it up with her hands and at the same time contracting the abdominal muscles, then suddenly relaxing these and pressing down the slat with her hands, and in this way, aided by the momentum imparted to the weight, kept up a kind of pounding movement until she “felt something gradually go down” and “press out.” Thinking then that she had “started things in the right direction,” she got up and managed to keep about as well as possible until night, when “the something” fell out, but to her horror, instead of separating as she expected, remained hanging down between her legs. She went to bed without taking time to undress, covered herself up and had remained there about two hours in the condition I had found her. While giving her broken account of these sad troubles, slight labor pains came on, and in spite of all that could be done to prevent it, she was delivered a little before daylight of a four or five months foetus, thus ending a most anxious night.

The patient made a good recovery, and in ten days was attending to her usual avocations; has since been married and had healthy children.

There is no point of special interest in this case except the effect that starvation, aided by the free use of tobacco.

may be considered to have had in so completely relaxing the muscular system, as to allow a gravid uterus of such size to be so completely dislocated. For the violence that was used, of itself, would scarcely have sufficed.

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