

RUPTURE OF THE VAGINA FROM COITUS.

THE subject of tears of the vagina in coition derives special interest from some recently published cases of this accident. That the vagina can be thus torn has been denied by some, while others have expressed doubt as to whether a serious hemorrhage could be thereby caused. For example, Breisky, in Billroth's *Handbuch*, observes that the fact of brutally performed coition causing fatal injury is doubtful. He quotes Hoffman, who questions whether, even in raped children, the vaginal tears are to be attributed to coition, but rather to rough manipulation. A similar doubt is also expressed by v. Preuschen, *Real Encyclopädie der Gesammten Heilkunde*.

The older authors reported cases of the accident where death occurred, rejected indeed by Breisky, but which are indirectly confirmed by recent observations. Even the remarkable case given by Demerbroc does not seem impossible. A bride after the first coitus had such a violent hemorrhage that Demerbroc says: "ut intra tres horas una cum virginitate etiam vitam amiserit."

The Centralblatt für Gynäkologie, of February 21, 1885, contains the report of a dangerous hemorrhage from a rent of the hymen in coition, and one of rupture of the vaginal vault from the same cause; these cases are given by Dr. Zeiss, of Erfurt. In the first, Dr. Zeiss did not see the patient until 4 P.M., the day succeeding the night of the accident. He found her pulseless, pale, bathed in a cold sweat, and a pool of blood about the thighs, sides of the pelvis, and back. After the removal of the blood he found two rents of the hymen, one on each side, and from the left

which extended to the vaginal attachment of the hymen, a continuous stream of blood was pouring from a torn artery. The suture was used to arrest the hemorrhage, and by stimulants reaction was accomplished. The suture was removed on the third day, and there was no recurrence of the bleeding.

The second case was one where a married woman who had borne a child a few weeks before, had her vagina ruptured by coition, which was *a la vache*. In this woman the uterus was strongly retroflexed, and the cervix hard and fixed at the right side, and upon this side of the vault there was a tear large enough for the finger to enter readily.

Dr Chadwick, in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, April 30, narrates a case of vaginal rupture occurring in a woman forty-eight years of age, who had been married six years to a sailor, and cohabitation had occurred freely without difficulty or pain. Her husband returning after four months absence, intercourse took place causing a rupture an inch long, in the upper third of the vagina, opening into the connective tissue. In the same journal for May 14, Dr. Mundé reports two cases of dangerous hemorrhage from rupture of the vagina in coitus; these cases had been previously reported, and their repetition was suggested by Dr. Chadwick's paper. Both of Dr. Mundé's patients had been married the previous day; in one the rent was an inch long, and began at the hymen; in the other it was on the left side of the vagina, fully two and a half inches in length, half an inch deep, and extended from about an inch above the hymen nearly to the vaginal vault. The length of the vagina in the second patient was extraordinary, its side measuring apparently not less than four inches. The hemorrhage in each case was arrested by tamponing.

The London Medical Times and Gazette, vol. i., 1860, contains the record of a case operated on at the Samaritan Hospital, by Sir Spencer Wells, where rupture of the recto-vaginal wall occurred at the consummation of marriage.

Dr. Ross reports in the *Canada Medical and Surgical Journal*, 1877, the case of a patient in the Montreal General Hospital sixty years of age, with rupture of the vagina; her husband, seventy years old, had been absent nine years, and returning insisted upon coitus, which caused violent pain, and an exhausting hemorrhage that came from a rent an inch long in the upper part of the vagina, just behind the cervix.

Kleinwächter, in the *Wien. med. Presse*, 1880, reports a case of rupture of the vagina occurring from violence during sexual intercourse. The subject, twenty-two years of age, was brought to the clinic in an unconscious condition, underclothes, abdomen, and legs covered with blood, and bleeding from the vagina. Upon examination, the labia majora and

minora were found œdematous, the perineum greatly swollen and discolored; the posterior wall of the vagina had a triangular tear, the base of the triangle being below, the length of the wound from above down was two inches. In this case it is believed the injury resulted from the use of the fingers or hand.

The Indian Medical Gazette for 1872 contains the report of a case in which a native drugged his wife, who had not yet reached puberty, and then had intercourse with her. She died of hemorrhage, and a post-mortem showed a rent one inch and a half long in the posterior wall of the vagina and the perineum torn to the anal sphincter, and a second rent in the anterior wall close to the cervix.

The Gazette of the same year also contains the report of a case where an English officer had intercourse with a girl between eleven and twelve years of age. She died from loss of blood, and a rent in the vagina, including the fourchette and extending two inches in a longitudinal direction, was found.

It will be seen from some of these cases that there may be a fatal hemorrhage even from coition, in others at least a dangerous bleeding, while in one probably the injury to the vagina was done, as suggested by Breisky and Hoffman, by the hands.