

OBSTETRICAL CASES.

B. FINCKE, M. D., BROOKLYN, N. Y.

I. *Sequelae of abortion.*

1867, Sept. 15, 8 A. M. was called in haste to the house across the way to help Mrs. N., a young woman, brunette, of small stature, in her confinement with her second child. Everything was regular and after a few severe pains the head was born and a healthy child followed. She was smelling chloroform liniment. Trembling. After-pains commence.

R Aconite 54 m.

When I laid my hand on the abdomen, severe pain, the ball-like uterus flattened and the after-birth descended. Then the family physician arrived. He asked how long I was there to which I answered a quarter of an hour. The child was strong and healthy, clean, cheesy on some parts, weighing I should judge about nine pounds.

1868, Aug. 3, 1 A. M. was called by a sister of the former with the words: "Sister is dying, give her something to relieve her for humanity's sake!" Found her pulse unappreciable, pale, unconscious, eyes large and staring, hands icy cold from the constant use of ice. Dilated pupils, hardly winking when I passed my hand over the eyes. The season was unusually hot.

R Rhus toxic. a few globules of the 30 and 70 m potencies in half a tumbler of water, one teaspoonful to be given every half to one hour.

She is easier. The family physician arrived and I went away.

The following report, being a portion of a letter relating to the strange occurrence before the death of the lady kindly furnished to me by her brother gives the termination of this strange case.

"She had a miscarriage July 4th last. The child was between seven and eight months and died after about ten hours.

On Monday about three weeks after the miscarriage in the afternoon she was suddenly taken with insanity caused as the physicians (alloëops.) said by sudden congestion of the uterus but under the influence of medicine she became daily more rational though the opium and fever made her somewhat flighty.

On Friday she became quite conscious and memory and reason told her that her sickness was not as she had fancied, the miscarriage, but another and more dangerous condition Dr. M. came three times a day and Dr. C. met him in daily consultations and Dr. J. came every other day.

On Friday night she was agitated by sights. She saw a cat, had fits of sudden darkness and saw flashing eyes of light. Her mother told her it was nervousness caused by Opium, and that consoled her greatly and afterward when the fits came upon her she would take her mother's hand and hold it until the fits passed over. While in that condition she said to her mother, 'dear mother, I think I know when you come in the room without seeing you, the whole room becomes luminous.'

On Sunday afternoon Dr. M. gave her mother plainly to understand that he did not think that the patient could live twenty-four hours, but as Rosa did not ask about her condition her mother did not tell her anything about it.

But about 9 P. M. she seemed to feel it herself. She called for her sister Julia and sent her to her trunk to burn up all her letters. She made some little presents of her jewelry and in her Bible for her little boy she wrote: 'For G. with his dying mother's love,' and asked to have it read to him when he was older. They asked her whether she had not better stop talking and take rest, but she said she wished to finish what she had to say, and that it made

but little difference whether she tired herself or not, it was only a few minutes more or less. She then asked her father if he had any message to send to his little son (who had died long before) and tried to comfort him in his sorrow. So the hours rolled on, then came an indication of what was yet to come. Her father entered the room and she mistook him for her Uncle John and exclaimed: 'There is Uncle John!' They told her it was her father. From that time the perfect clearness of her intellect began to fail, still her mind was full of pleasant thoughts. She saw the cat again but this time it was white instead of black. After conversing a short time, rather wandringly, she began to suffer. She said her eyes were fixed and she could only look one way, then, that all things waved before her eyes. Suddenly raising both her hands high in the air, she exclaimed: 'Oh, my darlings, my darlings take me with you! Reach down and take me up with you!' Lilly, her sister, stepped forward and took hold of her hand. Her arm dropped by her side. 'Oh, why did you bring me back, I was just going,' she said. 'Now my darlings I must grope for you.' For a little while she lay very still, her breathing a little labored, but not much so. We thought God was going to take her very gently. At last she said: 'Oh, my Saviour, must this be too?' Then commenced evidences of great physical suffering. She complained of great heat, of being parched and craved ice. We gave it to her constantly and she would plunge her arms into the bowl and rub her face and arms with the ice. As she seemed to suffer very much, I (the brother) wrote to the doctor to see whether he could not relieve her. He answered to give her as much ice as she wanted, and make her as comfortable as possible. The moaning and gasping increased. She ceased taking the ice, and lay motionless, moaning. Her mother sent in for a German physician, a homœopathist who lives opposite to us and who had brought G. into the world the year before.

He came in and stood by her bed-side, looking at her fixed eyes, holding the lids open, as he did so. She was perfectly motionless even when ice was placed in her hand. But after the doctor had been by her and mixed some medicine, when her father went to give it to her, she pushed it away. This was, however, only spasmodic and she relapsed again. Her father then gave her a little of it two or three times. She lay there, perfectly motionless, hardly breathing. Very soon after the medicine had been placed in her mouth, she moved a little, and in a few minutes recognized her husband and soon afterward felt in the ice-bowl for ice, though she did not speak. Then she commenced making the alphabet with her fingers till at last the mother exclaimed: 'Send for the doctor again.' Just then she spoke, 'how glad I am my tongue is loose at last.' Her husband started like a shot exclaiming: 'By the Lord, she is coming to!' and rushed out for the family doctor. 'Why did you send for the stranger when I died, so to speak?' she said. It was as if the dead had asked the question. She then asked me (the brother) whether Dr. M. (the family doctor) had seen her or been there; her mother told her he had not.

Shortly after, about 4 A. M., the doctor came in. He watched her with much interest. He sat with her some time. About 9 A. M. he came again. She was very weak. She said her spirit had been flogged out of her, and that she had been on a long journey, and asked why she had been brought back and that she did not wish to stay here. Dr. M. was very much astonished at the change. He said her skin was much better, and her face, but that her pulse was still low and time only would show. He gave her a little of Valerianate of Ammonia and left her.

From that time she did not suffer much. Her mind wandered. She grew weaker and she often smiled, and sometimes laughed. From time to time she spoke to her mother telling her not to feel so bad. She lived till 1 A. M. Tuesday when she died.

On a post-mortem examination they found congestion of the liver, spleen and abdomen, and enlargement of the uterus, but no high degree of inflammation. The doctors said; extreme heat demoralized the nervous system and impaired the circulation, and that she could not rally."

II. *After-effects of dry labor.*

Mrs. D. in Newark had a miscarriage every year, since she was married three years ago, on account of accidents.

1894, Nov. 8. Carried a child for the first time to full term, and after a dry labor for twenty-four hours a well-formed child was born but died in a few minutes after birth. Patient felt as if everything were loose inside the pelvis and the perinæum was torn. It healed up soon, however, but she could feel the two bones of the symphysis pubis rub upon each other when walking. Everything inside the lower part of the abdomen feels sore especially on the left side and like bruised, the womb feels sore with bruised pain all through. Stretching sensation across the umbilical region so that the clothes are too heavy. Two months and a half after confinement a slight show but none since which is now three months. Otherwise she feels good and is getting fat. When with the child she was enormously large. The chloroform used during confinement did have no effect at all.

R Arnica mont. M (million) one dose.

Nov. 26. This brought on her menstruation entirely painless, very profuse, as much as she would formerly have at those times, but all the soreness and other symptoms are gone and she feels perfectly well again.

III. *Threatened abortion.*

The same lady.

1895, Oct. 30. Her husband calls in the evening and reports that she is three months pregnant and has constant bearing down pains in the womb for a fortnight. Her physician (homœopathic) attending to her in her last confinement gave her three or four powders which relieved her for

a while but don't do so anymore. This morning he gave her one dose with the remark that in such a state as she was in only one in a hundred would get through safely and if that medicine would not help her, there was nothing further to do to prevent a miscarriage. The doctor gave probably the 200th because the patient preferred the higher potencies.

R Sabina^{cm} one dose.

Oct. 31. The husband reports in the evening after about 24 hours, that patient slept well all last night and felt well in the morning on waking up. But when she arose, severe frontal headache set in and the pain in the womb returned with a sensation as if it were squeezed together. At 11 A. M. the pain was across the pelvis. She was so much more in pain than ever before that she thought she must look out for some doctor whoever he might be, to give her relief. But after sober second thought she sent her husband to me. The state of affairs appeared threatening and another miscarriage might spoil the hope of the poor young woman.

R Sabina M (million) one dose.

1896, Jan. 23. She took this dose at 8 P. M. After half an hour she was easier, then she got all right and slept all night through and was well. Thus far she is confident that she will be confined in May next which is to be hoped as she has been well ever since.

The attending physician was very much surprised and wanted to know the remedy. I told her under the condition that she would get the name of the remedy he had given and the potency. I have not heard of him. Very likely he gave the same remedy.

POST-PARTUM ANTISEPSIS.

T. DWIGHT STOW, M. D., MEXICO, N. Y.

One of the latest and peculiar fads, having its origin in the old school, is the custom of resorting to antiseptics,

before and after delivery. The "Germ" theory has been the most potent and prolific cause of the practice. Of course, *the aim* of those who teach and practice antiseptics, is the benefit of the parturient, and the cleansing of uterus and vagina, the vulva and adnexia, as the most important step in that direction. The proposition seems plausible upon its face, but there are some serious objections to the practice, and it also has some absurdities. To *asepsis*, reasonably practiced, there is but little objection, but this too, can be carried too far. The etymology of the term antiseptics, indicates its use. Derived from the Greek words *αντι* "against," and *σепω* "to putrify," it indicates the use of any chemical or medicinal substance, simple or in combination, that resists, or opposes putrefaction. Quite a large group of agents are employed, some of them of very questionable quality, others, simple and benign. Of the first class we mention carbolic acid, acetic acid, alcohol, creosote, bichloride of mercury, tannic acid, boric acid, benzole.

Of the second class, we note listerine, Thiersch's solution, chloride of zinc, sennine, borine, borolyptol, Platt's chlorides, aristol, euophen, etc., etc. The so-called science of bacteriology—much less a science than a theory—has given prominence to a host of antiseptic germicides, to be tested indiscriminately upon thousands of patients, often regardless of consequences.

About the busiest men in the medical fraternity are the chemists and pharmacists, who flood the country from one end to the other with their advertisements, and puffs of the many new agents, new combinations, warranted to annihilate disease in cock-sure order, in anywhere from three minutes to twenty-four hours time. Judging by the manner and style of laudation, each of his own remedy, discovery or nostrum, and the very serious charges in such cases made against the other fellows in the trade, one may reasonably

wonder that so many of the race have escaped death, and that the remainder, are not spending their last dollars to secure an earthly paradise in the gift of "the wonderful panacea" chemist.

"But, to return to our subject." Is it necessary to use antiseptics in post-partum conditions? The answer requires some investigation. A woman just delivered, is in a peculiarly sensitive and oft times critical condition. Marked structural changes of the reproductive organs; of the cellular tissue round about; often marked or serious disturbance of kidneys, bladder, bowels, stomach, skin, breasts, and nervous system are manifest; and the utmost care must be exercised to secure a safe, easy and satisfactory recovery. The functions of the nervous system, of the lymphatics, of respiration, of digestion, of the circulation, must not be retarded, in order that the process of involution and of repair of injured parts may be normal. As the lately distended uterus and vagina contract, whatever of blood, mucus, or purulent debris, or parts of placenta remain behind, is forced out by utero-vaginal contractions, or dissolved in blood serum and washed away. While this is being done, or soon after, clots, coagula, and decomposed serum begin to decrease, look and smell better, there is poured out upon the endo-metrium and inner surface of vagina, organizable lymph, for the repair of abraded, over-congested or lacerated parts. This must not be retarded, checked or washed away.

Holding these facts and ideas in view, *we object to post-partum antiseptics, because it is unnecessary, speculative, and often pernicious:* even now, many of the physicians of the old school are abandoning the practice. Carbolic acid, bichloride of mercury, tannic acid, chloride of zinc, alcohol, iodoform,—and even Platt's chlorides, unless extremely diluted—ought not to be used, as most of them are irritant poisons and tend to produce hyperæmia, lymphatic enlargement, uterine catarrh, sub-involution; and the iodoform,

even in small quantities in solution, often seriously disturbs the nervous system, producing nausea, vomiting, sleeplessness and so on. Perhaps the safest antiseptic in use is listerine, but even Lister some years since, minimized its value. The best thing to do immediately after the expulsion of the secundines, is to irrigate the uterine cavity with pure, soft water, raised to 100° Fahr. until the fluid runs clear. This may be repeated the following day, but never after the os tinæ has closed to the admission of two fingers, as violent spasms of the uterus, and at times general clonic spasms may be brought on. After such irrigation—unless there be some surgical work to do—nothing is better than the administration of the remedy homœopathic, rest, quiet nursing and proper food.

During the last decade, bacteriological investigations have been pursued with much zeal. Much speculation has followed the investigations, as to the presence of bacteria in fermenting solutions, and during the putrefaction of animal or vegetable tissue. The old school theorists holding them to be *a cause* of zymotic disease, while our school, together with some outside independent thinkers, regard their presence as an effect: hence the wide difference in the therapeutics of the two schools of medicine. The allopathists look to the use of germicides, while we seek to restore the "Vital Force" upon which the integrity of tissues, organs and functions depend.

But a change is taking place in the minds of many investigators, as to the character of, and functions of bacteria, microbes, etc. Later investigations show that micro-organisms play an altogether different role, and the once feared and hated bacteria are now regarded as friends, and conservators of tissue, as they feed upon the wash material of wounds, abscess, ulcers, etc., from which by certain vital processes they spring, and are in turn devoured by the ever present leucocyte. This latest view when

generally accepted, will effectually dispose of germicidal treatment, and teach its advocates that asepsis is preferable, and that for purposes of cleanliness, pure water tempered to suit the case is sufficient. It will also not only corroborate our past views of all that speculative and worthless treatment, swiftly jumping from one thing to another—so characteristic of the old school pharmaceutical and therapeutical, yet absurd ingenuity. One by one in swift succession, the medical fads are dying. But Homœopathy, founded on immutable law, and in the hands of its true exponents, will live on and on, in grandeur, till time ends.

In all "solutions of continuity," whether after labor, injury by violence or operations, unless union takes place by "the first intention" there is more or less of torn or broken tissue deprived of vitality, that must be broken down and cast off, before repair of tissue can be effected.

Any lotion, douche or irrigant, that checks this process, or retards it, is unsafe, and its use injudicious. Many antiseptic combinations do this thing by escharotic or astringent qualities, while the stimulating ones increase the area of suppurating surface and retard recovery.

POST PARTUM HÆMORRHAGE—A CASE.

FLORA M. WATSON, M. D., CHICAGO, ILL.

March 29, 1895, I was called to attend Mrs. C., age twenty-one, a brunette of mild, easy disposition, in her third confinement.

The pains were coming at intervals of fifteen minutes. This continued for about four hours, when the pains decreased in frequency, the intermissions being of about thirty minutes duration; after two hours the pains increased in frequency so that the intervals between pains were not more than five minutes, and in about one hour expulsion

was completed. Up to this time everything was normal and uneventful.

Immediately following the expulsion of the child came a profuse pulsating stream of hot, bright red blood, which coagulated immediately on coming in contact with the air, which one dose of Belladonna^{cm} instantly controlled. The placenta was delivered in fifteen minutes with no return of the hæmorrhage.

Half an hour later she complained of nausea and with the retching came another profuse hæmorrhage. A dose of Ipecac.^{10m} was administered just at the moment when it seemed inevitable that the contents of the stomach must be ejected. This controlled both the nausea and the flowing as promptly as had the Belladonna in the previous instance. At the end of another hour the hæmorrhage returned, characterized by the same symptoms as the second flow, when Ipecac. was again administered with the same result as before. The vomiting seemed so imminent that I deemed it impossible to avert it, but was fortunately able to do so.

During this time and for an hour afterward, I did not leave the bedside; but as my patient seemed to be resting comfortably, and I could feel the uterus as a round hard ball under my hand, I deemed the danger past and went to an adjoining room to partake of some much needed refreshment, leaving my assistant in charge, with instructions to keep her finger on the pulse and watch the patient's countenance, and to call me on detecting any change.

Suddenly she called out "Doctor, I cannot detect any pulse." I hastened to the bedside; as I came in Mrs. C. said "I cannot see and my ears are roaring so." She was colorless and cold and apparently pulseless, and the blood was flowing in a steady, pulseless stream. China^{cm}, one dose, seemed to arouse the reactive powers and check the hæmorrhage, which did not return again. She improved steadily from that time on, making a good recovery, exper-

encing no further trouble excepting the weak condition resulting from the repeated hæmorrhages.

This case is remarkable to me in being the only one in which the second dose of any remedy was needed to permanently control hæmorrhage. In the intervals between the attacks the uterus would contract firmly and would then suddenly seem to lose all contractility, and a hæmorrhage would result.

The menses made their appearance in four weeks. A dose of Calc. carb.^{cm} controlled this and they did not reappear for one year.

During the ensuing summer, she had what she termed "sinking spells" as a result no doubt of the hæmorrhages, profuse lactation and hard work, she doing all of the housework for a family of eight. These attacks were characterized by sudden weakness, ringing in the ears, blindness and a sensation of falling; once ending in complete syncope. These attacks always followed some unusually hard days work, and were promptly relieved by China, which also improved her hearing which has been somewhat impaired since this confinement.

Previous confinements had been normal, and she had never before shown any hæmorrhagic tendency. The atonic condition was probably the result of hard work and worry, her husband having been without work during her entire period of gestation, he also during that time having had a long siege of typhoid fever through which she had nursed him. Her food had been insufficient in quantity and of inferior quality. She had also been mentally disturbed, never before having known any lack of the comforts of life, it being a heavy blow to her pride to have to accept pecuniary assistance from friends.