ADHESION OF THE PLACENTA AFTER DELIVERY.

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Mrs. C., aged about 35 years, of a leucophaeitic habit, was taken in labour of her sixth child. She was attended by a midwife, from whom I learned that it had been a breech presentation. She had been in labour for two days; the pains during that period being very feeble. She had been delivered of a still-born child about two hours before I was called in, and the midwife during the interval had endeavoured to bring away the "afterbirth" by pulling at the fundus, which at length gave way at its insertion; while at the same time the placenta itself remained immoveable. Haemorrhage now coming on rather profusely, alarmed the midwife, who requested that I might be sent for.

On arriving at the bedside of the patient, I found the haemorrhage rather alarming, and the patient sinking. After administering some brandy and water, I endeavoured to lay hold of the substance of the placenta and bring it way. Herein I was failed; for I found the adhesion so considerable, the texture of the placenta so firm, and the exhaustion of the patient so great, as not to justify any longer persistence in my efforts to remove it. I gave her brandy and water freely, and waited for nearly an hour, so as to give the patient a little rest, and again attempted to make another effort as the only means of saving her life, since the haemorrhage still continued and would continue so long as the substance of the placenta was distending the cavity of the uterus. I introduced my hand, and found the placenta in the upper part of the uterus; and, bending my fingers, I thrust them into its substance, determining, if practicable, to bring it away entirely, or as much of it as I possible could; but, notwithstanding the firm hold which I had, it gave way, and only a portion of it could be extracted; the remainder adhering to the uterus. She was now much exhausted; the features were deadly pale; she faint ed repeatedly; colliculous sweats bedewed the body; the breath was laboured; and not to be counted. These were symptoms in my opinion too alarming to permit the continuance of an operation which was calculated to aggravate them. I therefore determined to allow the adherent portion to remain, and trusted to stimulants, which I hoped would assist the powers of the system to accomplish that naturally which could not be done artificially. I ordered some aromatic spirits of ammonia to be given every two hours, and in the interval some weak brandy and water. In the course of a short time, the sinking pulse rose, the pallid countenance resumed the natural appearance, and the whole system partook of the general benefit.

She continued to improve; and on the third day from my attempt to extract the placenta, I had the gratification to see the expulsion of the remaining portion. I now considered my patient in a state of convalescence. I ordered her quinine and iron, which she took for a fortnight; at the end of which time, I took my leave of her—she being so far restored as to need no further treatment.

Remarks. I do not bring this case forward as possessing any new feature, or anything peculiar in the mode of treatment adopted; but to show that, however anxious we may be to remove the whole of the "afterbirth," there are instances in which to persevere in our efforts to do so, would be at the risk of the mother's life, and that a large portion of the mass may be allowed to remain without producing any bad symptoms. However much the stimulating treatment of these kind of cases is condemned by some accouchers, I verily believe, that had I not given stimulants freely in this instance, my patient must have sunk; nor without them, would the powers of nature have been able to throw off that which could not be brought away by art.