

Original Communications.

POST-PARTUM HÆMORRHAGE.

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The following cases occurred in my practice recently :—

No. 1. Mrs. N—, *primipara*. The labour concluded satisfactorily in about four hours. An hour afterwards the uterus was well contracted, and I had taken my departure; but when a short distance away was hurriedly summoned to return.

On examination found the womb quite relaxed, much blood having already been lost and still flowing profusely. Without trying any more simple remedy, great weakness being apparent in the woman, I injected, through the vaginal nozzle of an enema syringe, a solution containing equal parts of whiskey and water. The result being immediate and continued contraction, after which the patient progressed without an untoward symptom.

No. 2. Mrs. M—, aged about 42, seventh confinement. Previous history such as to excite apprehension, she having suffered from alarming hæmorrhage after her two last confinements, and in the seventh month of this pregnancy having had hæmaturia. Added to these circumstances was a general account of such symptoms as might bring her under the class of people known as "bleeders." The labour, in this case, was concluded in about three hours, and to all appearances the dreaded flooding was not to take place.

The result, however, proved otherwise, for before leaving the house, I was called from another room to the patient's bedside by the nurse saying, "Mrs. M. is dying." Upon raising the bed coverings I was surprised at the amount of hæmorrhage which had taken place, and was still continuing.

The patient was pale, cold and pulseless, unable to articulate, and apparently lifeless. No time was lost in using the syringe, and brandy and water in equal parts, with the gratifying result of bringing on immediate and permanent contraction. For four or five hours the prospect of restoring animation seemed very gloomy; but after frequent doses of

brandy and milk, warmth and strength returned, and convalescence went on most favorably.

I am led to publish these two cases because it does not appear, from the writings in current literature, that the means above resorted to are well known, at least, they do not seem to be generally practised.

For the above method, I am indebted to my friend Dr. Jukes, of St. Catharines, who published an essay on the subject, about ten years ago, giving cases as evidence of the utility and safety of the procedure.

That it possesses elements of safety over injection of perchloride of iron, there can be no doubt, from the fact that since iron acts as an instantaneous coagulator, some clots may be taken into circulation and produce embolism. or they may remain in utero, and give rise to septicæmia.

The *modus operandi* of spirit (it makes no difference if it be whisky, brandy, gin, or pure alcohol) appears to be that of producing, perhaps by irritation, immediate contraction, and in my experience the contraction so produced has been very forcible and permanent.

Dr. Brisbane, in a late number of the London *Lancet*, has advocated carrying a small bottle of perchloride of iron to obstetric cases with the same faithfulness that he would a preparation of ergot, and in post-partum hæmorrhage has successfully employed this agent, topically applied with a piece of sponge or lint. This would appear to me *prima facie* evidence that the iron injection is not required on account of its power to produce coagulation; since the small quantity that a bit of sponge could contain would not seem sufficient to constrict a bleeding sinus as large as those in a non-contracted uterus, but rather that its effect is that of an irritant productive of contraction. If such is the fact, is not the danger less when contraction, without blood coagulation, is produced as with the spirit injection?

The hypodermic injection of ergotine would appear to possess very valuable qualities in this form of hæmorrhage, and no doubt will be commonly used, it being spoken of as an excellent measure; but the intra uterine injection of spirit in this alarming condition, I believe, deserves a high place on account of safety, rapidity, both in execution, and result cleanliness and convenience.