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## Original Communications.

### TREATMENT OF PLACENTA PRÆVIA.

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Acceding to the request of the President, I appear before you to-day, to open the discussion this year on Obstetrics; as you are all well aware it has been our custom for many years past to appoint some one to open the discussion on each one of the chief branches of Medical Science. Unfortunately for myself, but still more for you, I have been selected as one of those to lay before you some obstetrical subject.

On looking over the subjects selected in previous years; I find that "placenta prævia" has never been chosen. The disease is one of not uncommon occurrence, while at the same time it is one of very great importance, and is just as liable to be met with by the youngest practitioner as the most experienced. I have therefore selected the "Treatment of Placenta Prævia." The subject is too extensive to deal with in its entirety and the time allowed by the Association is also too short, even if I thought of doing so; however, the treatment ought to afford material for discussion.

It is only expected of me to lay before you some text for discussion, I am not expected to enter into any theory of my own or of any one else, consequently I will be as brief as I can; merely outlining the treatment as advanced to-day by the most experienced writers; in other words the common practice of to-day.

In the discussion that will follow I hope if any one present has anything better to put forward, anything he has found more useful, he will give us the benefit of his experience, so that we may be able to profit by his work, and in this manner it appears to me our Association must bring forth

good practical results. For my own part I have nothing new to advance; I have followed in the beaten path of my predecessors and have had good results in my own practice, but I am ready to learn, and will gladly receive from any fellow practitioner any practical hint that will serve me, when in attendance on so anxious a case as one of placenta prævia.

In looking over the literature of this subject for the past century, it may not be uninteresting to make a few selections from some of the prominent writers on the subject: as a matter of comparison, just to see what progress we have made. In 1733, Chapman, writing on placenta prævia, recommends: that on the first attack of hæmorrhage, the woman should be at once delivered by art; as her future progress in gestation is accompanied by great risk to herself. Perkoz advises: that gestation should not be interfered with by art, "but that we should always wait for the natural labor pains," which he goes on to remark will put a safe end to the gestation.

Rigby, writing in 1789, says: hæmorrhage occurring in the early months of gestation is not serious to the woman; he considers interference with gestation to be unnecessary, and in another place he remarks: "Were it even necessary to interfere with gestation, I cannot conceive it possible even how to do so." Rigby did not believe then in the original fixation of the placenta at the os uteri; that when found there, it was the result of an accident, which had caused its dislodgment from its original site at the fundus, and that it had fallen or gradually slipped to the lower end of the uterus and there formed new attachments for itself.

In support of this theory he quotes Mauriceau, Portal, La Modé, Dioniss, Ruysch, Deventer, Giffard and others.

Smellie appears to have been the first author to admit the possibility of placenta prævia as a primary occurrence; in dealing with the treatment of hæmorrhage, he recommends the entire separation of the placenta, the rupture of the membranes and the delivery of the placenta first. This treatment for many years fell into disuse, but was again revived by the late Sir J. Y. Simpson, though there are some who credit him as being the originator of this plan of treatment.

As early as 1776, Leroux advocated in those