

CASE OF PROTRACTED UTERO GESTATION.

By JAMES A. SEWELL, M. D., Quebec.

To the Editors of the British American Journal of Medical and Physical Science.

I see in the November number of your Journal a report of the case of the "Com. vs. E. F. Hoover," which induces me to send you the following, which I extract from my note book just as I recorded it at the time of its occurrence. The case is of interest in a Medico-Legal point of view, as I conceive the data, (always uncertain), are, nevertheless, as correct as they can well be in any case of the kind; and goes to support the justice of the laws of those countries which allow a greater latitude than our own, for the occasional deviations of nature from her established rules, with regard to the period of utero-gestation; whereby, as in the case above alluded to, the guilty are punished, while the, (it may be), innocent woman, (as in the following case), would be protected from the fiery darts of slander, had the husband unfortunately have died shortly after her conception.

Mrs. A. B., aet. 22.—Second pregnancy delivered Sep. 8, 1842. Natural labour.

This lady was confined by me in July 1839, with her first child. She stated to me during her pregnancy that she "expected" about the 19th of June, but the event did not take place till the 19th of July. It became a matter of joke between us that she was carrying her child ten months; but it was merely a joke, as I conceived she had miscalculated her time, which was not to be wondered at with her first child. I am now, however, of opinion that she did in reality carry her infant ten months, and, moreover, that she has done the same thing on the present occasion.

The circumstances of her second pregnancy are as follow. In July 1840, she left her husband in this country and proceeded on a visit to her friends in England; was absent about 14 months, and returned to this city and her husband on the 19th of Sep. 1841, having menstruated on ship-board during the first week of that month.

On the 5th of October the catamenia returned, being exactly the period at which she looked for them. In November, however, they did not make their appearance, but about this time she began to complain much of "morning sickness," and to be troubled with *toothache*, with which symptom her first and subsequent pregnancy declared itself; her breasts also began to fill up and be hard, with the usual dark areola around the nipple, and she at once declared herself to be in the family-way, in which opinion I fully coincided, and which I had no reason to change afterwards. Her ca-

tamenia did not return, and she was confined on the 8th Sept., 1842, of a large healthy female infant.

From what period are we to date, is a question which now naturally presents itself. If we follow the usual course, I should count from midway between the *last* time she was unwell, and the *next* monthly period at which the catamenia should have returned. Say then she was taken unwell on the 5th Oct., from which she had perfectly recovered on the 10th, and allow 15 days to elapse, which will bring us to the 25th of October, the day from which I think we are justified in reckoning.

If then these data are correct, Mrs. A. B. carried her infant in utero 318 days, or more than ten and a half calendar months. If on the other hand, impregnation did not take place till the 4th of November, or the day immediately preceding that on which the return of the catamenia was looked for, (and which I conceive is the latest date we can ascribe to it), even then gestation will have been protracted to 307 days, or twenty seven days beyond the usual 40 weeks.

En passant I would merely remark, that this season, in Quebec, has been noticed for the great number of cases in which ladies have exceeded, by many days, (and in some instances even weeks), the period for which they had secured the services of their professional attendants.

Quebec, Dec. 1846.

POISONING BY ACETATE OF LEAD.

By ROBERT W. EVANS, M. D., Richmond, C. W.

On the 19th Nov. 1846, I was requested to attend Mrs. W., aet. 27, married 8 years, without issue, of intemperate habits. The messenger informed me that she had by mistake taken $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of sugar of lead for loaf sugar. I proceeded at once to her house, "*well armed*" with sulphate of zinc, &c. The room was filled with friends summoned from the neighbourhood, all endeavouring to administer relief to the suffering patient. She complained of a twisting pain around the umbilicus, with retraction of the abdomen towards the spine; pain in the back, nausea, tremors, great uneasiness and anxiety, dilatation of the pupils, metallic taste in the mouth, constriction of the throat, hiccough; pulse 70, small and hard, (increased in force in consequence of ardent spirits drunk during the day); laborious breathing; thirst; a desire for cold drinks; to these symptoms succeeded spasms, and pains principally of the hands and feet.

Treatment.—Without delay I administered sulphate of zinc, gr. xx., which produced immediate emesis, encouraged by copious draughts of tepid water: after