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INVERSIO UTERI: WITH A NEW METHOD OF ITS REDUCTION.

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(Concluded.)

CAUSES OF INVERSIO UTERI.

Dr. Good says: "This mischievous condition is commonly produced by unskilfully and violently pulling away the placenta." It is unquestionable that, for centuries past, much importance has been attached to its careful removal as a preventive of the accident. Even the schools of the Asclepiadæ, anterior to the time of Hippocrates, had a wholesome fear of it at the time of labor, and devised a number of artificial methods for the extraction of the placenta, chiefly interesting, however, for their grotesqueness, rather than for any good to be attained by the adoption of any of them. Celsus, with an apparent tremulous horror about his pen, advised moderate traction on the cord, and then, with more than questionable propriety—except in certain threatening conditions—advises the introduction of the hand to detach the placenta. By far the larger number of cases occur at the time of, or just after, the completion of labour, and are directly attributable to it. Inertia of the uterus is, in all cases, a pre-requisite, whether it has ever been occupied by a fetus or not. Dr. Cross says that 350 out of 400 of his collected cases were a complication of labour. Ané and Teller each cite a case occurring ten and twelve days, respectively, after labour. It has even happened to the virgin womb, a polypoid growth being the cause, with pre-existing inertia.

I am convinced that no difficulty of the kind under consideration will occur if, with one hand over the fundus, uniform contraction be secured, prior to traction on the cord with the other hand. It is a matter for consolation to know that few, if any, cases have occurred in the hands of qualified practitioners.

Here I may diverge, to express my utmost condemnation of a class of operators in midwifery, who stealthily move from house to house, chiefly amongst the poor, but sometimes, and rather frequently too, amongst the well-to-do classes of mechanics and labourers, offering their miserable services, for a small consideration—sometimes to the desolation of families, and the death of both mothers and infants. These creatures are called "midwives." If I speak in terms of detestation of these people, it is not without reason, for under my own notice several cases of cruelty and death have come, as a result of their manipulations. In one case the womb was inverted, there are the best of reasons for knowing; in another, emphysema of the whole body of the mother, abrasion of the vagina, rupture of the perineum, with sioughing of the soft parts, from repeated and ineffectual efforts of the midwife to seize the child's head with the hand, and deliver. This labour being one in which the pains were frequent and powerful, extending over several days and nights, it is not wonderful to hear that the child was still-born when removed with the forceps; the mother, strange to say, recovered. In another case (and I could add others still), where presentation of the arm occurred, the protruding extremity was pulled until the humerus was dislocated, and the cuticle, abraded from the shoulder, to the wrist, presenting a bruised, discolored, and swollen mass;—but