

in every instance to be considered highly dangerous, particularly at an advanced period of pregnancy, it is advisable in women of robust and plethoric habits to bleed frequently during the progress of pregnancy, by abstracting a sufficient quantity of blood at different periods; taking care, at the same time, and particularly near the termination of pregnancy, to keep the body open by cooling purgatives. In women of an unstable constitution, all exciting causes should be carefully avoided, and the habit be strengthened as much as possible, and by that means rendered less susceptible of disagreeable impressions.

CHAP. IX.

ABORTION, &c.

EVERY pregnant woman is more or less in danger of abortion. This should be guarded against with the greatest care, as it not only weakens the constitution but renders the woman liable to the same misfortune afterwards.* Abortion may happen at any period of pregnancy, but it is most common in the second or third month. Sometimes, however, it happens in the fourth or fifth. If it happens within the first month, it is usually called a false conception; if after the seventh month, the child may often be kept alive by proper care.

The common causes of abortion are, the death of the child; weakness or relaxation of the mother; great evacuations; violent exercise; raising great weights; reaching too high; jumping, or stepping from an eminence; vomiting; coughing; convulsions; fits; blows on the belly; falls; fevers; disagreeable smells; excess of blood; indolence; high living, or the contrary; violent passions or affections of the mind, as fear, grief, &c.

The signs of approaching abortion are, pain in the loins, or about the bottom of the belly; a dull heavy pain in the inside of the thighs; a slight degree of coldness, or shivering; sickness; palpitation of the heart; the breasts become flat and soft; the belly falls; and there is a discharge of blood or watery humours from the womb.

To prevent abortion, we would advise women of a weak or relaxed habit to use solid food, avoiding great quantities of tea, and other weak and watery liquors; to rise early and go soon to bed; to shun damp houses; to take frequent exercise in the open air, but to avoid fatigue; and never to go abroad in damp foggy weather, if they can help it. Women of a full habit ought to use a spare diet, avoiding strong liquors, and every thing that may tend to heat the body, or increase the quantity of blood. Their diet should be of an opening nature, consisting principally of vegetable substances. Every woman with child ought to be kept cheerful and

* Every mother who procures an abortion does it at the hazard of her life; yet there are not a few who run this risk merely to prevent the trouble of bearing and bringing up children. It is surely a most unnatural crime, and cannot, even in the most abandoned, be viewed without horror; but in the decent matron, it is still more unpardonable.

easy in her mind. Her appetites, even though depraved, ought to be indulged as far as prudence will permit.

When any signs of abortion appear, the woman ought to be laid in bed on a mattress, with her head low. She should be kept quiet, and her mind soothed and comforted. She ought not to be kept too hot, nor to take any thing of a heating nature. Her food should consist of broths, rice and milk, jellies, gruels made of oatmeal, and the like, all of which ought to be taken cold.

If she be able to bear it, she should lose at least half a pound of blood from the arm. Her drink ought to be barley-water sharpened with the juice of lemon; or, she may take half a drachm of powdered nitre, in a cup of water-gruel, every five or six hours. If the woman be seized with a violent looseness, she ought to drink the decoction of calcined hartshorn prepared. If she be affected with vomiting, let her take frequently two table-spoonsful of the saline mixture. In general, opiates are of service; but they should always be given with caution.

Sanguine robust women, who are liable to miscarry at a certain time of pregnancy, ought always to be bled a few days before that period arrives. By this means, and observing the regimen above prescribed, they might often escape that misfortune.

Though we recommend due care for preventing abortion, we would not be understood as restraining pregnant women from their usual exercise. This would generally operate the quite contrary way. Want of exercise not only relaxes the body, but induces a plethora, or too great a fulness of the vessels, which are the two principal causes of abortion. There are, however, some women of so delicate a texture, that it is necessary for them to avoid almost every kind of exercise during the whole period of pregnancy.

Where abortion cannot be prevented, the next indication is to conduct the patient safely through the process, by directing our immediate attention to the hemorrhage; to check which, bleeding is resorted to by some practitioners; but, unless the vessels be above their natural force and strength of action, it is not likely to be of any service. Astringent injections, composed of alum, oak bark, or sulphate of zinc, and cold applications to the loins, &c., are often employed in floodings; and where the hemorrhage is slight, these immediately will prove beneficial; but in floodings without any remission, they do not appear calculated to afford much relief. In such cases it will be best to trust to the formation of a coagulum; enjoining rest, giving an anodyne at bed-time, and keeping the bowels open by some gentle aperient. But, where these means have been pursued without effect, and the woman becomes exposed to imminent danger from great loss of strength, the most powerful astringents must be employed; such as the sulphate of zinc* and superacetate of lead†; of the last, one, two, or three grains may be given, repeating the dose every three or four hours according to the urgency of the case. As soon, however,

* Take Sulphate of Zinc, 2 to 5 grains.
 Confect. of Roses, $\frac{1}{2}$ scruple.
 Opium, $\frac{1}{4}$ grain.
 Make a bolus, to be taken every fourth hour.

† Take Superacetate of Lead, 2 grains.
 Opium, $\frac{1}{4}$ grain.
 Make a pill, to be given every hour, should it be required, until six pills are given.

as the hemorrhage has stopped, give a dose of castor-oil in order to prevent any bad effects from the action of these remedies on the coats of the stomach and intestines. The application of cloths dipped in cold water to the back and external parts will have a much better effect than internal astringents, consequently ought never to be neglected. The introduction of a piece of smooth ice into the vagina has often a very speedy effect in arresting the hemorrhage. A snow-ball wrapt in a bit of soft linen will have the same effect; but neither of these should be continued so long as to cause pain.

The most effectual means, then, to be resorted to for relieving the hemorrhage attendant on abortions are: if the pulse be full, hard, and frequent, bleeding is to be resorted to; if not, the fox-glove is to be trusted to, either in the form of pill, tincture, or infusion: the application of cold to the thighs and pubes; admitting a free circulation of cool air in the patient's bed-chamber; keeping the heat of the body at a low temperature; absolute rest in a horizontal position, and which must be continued during the whole process, however long it may be; cold acidulated liquors for ordinary drink; light food taken in small quantities at a time; carefully abstaining from every thing stimulant, and plugging up the vagina, &c. &c.

Sometimes the hemorrhage is kept up by some portion of the ovum remaining partly within and partly without the uterus; when, should circumstances demand it, this should be removed by careful manual interference with a pair of armed forceps.

For some days after abortion the patient should be confined to bed, as getting up too soon is apt to produce a debilitating discharge. Women disposed to abort should the more sedulously avoid the exciting causes of abortion at those dates of utero-gestation when it is most apt to take place.

CHAP. X.

MANAGEMENT OF CHILDBED-WOMEN.

MANY diseases proceed from the want of due care in child-bed; and the more hardy part of the sex are most apt to despise the necessary precautions in this state. This is peculiarly the case with young wives. They think, when the labour-pains are ended, the danger is over; but in truth it may only then be said to be begun. Nature, if left to herself, will seldom fail to expel the *fœtus*; but proper care and management are certainly necessary for the recovery of the mother. No doubt, mischief may be done by too much as well as by too little care. Hence females who have the greatest number of attendants in child-bed generally recover worst. But this is not peculiar to the state of child-bed. Excessive care always defeats its own intention, and is generally more dangerous than none at all.*

* Though the management of women in child-bed has been practised as an employment since the earliest accounts of time, yet it is still in most countries on a very bad