

III. *An Account of a Dropsy in the left Ovary of a Woman, aged 58. Cured by a large Incision made in the Side of the Abdomen, by Dr. Robert Houstoun.*

AUGUST 1701. I was in the Country, with a Patient, the Lady *Anne Houstoun*, Wife to Sir *John Houstoun*, Baronet; in the Shire of *Renfrew*, ten Miles from *Glasgow*, *North Britain*. This charitable Lady press'd me with great Earnestness to visit a Tenant's Wife, who lay bedridden, of an uncommon Disease, which no Physician, or Surgeon, who had seen her, could give any Name to, or account for. She inform'd me, the ablest of that Country had forsaken her, and declared her incurable, so that I could lose no Reputation by the Result of my Endeavours.

In order to oblige this worthy Lady, and in Compassion to the Distress of a poor Woman in so deplorable Condition, deserted and given over on all sides, I went, determin'd to do every thing in my Power for her Relief. She was in the 58th Year of her Age, her Name was *Margaret Millar*.

She inform'd me that her Midwife, in her last lying-in, at 45 Years old, having violently pull'd away the Burthen, she was so very sensibly affected by a Pain, which then seiz'd her in the left Side, between the *Umbilicus* and Groin, that she scarce ever had been free from it after, but that it had troubled her more, or less, during 13 Years together; that for two Years past she had been extremely uneasy, her Belly grew very large,

large, and a Difficulty of breathing increased continually upon her; infomuch that for the last six Months, she had scarce breath'd at all but with the utmost Difficulty. That in all that Space of Time, having quite lost her Appetite, she had scarce eat so much as would nourish a sucking Child; and that for three Months together she had now been forc'd to lie constantly on her Back, not daring to move at all, to one side or other.

This Tumour was grown to so monstrous a Bulk, that it engross'd the whole left Side, from the *Umbilicus* to the *Pubes*, and stretch'd the Abdominal Muscles, to so unequal a Degree, that I don't remember ever to have seen the like in the whole Course of my Practice. It drew towards a Point. Her being so long confined to lie continually on her Back, having grievously excoriated her, added much to her Sufferings, which, with want of Rest and Appetite, had wasted her to Skin and Bone, as the poor Woman herself expressed it. Indeed she needed not to have told me so, my Eyes were too faithful Witnesses of her low and wretched Condition.

Scarce able to speak out, she told me, that having heard much of my Success, she had strong Hopes of Relief, provided I would try at least, and do something in Pity to her Affliction.

I answer'd her that I was willing, but afraid, in her low State, she would want Strength to undergo a large Incision; that in order effectually to relieve her, I must be oblig'd to lay open a great Part of her Belly, and remove the Cause of all that Swelling: she seem'd not frightened, but heard me without Disorder, and, as if inspir'd with sudden Courage, press'd, and urg'd me to the Operation.

I drew (I must confess) almost all my Confidence from her unexpected Resolution, so that without loss of Time, I prepared what the Place would allow, and

with an Impoffhume Lancet, laid open about an Inch, but finding nothing iffue, I enlarged it two Inches, and even then nothing came forth but a little thin yellowifh *Serum*, fo I ventured to lay it open about two Inches more : I was not a little startled, after fo large an Aperture, to find only a glutinous Subftance bung up this Orifice. All my Difficulty was to remove it ; I try'd my Probe, I endeavour'd with my Fingers, but all was in vain ; it was fo flippery that it eluded every Touch, and the ftrongeft hold I could take.

I wanted, in this place, almoft every thing neceffary, but bethought myfelf of a very odd Inftrument, yet as good as the beft in its Confequence, becaufe it answer'd the End propos'd. I took a ftrong Firr-Splinter, fuch as the Poor in that Country ordinarily ufe to burn inftead of Candles ; I wrapt about the End of this Splinter fome loofe Lint, and thruft it into the Wound, and by turning and winding it, I drew out above two Yards in Length of a Subftance thicker than any Gellie, or rather like Glue that's fresh made and hung out to dry ; the Breadth of it was above ten Inches ; this was followed by nine full Quarts of fuch Matter, as I have met with in Steatomatous and Atheromatous Tumours, with feveral *Hydatides*, of various Sizes, containing a yellowifh *Serum*, the leaft of 'em bigger than an Orange, with feveral large Pieces of Membranes, which feem'd to be Parts of the diftended Ovary. Then I squeez'd out all I could, and ftitch'd up the Wound in three Places, almoft equi-diftant : I was oblig'd to make ufe of *Lucatellus's* Balfam, which was made by her Lady for the Ufe of the Poor ; with this Balfam I covered a Pledget, the whole Length of the Wound, and over that laid feveral Comprefles, dipp'd in warm *French* Brandy, and becaufe I judg'd that the Parts might have loft their Spring, by fo vaft and fo long a
Diftention

Distention, I dipt in the same Brandy a large Napkin four times folded, and applied it over all the Dressings, and with a couple of strong Towels, which were also dipt, I swathed her round the Body, and then gave her about four Ounces of the following Mixture, which I had from her Lady.

R̄ *Aq. Menthae* ℥ ss. *Aq. Cinnamomi fort.* ℥ iss.
Syr. Diacodii ℥ vi. *M.*

The Cinnamon-Water was drawn off from Canary and the best Cinnamon; indeed it was the finest and most fragrant Cinnamon-Water I ever tasted; of this Mixture I ordered her 2 or 3 Spoonfuls 4 times a Day.

Next Morning I found her in a breathing Sweat, and she informed me, with great Tokens of Joy, that she had not slept so much, nor found herself so well refresh'd, at any Time for three Months past. I carefully attended her once every Day, and as constantly dressed her Wound in the same Manner as above, for about eight Days together; I kept in the lower Part of the Wound a small Tent, which discharged some Serosities at every Dressing for 4 or 5 Days. But Business calling me elsewhere, I left her, having first instructed her two Daughters (both Women, who carefully attended her) how to dress her Wound, and told 'em what Diet I thought most proper, enjoining 'em strictly to observe what I order'd.

Her chief Food was strong Broth made of an old Cock, in each Porringer of which was one Spoonful of the Lady's Cinnamon-Water; this was repeated 4 times a day, and gave her new Life and Spirits.

After three Weeks Absence, I called at her House, and finding it shut up, was a little surpriz'd, but had not gone far before I was much more surprized, when I found her sitting wrapt up in Blankets, giving Directions to some Labourers who were cutting down her Corn.

She mended apace to the Admiration of every body thereabouts, recovered surprizingly, and lived in perfect Health from that time, which was in *August 1701*, till *October 1714*. when she died in ten Days Sickness.

That this Tumour, or rather Dropsy of the *Ovarium*, proceeded from the Midwife's Rashness in pulling away the *Placenta*, not knowing how to separate it from the *Uterus* skilfully, seems to me plain from what the Woman herself told me, and what fell out afterwards.

The *Placenta* adhering fast to the *Uterus*, required more Art to bring it away than she was Mistress of, which probably induc'd her to use Violence; by which she forc'd down the *Fundus Uteri*; so overstrain'd the Ligaments, and all that's appended to 'em; especially the *Ligamentum latum* of the left Side and its *Ovarium*, which may be reasonably allow'd to have been hurt in the Relaxation with the rest. Hence the Elasticity of these laesed Parts was not only impair'd, but the small Lymphaticks ruptur'd, so that the extravasated *Lympha* rushing out, thicken'd, and not being able to recirculate, dilated the injur'd *Ovarium*, and thus increas'd the Tumour, and the Parts being already excessively distended, and being no longer able to resist the new Influx of fresh Secretions, ruptur'd also, and by Degrees augmented to that huge and enormous Bulk.

Cyprianus in his Letter to Sir *Thomas Millington*, gives several Instances of the Mischiefs committed by Midwives, and other ignorant Persons. When a *Placenta* adheres, then (says he) they tear all before 'em, by pulling rudely, they force down the *Fundus Uteri*, consequently do Violence to the *Ovaria* and other Parts, whence follow Inflammations, &c.

Forestus, l. 28. *Obs.* 80. says, that an over-bold Midwife pulled out the *Placenta* too hastily, and that the

the Woman presently fell into a Swoon, and died immediately.

Frederick Ruysch attributes the Cause of a *Placenta's* adhering close, to a central Insertion of the Navel-String into the *Placenta*, in which Case it is hard to separate; a Train of dismal Accidents attend those who, not knowing how to do it, venture to pull it away by Force. *Vide Obs. Anat.* 97.

Dionis and *la Motte* have made the same Remark, by the latter of which we are told of innumerable Accidents, which he has known happen to Women in hard Labour, by the Rashness and Ignorance of bold Pretenders, who, without Rule, Precepts, Practice, or any suitable Instructions, venture to practise Deliveries.

The aforesaid *Ruysch* has a remarkable Instance of the Effects of Violence in hard Labour: The Case is curious. *Vide Obs. Anat.* 63.

Manget, in his *Theatrum Anat.* tells us that in all hard Labours, where the *Placenta* sticks, the Ligaments suffer more or less by a rash and ignorant Way of Pulling; Examples of which see in *Platerus's Obs. lib.* 3. *Bartholin. Cent.* 2. *Hist.* 91. *Cent.* 5. *Hist.* 19. *Marchett. Anat. cap.* 7. and others, of which *Blasius* has given us an ample List in his Commentaries on *Veslingius*.

He likewise tells us, that the *Ovaria* grow to a wonderful Bulk, and contain such a huge Quantity of Liquor, that they become dropfical, whereof *Skenckius* in his *Obs.* has recorded many Examples, as hath *Riolan*, and many others.

Munnicks in his *Bibliothec. Anat.* gives us the History of a large Dropfy of the right *Ovarium*.

Mortgagni has told us, that he has often met with large Vesicles in the *Ovaria*, and, in morbid Bodies, sometimes full of purulent Matter.

Sylvius

Sylvius. Ex lymphaticis laeis tam Virilium, quam Muliebrum Testicularum, &c. Hydrops particularis excitari potest.

Veslingius cap. 7. has often met with large Tumours, from Obstructions in the *Ovaria* of Women.

Vesalius found in the right *Ovarium*, 9 or 10 *Glandules*, like Goose Eggs, with Matter not unlike the Whites of Eggs, or rather thicker.

Gul. Ballon, paradig. vi. found an Imposthume of the Nature of a *Steatoma*, near the *Collum Uteri*; The Woman had a large Tumour on her Side 16 Years, and had only one *Ovarium*, which was shown as a wonderful thing.

At *Westminster*, about two Years ago, I opened the Body of a Gentlewoman, about 60, whose left *Ovarium*, of a great Bulk, weigh'd vi. lb. to which adher'd several *Hydatides* like Pullets Eggs.

Hildan mentions an *Hydropick* Tumour of the right *Ovarium*, of a prodigious bulk, stuff'd with Hair, *vide Gul. Fab. Hild. Cent. 5 Obs. 48. Greg. Horst. Tom. 2. l. 4. Ob. 53.*

Ruysch Obs. Anat. 17. A Dropsie (says he) of the *Ovarium*, or (if you please) of the Eggs, is an Affection, or Disease, well enough known to others, but I am afraid not so well consider'd; Authors have agreed to call it *Hydatis*, with which name I shall rest satisfied, provided we agree about the subject of the Distemper. I observe this, most frequently, if not always, to be the Eggs, but so chang'd, and sometimes swell'd to such a Bulk, that I have often seen them larger than a Child's Head.

Drelincourt has given us a very full and exact Account of a Dropsie of the left *Ovarium*, in a Lady of 35 Years. The Tumour, of an enormous Bulk, continu'd three Years. The Body of the *Ovarium*, with all contain'd in it, weigh'd, 60 lb. It was nothing
but

but a number of little Globules, cluster'd together, that differ'd in their Roundness, Form, Colour, and Consistence, proceeding from little seminary Vesicles in a Cluster. Some had Water extremely clear and liquid, others a yellowish *Serum* thin, others a glutinous Matter; some were as big as Pullets Eggs, others bigger than one's Fist.

Let these few, out of the many Instances which I could produce from Authors of undoubted Reputation, suffice to prove, that the *Ovaria*, as well as the *Tubæ Falloppianæ*, Ligaments, and *Uterus* itself, are not free from Dropsies, &c. and that they proceed from Obstructions, often occasioned by rude and violent dealing with Women in difficult Labours, which generally bring on a train of dismal Symptoms, that sooner or later, according to the Strength of the Sufferer, after a miserable, painful, languishing Life, end in Death.

The manifest Success in this uncommon Case may be of use, and may shew, that we ought not to despair too soon, in Distempers that are seemingly most dangerous.

IV. *Preparatio Carulei Prussiaci ex Germaniâ missa ad Johannem Woodward, M. D. Prof. Med. Gresh. R. S. S.*

℞ **T**artari crudi & Nitri crudi Siccati ad ℥iiii. Pulveriscentur minutissime, & commisceantur, deinde admoto igneo carbone detonentur, & habebis Salis Tartari extemporanei ℥iiii. Dum adhuc calidum est hoc Sal, pulveriscentur subtilissime, & addantur sanguinis Bovini probe exsiccati & subtiliss. pulv. ℥iiii. Hæc, bene