

The History of a large Prolapsus Uteri, accompanied with several extraordinary Circumstances, from which it appears, that the Catamenia flow only from the Uterus, and not from the Vagina.
By Mr James Hill, Surgeon at Dumfries.

ABOUT the year 1741, a married woman was delivered of her first child when she was in the twentieth year of her age. The midwife, who was none of the most humane of her profession, pulled very hard in bringing away the placenta ; upon which, the woman heard a particular noise, and thought she felt something break within her. She complained that she was injured ; but the midwife answered, in a surly manner, that she knew her business, and had done no harm. A pain and weakness continued

in that side ; but she was not sensible of all the injury that had been done till she got up and began to walk across the room. The uterus then fell down, as large as the fist of a man of ordinary size, when clinched. It was covered by the vagina reversed, which came down with it, resembling a bag. The os tincae projected about an inch below all, and seemed to her to resemble the nipple of a breast. These, therefore, were the appellations which she afterwards used for distinguishing these parts.

After this first prolapsus, she went immediately to bed, and put all up very easily. It continued so till the next time that she attempted to walk, when it again dropt down as formerly. She took no medical advice upon this occasion ; but, by the persuasion of some good old woman of her acquaintance, bandages were applied, with a view of keeping it up ; but without effect. It always dropt down when she stood erect, and the bandages galled and fretted her so much, that she threw them all away. It continued regularly to hang down all the day, and was put up every night, in which situation it remained till she got up next morning. Her health was in no degree impaired by this affection ; she felt no other

inconvenience from it than what arose from the bulk.

She suckled her child for about eighteen months; and, a short time after it was weaned, the catamenia appeared as usual. She then observed, that the menstrual blood was discharged entirely through the nipple, as she called it, and that not a drop came from the bag. Sometimes the blood came away by single drops, and very slowly, at other times it flowed so fast that she was obliged to keep within doors; and, in general, her menstrual evacuation was in great quantity.

After some time, she again fell with child. This was attended with much inconvenience during the whole time of gestation; the uterus still hanging down all the day and being put up at night. At length, however, it grew so big, that it could not get down. Then it lay as a heavy load on the os pubis and neighbouring bones, till some time in the seventh month, when she was delivered. She nursed this child also, and it lived till it was four years old. During the time that she gave suck, and after the child was weaned, the circumstances with respect to

the prolapsus were, in every particular, the same as formerly; with this difference only, that the nipple now hung somewhat lower.

In the course of a few years, she conceived three times after this; but she carried none of her children beyond three months. This she herself attributed to her being of a very passionate temper. And an abortion in all the cases ensued on her being much provoked. After every miscarriage, the nipple hung still farther down than formerly.

These frequent miscarriages were succeeded by a fluor albus, which continued for six or seven years. During all this time she uniformly observed, that, when she menstruated, the discharge was from the nipple; while, on the other hand, the whites came entirely from the bag; which last was so wet, that she was obliged to have it constantly covered with cloths.

While in this situation, she was affected with a very severe colic, and such a swelling of the uterus from cold, that she could not put it up. This obliged her to acquaint me with the whole affair. The colic and swelling were soon removed; but I did not propose to do any thing for

the other complaints, which continued in the situation described above till the year 1761, when she was attacked with a severe intermittent. She was then between forty and fifty years of age; and, after the ague was removed, her menses did not return. The prolapsus, however, continued as formerly, with this remarkable difference, that the os tincae or nipple coalesced and was skinned over. The fluor albus also went off, and she has now no trouble from the pendulous uterus, but the bulk, to which she has been accustomed for thirty-three years; and, for these last ten or twelve years, she has not taken the trouble to put it up.

It swells sometimes to a great bulk, from cold or hard labour. At other times, it shrinks up like a corrugated scrotum, to which it bears a very great resemblance; as, from being long exposed to the open air, it is now dry, and of the same colour with the rest of the skin.

I imagined, that, after having been so long down, and after having assumed this appearance, it could not be put up again. But in this I was mistaken. She was still able to reduce it with the utmost ease; but it came down again as soon

as the pressure was removed. The bulk of this tumour never obstructed the urethra, as it was entirely below that passage. She still continues in good health, and goes about so briskly that few people know she has any disorder.