HISTORY
OF
A CASE OF
MEDULLARY SARCOMA,
WHICH AFFECTED SEVERAL IMPORTANT VISCERA,
WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE
MORBID APPEARANCES WHICH WERE OBSERVED ON DISSECTION.
BY GEORGE LANGSTAFF, ESQ.

READ 27TH MARCH 1833.

THE patient was a woman, 38 years of age, who had borne eleven children, and had enjoyed a good state of health until within the last two years of her life, when symptoms denoting a morbid condition of the liver began to shew themselves, accompanied with a disordered state of the digestive organs.

The symptoms soon assumed a more alarming aspect; great pain was experienced in the region of the liver, (which increased in size,) in the right shoulder, and in the loins.

During the four months which preceded her death, the patient's health declined rapidly, and she became

greatly emaciated, without, however, exhibiting signs of ascites, œdema, or jaundice.

The menstrual period having ceased during this time, she imagined herself pregnant and I was requested to meet the medical gentleman in attendance in order to give my opinion respecting the nature of the disease; this was about three weeks previous to her decease. On examining the abdomen, it was found enlarged to the size which it assumes at the full period of utero-gestation, and the parietes being very thin, I ascertained that the liver abounded with tubera, which I concluded to be of the fungoid or medullary kind, from the distinctness with which they presented themselves on the external surface of the organ, a peculiarity which, (as I have had several opportunities of ascertaining by post-mortem examination,) is more remarkable in the fungoid than in any other form of hepatic disease. Slight pressure on the abdomen was productive of great pain; there was also pain in the region of the left kidney, and the patient informed me that she had passed an offensive puriform fluid with her urine, for some time. She was extremely restless; had been greatly depressed in spirits, and was occasionally afflicted with singultus and vomiting; the appetite was bad, and the pulse small and 120 in a minute.

On examining the region of the pubes, I could not detect any enlargement of the uterus indicative of pregnancy, and I considered the question of its

existence as one of little importance, as the patient did not appear likely to survive more than a month, and further, it seemed improbable that a person so much diseased could be pregnant.

During the fortnight previous to her death, the bodily powers of the patient gradually sunk, her mind also became perturbed; she took very little nourishment, and her pulse was 150 and extremely small.

In the progress of the case, the tumefaction of the abdomen greatly increased, the integuments became inflamed, symptoms of sphacelation commenced, and the skin assumed an irregular surface corresponding with that of the tubera in the liver beneath.

About twelve hours prior to the patient's dissolution, uterine hæmorrhage commenced, which was succeeded by the expulsion of a foetus, of the third or fourth month of utero-gestation and which was in a putrid condition: the placenta was not expelled.

Sectio Cadaveris.—On opening the abdomen, the liver appeared to occupy the principal part of this cavity, and firm adhesion, by organized lymph, firmly united the serous investment of the convex surface of this viscus to the peritoneum, covering the anterior part of the abdomen. Nearly the whole of the natural structure of the liver had been superseded by

the production of medullary and fungoid tubera, which projected considerably from the external surface of the organ, and many of which had acquired the magnitude of a moderate sized orange.

On making sections of the liver, the tubera were observed to be contained in dense and highly vascular cysts, a fact which was the more distinctly shewn from the arteries having been injected with size and vermilion.

Those portions of the liver which retained their natural structure were of a pale white colour, with scarcely any signs of vascularity, or appearance of biliary ducts, which induced me to suspect that the secretion of bile had been suspended for some time ; a circumstance which might account for the absence of jaundice.

The gall-bladder contained a small quantity of a viscid dark-coloured secretion.

In the substance of the pancreas there were three moderate sized tumours and several minute ones of a scirrhus structure : some of the mesenteric glands were converted into medullary tumours.

The spleen retained its natural structure.

In the right kidney were found medullary and fungoid tubera.

The uterus was healthy, with its mouth widely expanded, and the placenta partially detached.

The right ovary was considerably enlarged, and its natural structure destroyed by the production of scirrhus and fungoid tubera ; it contained, besides, several serous cysts—*not* hydatids.

The left ovary was nearly as large as the other, and similarly affected with fungoid tumours and serous cysts.—The Fallopian tubes were pervious.

It may here be mentioned that the arteries of the uterus were injected with size and vermilion, which had passed on from them into the substance of the placenta, producing a deceptive appearance of the arteries of the chorion being filled ; this was dissipated by maceration.

Sections of the ovaria were made and minutely examined, with the purpose of discovering a corpus luteum, but without success.

Observations.—It seems almost incredible that a person with such extensive disease in various viscera, and with such a disordered state of the general health, could have become pregnant. It would be a difficult point to decide pathologically or physiologically how it was possible for impregnation to have been effected, when, as was shewn by dissection, all the natural structure of the ovaria had been destroy-

ed. Perhaps, at the time of impregnation, some portion of the ovaries might have contained a vesicle capable of effecting the purpose, and then the changes produced by utero-gestation excited the vessels of the ovaries in accelerating the morbid growth which affected them. I feel the more inclined to entertain this opinion, from having observed, (by a daily examination,) that the liver, during the three weeks that I attended the patient, underwent a manifest enlargement.

In my museum there is a preparation of the uterus of a young woman, which is itself perfectly healthy, yet both ovaries are filled with medullary and fungoid matter : this patient owed her death to the production of an enormous tumour at the knee-joint, which had caused absorption of the capsular and other ligaments and had also destroyed, to an extent of six inches, the periosteum covering the anterior surface of the femur, which, at the part thus denuded, was considerably reduced in size by progressive absorption : the popliteal artery, vein and nerve, were imbedded in and compressed by the diseased growth, so much so, that it is surprising how the circulation in the leg was carried on.