CASE
OF
POLYPUS OF THE UTERUS,

BY G. LANGSTAFF, ESQ.

READ JANUARY 10TH, 1832.

Mrs. ———, 59 years of age, who had borne several children, and had enjoyed good health during the greater part of her life, and had ceased to menstruate several years, became affected with uterine pains, accompanied with frequent hæmorrhage, nearly twelve months previous to her death.

Six months prior to her dissolution the uterine hæmorrhage became so profuse as to affect her health; she was troubled with a cough and difficulty in breathing: the liver occasionally became disordered, and her countenance denoted symptoms of jaundice.

Several distinguished physicians and accoucheurs had been consulted; but it was only a few days previous to the death of the patient that the real nature of the disease was discovered, by her having submitted to an examination per vaginam; when it was found

that there was a polypus in the uterus projecting into the vagina.

She was advised to have the diseased growth removed by ligature, to which she consented; but she died from the effects of hæmorrhage, on the fourth day after seeing the gentlemen who had proposed the operation.

I was requested to inspect the body, and the following are the appearances which presented.

She had not become much emaciated; there was a considerable quantity of adipose substance seen on cutting through the parietes of the abdomen. In each side of the chest there was nearly a quart of water, and the lungs were partly filled with serous infiltration. There were about two ounces of fluid in the pericardium. The heart was very small, its structure flaccid, and the cavities and valves healthy.

All the abdominal viscera appeared blanched, and there was scarcely any blood in the vena cava; but there were evident signs of peritoneal inflammation, particularly in the situation where it is reflected over the pelvic viscera; and there were about two pints of fluid in the pelvis.

The liver was small and of a very pale colour; its structure so extremely soft as to be easily lacerated

by the pressure of the thumb and fore-finger. The gall-bladder and biliary ducts were greatly distended with bile. The spleen was small and very soft. The kidneys were healthy.

The omentum was laden with fat, and there was a firm union of a part of its extremity to the fundus uteri; and there were old standing adhesions of the posterior part of the serous covering of this viscus to the anterior surface of the intestinum rectum.

The pelvic viscera were removed for more minute examination.

The body of the uterus and its parietes were much larger than natural, yet there were not any signs of carcinoma or fungus hæmatodes.

A polypus had formed at the superior part of the fundus of the uterus, which seemed to have had its origin in the muscular coat; it had projected into the mucous surface, and proceeded along the cavity in the form of a large pedicle, nearly equal in size to its base, and the growth had passed through the os uteri into the vagina, where it had acquired the magnitude of a large peach, and assumed the appearance of a fungoid tumour.

The mucous surface of the tumour in the vagina had been destroyed by ulcerative absorption; it was coated with coagulated blood, which appearance in-

duced me to suppose that the hæmorrhage had proceeded principally from this part, and not from the vessels belonging to the internal surface of the uterus.

The os uteri was considerably dilated, so that there would not have been much difficulty in applying a ligature round the polypus.

The fallopian tube on the right side was completely obliterated, and the ovarium converted into small serous cysts, not hydatids.

The left fallopian tube was pervious; the ovarium was soft in texture, and there was an appearance exactly resembling what I have seen in a recent corpus luteum; but this event could not perhaps have been effected at such an advanced period of life; yet we have experiments to prove that excitement may produce appearances in the ovaria of rabbits and other animals, where there had merely been the exciting stimulus, at a proper period, without sexual intercourse; and I have, in my museum, some preparations of false conceptions which shew all the signs of the involucra of an ovum in the human being, without there being a vestige of an embryo, where actual intercourse had not been effected.

On cutting through the whole extent of the polypus, I found the cervix of a dense structure, exactly similar to that of the uterus; but to my asto-

nishment, when the incision was extended through that part of it which had entered the vagina, I found in its centre grumous blood contained in a dense cyst, surrounded by coagulated blood.

This appearance I have never before witnessed. Fluid has occasionally been found in the centre of large polypi. The polypus in this instance was small. I have seen them of various sizes ; sometimes occupying the whole of the vagina. They frequently vary in structure, but are generally, I believe, denominated polypi. The application of a ligature will often succeed in preventing a recurrence of the disease ; but I think that in the present instance the operation would, considering the patient's state of health, have proved unsuccessful.