

they were more soft and spongy than in their natural state, and when first extracted, were very putrid and offensive.

XVIII. *An Account of a Mode of Practice which has been successfully adopted, in Cases of Distortion of the Pelvis, in pregnant Women. By Mr. John Barlow, Surgeon at Bolton in Lancashire. Communicated in a Letter to Mr. W. Simmons, Surgeon, at Manchester; and by him to Dr. Simmons.* ✓

To Mr. SIMMONS, Surgeon, at Manchester.

DEAR SIR,

I Have drawn up an account of the mode of practice which I have adopted, and have pursued during several years, in cases of distortion of the pelvis, in pregnant women. These observations I have thought it proper to address to you, as they bear a strong relation to

to a subject which you have discussed with great ability and success. Upon my plan of delivery, the life of the child is not endangered, while the mother sustains no greater risk than that incurred in every natural labour. And I will venture farther to advance, that even the use of the crotchet may be superseded by the method which I am about to describe; and that the formidable obstetrical apparatus of knives, hooks and perforators may be happily banished in future from the surgery.

Such large promises would meet with little credit, if they were unsupported by facts; it will appear, however, that I am delivering the result of much experience, and not hazarding conjectures. Even a smaller number of facts than you will find subjoined, would have fully established my assertions.

My method consists in exciting premature labour early in the seventh month of pregnancy, whenever I have been consulted in time by distorted patients. At this period of gestation, the smaller size of the child's head, and the greater compressibility of its bones, render the completion of delivery easy, without the assistance of instruments; so that the mother is not exposed to any peculiar hazard
by

by the practice; and the child, at seven months old, has a sufficient chance of surviving the birth.

From a number of cases which have occurred to me, I am even persuaded, that labour might be brought on at an earlier period, if the extreme deformity of the pelvis should require it, without much risk to the mother.

It is hardly necessary to describe the particular method which I employ to excite labour. It is easy for any medical man to understand how the membranes may be ruptured, without pain or injury to the mother. If the practice were made generally known, it might be applied to very bad purposes. I commonly give a mixture, from which the patient is taught to expect the desired result; every thing then goes on as in natural labour.

The safety and certainty of this method are such, that some of my patients, who had formerly been delivered by the crotchet, are now in the habit of sending, to fix with me in what week labour shall be brought on; and the event has always answered their expectations and mine.

I shall now proceed to state some cases in proof of my assertions; several of the following

ing instances can be attested by my medical brethren in Bolton, who have been occasionally desired to see the patients, when I have been otherwise engaged, after the discharge of the waters.

CASE I.

The wife of John Smith, a woman rather advanced in life, of a delicate habit, and much deformed both in the pelvis and spine, had been delivered six times by the crotchet. In all those labours, the waters had been discharged several days (in two of them, six days) before delivery, after violent and almost continual pains. I brought on labour early in the seventh month, June 17, 1783, and she was delivered on the 21st, with common assistance. It was a footling case, and the child was born dead. On the 31st July, 1784, I ruptured the membranes in the same woman, at the same period of pregnancy, and discharged the waters; she was delivered on the 3d of August; the child was born before I arrived, excepting the head, which was brought away with common assistance—this child was also dead. The width of the

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the pelvis, in the narrowest part, from the sacrum to the pubis, I judge to be one inch and a half, and in the widest not more than two inches.

C A S E II.

The wife of Oliver Longworth had been twice delivered by the crotchet, after the waters had been discharged two or three days, during which she was in almost continual and violent labour.

Dec. 5th, 1787, I brought on labour, and she was delivered on the 7th.—The child lived three hours.

Feb. 1, 1790, I again excited labour, and she was delivered on the 4th.—The child was dead.

Jan. 4th, 1793, Labour was again brought on artificially, and delivery took place on the 6th. As she lived in the country, the child was born before I arrived—and was dead. The pelvis of this woman was about two inches in diameter at the narrowest part, and two inches and a half at the widest.—it was otherwise distorted.

C A S E

C A S E III.

The wife of John Walwork had been delivered four times by the crotchet; she has since borne six children by premature labour: all were alive at the time of delivery, and three of them are now living. The narrowest part of the pelvis, in this woman, was about two inches; the widest two inches and a half.

Delivery took place, spontaneously, in one of these pregnancies, in the seventh month.

C A S E IV.

The wife of George Jowel had been formerly delivered of two dead children; one by the forceps, the other by the crotchet. She has since borne three living children by means of premature labour, one of which died soon after the birth; the second is now alive, and four years old; the third lived ten months. The pelvis of this woman, though not so much distorted as some of the others, was in no part above two inches and a half wide.

C A S E

CASE V.

The wife of Peter Blakely has had ten children; the first six were still born; five of whom were delivered by the crotchet. Since that time she has borne four by premature labour; two of these were born dead, one lived an hour, the other is now four years old.

A circumstance well worth remarking took place, respecting her last labour. Premature labour was excited three times by art, but in her last pregnancy it came on without any assistance. I shall not venture to assert, that the constitution had acquired the habit of expelling the fœtus in the seventh month, in consequence of the preceding treatment; but if other instances of the same nature should be observed, they would furnish a strong additional argument in favour of the practice which I have recommended.

This woman was strong and muscular; the pelvis was not more than two inches and a half in diameter at the widest part.

I presume

I presume it may be fairly inferred, from these cases, that when the accoucheur is consulted at an early period of pregnancy, he may, by exciting labour at a given period, preserve both mother and child, under circumstances which have hitherto been supposed, by all practitioners, to require the absolute sacrifice of one life, or to be attended with great danger to both: and that in extreme cases of distortion, the mother may be saved, by having early recourse to this method, without subjecting her to the fatigue and pain occasioned by the crotchet.

I am,

Dear Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

JOHN BARLOW.

Bolton,

Dec. 16th, 1799.