

IN the presentation of the superior extremities of children, at the time of birth, it has been an opinion, I believe, universally adopted, that women would die undelivered, if they were not relieved by art. Being informed that the following cases, which are contradictory to this opinion, have been misrepresented, I think it necessary to print this short account of them.

C A S E I.

* In the year 1772, I was called to a poor woman in Oxford-Street, who had been in labour all the preceding night, under the care of a Midwife. Mr. Kingston now living in Charlotte-Street, and Mr. Goodwin, Surgeon, at Wirksworth, in Derbyshire, who were at that time students in Midwifery, had been sent for, some hours before I was called. The arm of the child presenting, they attempted to turn and extract it by the feet, but the pains were so strong as to prevent the introduction of the hand into the *uterus*. I found the arm much swelled and pushed through the external parts in such a manner, that the shoulder nearly reached the *perinaeum*. The woman struggled vehemently with her pains, and during their continuance, I perceived the shoulder of the child to descend. Concluding that the child was small and would pass, doubled, through the *pelvis*, I desired one of the gentlemen to sit down to receive it, but the friends of the woman would not permit me to move. I remained by the bed side till the child was expelled, and I was very much surpris'd to find, that the breech and inferior extremities were expelled before

before the head, as if the case had originally been a presentation of the inferior extremities.

The child was dead, but the mother recovered as soon and as well as she could have done after the most natural labour.

C A S E II.

In the year 1773, I was called to a woman in Castle-Street, Oxford-Market, who was attended by a Midwife. Many hours after it was discovered that the arm of the child presented, Mr. Buroffe, Surgeon, in Poland-Street, was sent for; and I was called into consultation. When I examined, I found the shoulder of the child pressed into the superior aperture of the *pelvis*. The pains were strong and returned at short intervals. Having agreed upon the necessity of turning the child and extracting it by the feet, I sat down and made repeated attempts to raise the shoulder, with all the force which I thought could be safely used; but the action of the *uterus* was so powerful that I was obliged to desist. I then called to mind the circumstances of the case before related, mentioned them to Mr. Buroffe, and proposed that we should wait for the effect, which a continuance of the pains might produce, or till they were abated, when the child might be turned with less difficulty. No further attempts were made to turn the child. Then every pain propelled it lower into the *pelvis* and in little more than one hour the child was born, the breech being expelled, as in the first case.

This child was also dead, but the mother recovered in the most favourable manner.

Having been prepared for observing the progress of this labour, I understood it more clearly,
and

and attempted to explain both in my lecture on the subject, and in the aphorisms which were printed for the use of the students, my opinion of the manner in which the body of the child turned as it were, upon its own axis. I also pointed out the circumstances, in which, I supposed, the knowledge of the fact might be rendered useful in practice; but with great circumspection.

C A S E III.

January the 2d 1774, I was called to Mrs. Davis, who keeps a Toyshop, in Crown-Court, Windmill-Street. She had been a long time in labour and the arm of the child presented.

The late Mr. Eustace had been called on the preceding evening, and had made attempts to turn the child, which he had continued for several hours without success. I was sent for about one o'clock in the morning and on examination found the arm pushed through the external parts, the shoulder pressing firmly upon the *perinæum*. The exertions of the mother were wonderfully strong. I sat down while she had two pains, by the latter of which, the child was doubled and the breech expelled. I extracted the shoulders and head, and left the child in the bed. Mr. Eustace expressed great astonishment at the sudden change, but I assured him that I could claim no other merit on account of this delivery except that I had not impeded an effect which was wholly produced by the pains.

This child was also dead, but the mother recovered in the most favourable manner.

In all these cases, the women were at the full

full period of utero-gestation and the children were of the usual size.

Other cases of the same kind have occurred to me, and with the histories of several, varying in the time or manner in which the evolution of the child was made, I have lately been favoured by gentlemen of eminence in the profession. But these are sufficient to prove the fact, that in cases in which children present with the arm, women would not necessarily die undelivered, though they were not assisted by art.

With respect to the benefit we can, in practice, derive from the knowledge of this fact, I may be permitted to observe, that the custom of turning and delivering by the feet in presentations of the arm, will remain necessary and proper, in all cases, in which the operation can be performed with safety to the mother, or give a chance of preserving the life of the child. But when the child is dead and when we have no other view but merely to extract the child, to remove the danger thence arising to the mother, it is of great importance to know that the child may be turned spontaneously, by the action of the *uterus*. If we avail ourselves of that knowledge, the pain and danger which sometimes attend the operation of turning a child, may be avoided. Nor would any person versed in practice, fixing upon a case of preternatural presentation, in which he might expect the child to be turned spontaneously, be involved in difficulty, if from a defect of the pains or any other cause, he should be disappointed in his expectations. Nor would the suffering or chance of danger to the patient be increased by such proceeding.

THOMAS DENMAN.

July 12, 1780.

