

"Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,  
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre."

We all know that too great a number of children born in natural labour die during the first year of life, and a still larger proportion perish before they arrive at the years of usefulness, and then I think any man will bear me out in saying that the chances of a child, after having gone through all that, of being insane, an idiot, or a criminal, are greater than that of its being anything extraordinary. You remember well that amusing crank, Mr. Walter Shandy, when he was trying to prove the correctness of his theory that the pressure of the cerebrum on the cerebellum, during natural labour, had a bad effect on the intellect, could only bring up for evidence in support of his doctrine, the case of Julius Cæsar and the doubtful and equivocal one of Edward the Sixth. I doubt whether in all the cases operated on since then, you can greatly increase Mr. Walter Shandy's catalogue of great intellects in people born by the Cæsarion section.

Now, we should bear in mind that the mother has gone through the quicksands and shallows of childhood, youth, and adolescence; she has arrived at the time when she is head of a family; when her life is the most important thing to her friends and family, and when her death would perhaps be a loss irreparable; and I say that the mother has infinitely greater claims on life than the fœtus. I say that under the best circumstances—I am not speaking against the Cæsarion section—her chances of recovery would be less after the Cæsarion section, than if she had been delivered by craniotomy. Perhaps if the operation were performed by the best members of the colleges, the mortality would be small, but most of these operations must be performed by a country practitioner. But imagine how such an operation would be performed by the ordinary country practitioner. I can sympathize with a country practitioner when he is brought face to face with a question of this kind—shall he open the abdomen or reduce the size of the fœtal head? I can sympathize with the man who perhaps has never seen the living abdomen opened, or even seen the section of a cadaver since he left college. It is by the country practitioners that most of this would have to be

done. In a case of the kind, say, for instance, there is in the States, Kingston, or even Ottawa, a man who can operate successfully, he might as well be in the moon so far as we are concerned. The boy who went to college to study medicine said he would probably kill his first half dozen patients, but he would gain experience by it. Now, a man practising amongst our country families would not see that many cases during all his practice. In all my practice the question has but twice been raised, whether I should resort to the Cæsarion section or to craniotomy. Soon after I commenced practising I had a case. The woman had been in labour for a long time, the forceps had been applied and it was not possible to deliver. The fœtus was evidently dead, and I used the scissors to deliver. About four years ago I had a patient, a small woman, and the child was enormously large, and she had been in labour for several hours. The head would not engage. I tried to apply the forceps, and I am not ashamed to confess to you that it was a complete failure. I turned and brought down the feet. I thought that perhaps by pressure above and application of the forceps to the after coming head I could deliver, but the disproportion was so great that I entirely failed to get the head engaged. The fœtus was dead, the cord pulseless, and I passed the scissors into the base of the brain, and those of you who have tried that on the back of a strongly ossified skull will not envy me my labour. However, I delivered the woman. I had attended at the birth of both the husband and the wife; their mothers were remarkable for having had very large children, and I said to the mother-in-law, "now, if this woman gets in that way again I would advise, if she is anything like as large as she is now, not letting it go the full term." That was about four years ago. Some time in June I happened to be attending another daughter-in-law of hers, and she told me that this woman was about seven months gone and was very poorly and very large. Now, I said, I would advise her to have a premature labour brought on. They had moved at this time several miles away. There was a young doctor living near her, and he at once went and passed a catheter into the uterus. He told them that labour would come on in twenty-four hours or so. They waited forty-eight hours and then thought something was wrong. I went