

Mauriceau,* for example, mentions a case "*Du laborieux accouchement d'une femme dont l'enfant étoit resté au passage, à cause de l'extrême grosseur de la tête.*" He was called in March, 1669, to a primipara, aged 35, who had been in labor eight days. The head was in the cavity of the pelvis, and the child had been dead four days. The patient had been visited and abandoned by three or four surgeons, one of whom had made an incision into the soft parts of the vulva. The obstruction arose from the large size of the child's head. Mauriceau perforated and extracted with the crochet, and the woman who appeared to be moribund when the accoucheur arrived, lived on for eleven days, ultimately dying of "*une grosse fièvre qu'elle avoit cinq ou six jours auparavant.*" From this circumstance Mauriceau concluded that the patient might have escaped if she had been delivered two or three days earlier, that is to say, if she had been in labor only five or six days.

He relates another case "*De l'accouchement d'une femme qui eut un très-laborieux travail.*" It was that of a primipara, aged 28, who had been in labor two entire days after the rupture of the membranes. There had been ten hours of very strong pains. The head was low down in the vagina and had rested there for twelve hours. The pains had now ceased. "*Quoique sa Sage-femme lui eût donné deux clysters assez forts, pour tâcher de lui exciter de nouvelles douleurs, et qu'elle l'eût fait aussi saigner du bras suivant mon conseil.*" . . . Mauriceau ordered a strong dose of senna to be administered, and two hours afterwards a powerful clyster. Pains then came on, and the patient was delivered without more ado, "*d'un gros enfant mâle, qui étoit encore vivant.*"

Here then, we have two extremes of practice contrasted, the helplessness of the seventeenth century, and our own resourcefulness at the end of the nineteenth, and yet it may be alleged, not without reason, that there is to be seen in the contrast only one more illustration of how "knowledge comes but wisdom lingers." Such results of our modern practice as I have given in illustration do not make it so perfectly obvious that in obstetrics we are much wiser than our sires.

The work of Mauriceau from which I have quoted, contains the famous case in which he met Chamberlen, who failed to deliver with his forceps a woman with a deformed pelvis, and immediately after fled from Paris.

Mauriceau's practice illustrates, then, that of the age imme-

* Observations sur la grossesse et l'accouchement, etc., Paris, 1715.