

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

MANY years have elapsed since a treatise entirely devoted to Operative Midwifery has appeared in the English language.

In venturing to consider the subject in these pages, I have constantly had before me two standard works. I refer to Barnes' 'Lectures on Obstetric Operations' and Herman's 'Difficult Labour,' the former a classic in obstetric literature, the latter a most valuable companion at the bedside.

As will be seen, I have followed very much the same lines as Barnes, whose 'Lectures' have always appeared to me nearly perfect. Much, however, has happened since the publication of the last edition in 1886. At that time antiseptis and asepsis in midwifery were only beginning to be discussed; abdominal palpation for the diagnosis of presentations and positions of the fœtus was practised by only a few; the revival of symphysiotomy had newly begun; the modern operation of Cæsarean section had been described by Sänger only a year or two previously; while operations upon the pregnant or parturient woman for abdominal and pelvic tumours were had recourse to only in the most desperate circumstances. Indeed, the changes that have taken place have their parallel only in the revival that followed the scientific teaching of Ambroise Paré.

In considering the various pathological conditions causing dystocia and the methods of dealing with them, I have tried, as far as possible, to indicate what is becoming more apparent every day, that the art of midwifery can no longer be considered a subdivision of medicine, but must be regarded as a branch of surgery requiring a thorough knowledge of surgical principles.

I trust it shall be found that due credit has been given to those who have specially advanced the art of obstetrics in recent years. The names of many who have thus distinguished themselves in this and other countries are mentioned throughout the text, but it is impossible to avoid overlooking some, and to them I offer my apologies.