

and the history of which has been recorded by Sir Charles Bell, in the fourth volume of the Transactions of this society. Why the induction of premature labour was not had recourse to in this case it was difficult to imagine; the distortion was known to exist years before; the woman had been repeatedly delivered with the crotchet; and yet on this occasion she was allowed to go to the full period, and died almost immediately after having undergone this bloody operation. There are many other cases to which these observations might be applied with equal force in which the operation was unnecessary and unjustifiable. From the paper now read to the society, it appears that Mr. Wren saw Mrs. Williams in the fifth month of her first pregnancy, labouring under the characteristic symptoms of mollities of the bones of the pelvis—viz., pain in the region of the pelvis, associated with great and rapidly increasing difficulty in walking. "This difficulty," it is stated, "at last amounted to almost complete inability to walk, and for some weeks before her confinement she did not move farther than from her bed-room on the second floor, to her sitting-room on the first floor, where she passed the whole day lying or sitting on the sofa, and was carried up and down stairs by her husband." "There was nothing in her appearance when she came under Mr. Wren's care," adds Dr. West, "or subsequently, to suggest the idea of her being deformed—the only peculiarity being that she always stooped very much forward." On what cause Mr. Wren imagined these symptoms to depend does not appear, nor is it stated whether a suspicion crossed his mind that a destructive disease was going on in the pelvic bones producing a high degree of distortion. The poor woman looked forward with much apprehension to her labour, as well she might, and extracted from Mr. Wren "a promise that she should be allowed to inhale chloroform when labour came on." I presume, from the total silence on the subject in the paper, that Dr. West knew nothing whatever of the case until the 7th of May, 1850, when labour had actually commenced, and it was determined to perform the horrible operation now described. Had the nature of the disease been ascertained in the fifth month of pregnancy, and the proper treatment adopted, no man

of the slightest experience can entertain a doubt that the necessity for this operation—which necessity I do not even admit, existed at the time it was performed—could have arisen, and this miserable woman might now have been alive, and the society spared the recital of this melancholy catastrophe. The case ought to stand as a striking warning to others to avoid similar mistakes. But in January, in 1847, the same fatal operation was performed by Mr. Skey, at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, where great distortion of the bones of the pelvis was ascertained to exist in the sixth month of her first pregnancy; and yet the induction of premature labour was not employed. "The patient, Sarah B——, first consulted Mr. Jolin, surgeon, of Copice-row, Clarksenwell, on the 3rd of October. She was much deformed, being four feet one inch in height only, and in her thirty-eighth year. Mr. Jolin promptly detected pregnancy, and became alive to the whole extent of her calamitous situation. It was plain that no child could be propelled through the pelvis, the antero-posterior diameter being only one inch and one-third, and evident that no resource remained but the Cæsarean section. Mr. Jolin lost no time in holding a consultation with Mr. Skey, and the patient was admitted into St. Bartholomew's Hospital, under the care of the latter gentleman. Then Dr. Rigby, Dr. Protheroe Smith, and Dr. Ferguson, saw the patient, and confirmed the views of Mr. Jolin in every particular." On the 7th of October, this woman was positively ascertained to be pregnant—the catamenia had then ceased six months—she was then in fact, six months pregnant. On the 23rd of October she was examined by Mr. Skey and Mr. Jolin, and told that an operation was necessary; in fact, the Cæsarean section. On the 6th of November she was admitted into the hospital, and continued there during the remainder of the month of November, the whole of the month of December, and till the 26th of January, when the operation was performed, in the presence, I have been informed, of several hundred spectators, from all parts of the metropolis, summoned to witness this horrible spectacle. The poor woman died in thirty-six hours, and I have been informed that the child which was extracted alive, has since died in