

A further statement of the case of Elizabeth Thompson : upon whom the Caesarean operation was performed in the Manchester Lying-In Hospital : in addition to that published by Mr. Wood, in the Memoirs of the Medical Society of London, vol. 5th / By Charles White, and Richard Hall, ... and George Tomlinson, and John Thorp.

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A FURTHER
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~~~~~  
 BY  
 CHARLES WHITE, }  
 AND } Men-Midwives Extraordinary,  
 RICHARD HALL, }  
 AND  
 GEORGE TOMLINSON, }  
 AND } Men-Midwives in Ordinary  
 JOHN THORP, }

TO THAT CHARITY.

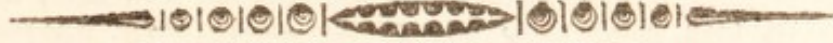


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Manchester, November 8th, 1799.

## A further Statement,

Ec. Ec.

As a difference of opinion has taken place before the public, betwixt two Medical Gentlemen, on the subject of a case of Cæsarean Operation, lately performed in the Lying-in Hospital in Manchester; and the facts of it being variously represented by them; the Men-midwives of that Institution feel it their duty to the profession, to state their opinion, and the circumstances, of this interesting case.

On Monday the 24th of June last, about one o'clock P. M. Mr. White received a letter from Mr. Ogden, a Surgeon at Ashton-under-Line. See note (a) together with Mr. White's answer.

About two o'clock, Elizabeth Thompson was brought to the Lying-in Hospital, (b) and as soon as she arrived, Mrs. Turner, the Matron, and Midwife, sent for Mr. Wood, the Man-midwife in Ordinary, for the week, who saw her about three o'clock. He, finding the case a very difficult and dangerous one, desired a consultation, when the Men-midwives Extraordinary, and in Ordinary were immediately sent for; four of whom attended. Mr. Nanfan was at Buxton. Mr. White was gone a few miles out of town; but a messenger was dispatched after him, to request his attendance. He immediately came to town, and arrived at the Hospital about half past eight o'clock; where he found Messrs. Hall, Tomlinson, Wood, and Thorp. After having examined the poor woman; their opinions were taken separately, and given in to Mr. Wood, without any previous communication with each other; when they were unanimous, that the *Pelvis* was so much distorted, that none of them could perceive either the child, the *Os Tincæ*, or any part of the *Uterus*; that nothing but the Cæsarean Operation, could give any chance, either, to the mother, or the child, and, that, no time ought to be lost in performing it. The Pulse then beat 120 strokes in a minute.

The plan, laid for the operation, was, to pay no regard to the Epigastric Artery, as it could be of no consequence in a large Wound, to men accustomed to perform operations, and who knew the use of the Needle and Tenaculum. The place of election for the incision,

appeared to them, to be, where, the child could be most easily perceived; where, they were not likely to meet, either with Intestines or Placenta, or any intervening substance of consequence. The operation was well performed, and with great steadiness, by Mr. Wood, in the presence of Messrs. White, Hall, Tomlinson, and Thorp, of Mr. Chippindall, (the Apothecary to the Charity,) Mr. Barlow, (Mr. Wood's Assistant,) and Mrs. Turner, the Midwife. The Epigastric Artery was not wounded; the incision in the *Uterus* was not more, than sufficient to extract the child; there was no Hemorrhage to threaten life, or to impede her recovery; and what blood was shed into the cavity, was taken up by a sponge. The child lay upon its right side, with its head, in the neck of the *Uterus*, resting on the fourth *Vertebra* of the loins, and on the right *Ilium*, and *Pubis*, completely above the superior aperture. Whoever will be at the trouble of applying a foetal skull to this distorted *Pelvis*, will be convinced, that it could not take any other position, the head could not descend so low as to be jammed in between the bones of the *Pelvis*; it could not even descend so low as the fifth *Vertebra* of the loins; so that, the *Cervix Uteri* appears to have been forced, at every pain, against the *Os Innominatum* on the right side, and the fourth *Vertebra* of the loins. The natural shape of the head was not at all changed from its round form, to an oblong, or sugar-loaf form; and it is impossible, that, it should have so changed, because the superior aperture was too narrow, and too distorted, to admit of its descending through any part of that aperture; and as the bones of the *Pelvis* could not give way, the child's head, by every labour pain, would drive the *Cervix Uteri* against the solid bone, and produce an alarming degree of contusion,—thence the danger.

We attended the Patient three times a day, as long as she lived; and we are satisfied, that, the after-treatment was right, and proper in every respect. But thus far we may say, that, though she did not lose so much blood, as to endanger her life, or impede her recovery, we were of opinion, that, taking more, either generally, or locally, would, on account of her previous indisposition, have occasioned too great a debility. We thought seventeen hours after the Operation, early enough to inject a Glyster; as the Intestines had been sufficiently emptied, a little while before the Operation, by a violent *Diarrhœa*. We never, at any one time, thought her free from danger. She died an easy death, and was extremely thankful for what had been done for her; and we hesitate not, to give it as our opinion, that, performing the Operation, was the greatest act of humanity, that could be done to the poor creature, who was labouring under as excruciating pains, as we ever knew to fall to the lot of a human being.

The body was opened by Mr. Wood, in the presence of the Medical Committee of the Hospital. The Gentlemen who attended, were Dr. Cowling, Messrs. White, Hall, Thorp, Foxley, Brigham, Ollier, and Clough. Mr. Chippindall, and Mr. Barlow, were also present.

There were about ten ounces of bloody serum, with a little coagulated blood, (not more than an ounce) in the cavity of the abdomen.

The Intestines were much distended with wind; but very few *Fœces* were contained in them, and none of them were hardened.

There was no appearance of peritoneal, or intestinal inflammation; no inflammatory exudation; no flakes of coagulable lymph; nor any extravasated fluid, of the nature of milk, resembling unclarified whey, containing flakes of curd like matter, adhering to the Intestines; nor had the Intestines formed any Adhesions; nor were there any unfavourable appearances about the Wound in the *Uterus*, or in that of the Integuments.

The *Uterus* was taken out of the Body, and the *Os Tinæ* was found dilated to about two inches and a half diameter; but still, nothing could be discovered, that could possibly account for her death; until it was cut open, when the inside being carefully washed with a sponge and warm water, a Gangrene appeared quite round the inside of the neck of the *Uterus* rising higher in nearly a circular form, in the forepart, where the child's head was believed to have pressed it against the elevated part of the *Ossa Pubis*. This Mortification (*c*) in the neck of the womb, which was totally unconnected with the incision in that organ, we consider as sufficient in itself, to account for the death of the woman.

As soon as the *Uterus* and *Pelvis* were removed from the body, Mr. Wood, sent round to the Physicians and Surgeons of the Manchester Infirmary; and to several other Medical Gentlemen, who had not attended the Dissection, to request their attendance at the Hospital; where, the *Uterus* and *Pelvis* were left for their inspection. In the course of that day, the following Gentlemen attended, and saw the *Uterus* and *Pelvis*.

Dr. Holme, Physician to the Infirmary.

Dr. Hull.

Mr. Bill, Mr. Killer,  
Mr. Ward, and Mr. Hamilton, } Surgeons to the Infirmary.

Mr. Taunton, Surgeon to the Cornwall Fencibles, at the Barracks.

Mr. William Henry.

Dr. Percival called on Mr. White in order to have gone with him to the Hospital, but not finding him at home, and other circumstances occurring, prevented the Doctor from seeing the *Uterus*.

Mr. Simmons in a note to Mr. Wood, thanks him for his polite attention, but declines in the present instance accepting his invitation.

The Cæsarean Operation has been successfully performed in Ireland; in the West Indies; frequently upon the Continent of Europe; and within these six years at Blackrod in this county. The only matter of dispute, in this last instance, is, whether the *Uterus* was cut open with a knife, or was burst. The Operator says, it was cut open, the Assistant says it was burst. We are not aware, that, a lacerated wound has any advantage over an incised one; except in preventing Hemorrhage, which we do not find to be a material objection to the operation.

We believe, that, the Cæsarean Operation, and cutting the *Symphisis* of the *Pubis* have frequently been unnecessarily performed upon the Continent, in cases, where an English Accoucheur would never have thought of having recourse to either; and on the contrary, we believe, that many lives have been lost in this Kingdom, for want of the Cæsarean Operation being performed, and that some have been lost, from its having been too long delayed. But, we should be much concerned to find it ever become other, than a rare operation.

It should never be resorted to, when milder means will answer; nor should the life of the child, be put in competition with that of the mother, nor should it in any case be performed, without a consultation of the most eminent Practitioners in the Neighbourhood.

Many Women's lives have been saved by the Crotchet in distorted *Peloes*; but there are some cases, where it cannot possibly be used; six having occurred in this town, within our knowledge, in which the delivery could not be accomplished by means of this Instrument, and the Cæsarean Operation, not being had recourse to, all the mothers, and children perished.

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Note (a) Mr. Ogden's Letter.

Charles White, Esq. King-street, Manchester.

“ DEAR SIR,

Though I am not acquainted with all the rules of the Lying-in Hospital, yet, I trust, I am acting in conformity with their spirit, in sending the poor woman, who is the object of this address, to the Charity in question. I have no doubt you will receive her with cheerfulness; and tho' I am afraid, there will be much, both of difficulty and danger in the case, yet it will be some consolation to me, to reflect, that every possible care will be taken of the poor patient. Living as she does, at a distance from all obstetrical assistance, it would be impossible, under all the circumstances of the case, to render her all the necessary aid and accommodation, at home. Humanity, therefore requires me to act as I am doing. Permit me further to request, that, should the Cæsarean Section be deemed expedient, in the present case, you will inform me of it, in order, that, I may be present at the operation.

With becoming Respect, I remain,

Dear Sir, Your most obedient Servant,

JAMES OGDEN,”

Ashton, 24th June, 1799.

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Mr. White's Answer.

*Mr. Ogden, Surgeon, Ashton-under-Line.*

“ DEAR SIR,

Immediately upon the receipt of your letter, yesterday, I sent it down to the Lying-in Hospital; and along with it, a recommendation for the poor woman; but she was not then arrived, and I was obliged to go out of town; but Mr. Wood, under whose care she fell, finding the case a very deplorable one, called a consultation, and a special messenger was dispatched after me, to request my attendance. When I arrived, betwixt eight and nine o'clock, I found Messrs. Hall, Tomlinson, Wood and Thorp; we were all unanimous, that no relief could be obtained for the poor woman, except by the Cæsarean Operation, which she consented to without the least hesitation, and it was performed by Mr. Wood, without any accident or disappointment. The child is alive and hearty, and was christened this morning by the name of Julius Cæsar. The poor woman has had a very good night, and is as well in every respect as can possibly be expected. She bore the operation without a complaint, and says it was a much easier labour than her former one.

It gave us all great concern, that, we had not time to send for you; but the lateness of the hour, when the consultation took place, and the great consequence it might be of to the poor woman, to have delayed the operation, we hope will be a sufficient apology for not requesting your attendance, but, we shall be extremely happy, if you will have the goodness to attend our consultation at the Hospital to-morrow morning at a quarter before seven o'clock.

*Manchester,*

*June 25th, 1799.*

I am yours most sincerely,

C. WHITE.”

Mr. Ogden attended the consultation at the time appointed.

Note (b) We find, upon enquiry, that, she was brought in a cart, placed on a feather bed which was slung with cords, in imitation of a hammock; but the mode which we recommend for conveying women, in labour, from a distance, is a sling, carried by two men. It is easily constructed in any country place, with two poles, and a couple of sacks. One upon this construction is kept in the Hospital, for that purpose, and may be had when applied for.

Note (c) Mortification frequently takes place without any inflammation preceding; and, that mortification of the *Uterus* will happen, without much previous warning, will appear from a case which Mr. White published in the appendix to his Treatise on the Management of Pregnant and Lying-in Women, Ed. 5th. Page 448, of a Lady who died on the 8th day after delivery, of a Mortification of the *Uterus*, but had made no complaint till within six hours of her death.

The *Uterus* is an organ, which is not absolutely necessary to life, since many animals have been known to live after it has been taken out. *Aëtius* and *Paulus Aegineta*, say, that, they have known even women recover, when the *Uterus* had been extirpated on account of an Inversion, and the same is mentioned by *Paré*. A very interesting case of this kind is related by Professor *Wrisberg* of Gottingen (Com. Soc. Reg. Sc. Gott. Tom 8). *Mary Dorothy Ude* was delivered by a midwife of her first child on the 5th of June, 1780, who used so much violence in attempting to bring away the placenta, that she inverted the *Uterus*, and immediately afterwards cut it away with a knife, exactly in the part where it is connected with the *Vagina*. The poor woman was greatly endangered by the Hemorrhage, but recovered completely. In September 1786, the aperture, which before that time would admit a finger, was become almost closed.

*Dr. Holme*, Physician to the Manchester Infirmary, saw and examined this woman in the year 1790, at Gottingen.

N. B. Casts of the *Pelvis*, taken in Plaister of Paris, by *Mr. Sardini*, may be had of him in London, and of *Mr. Chippindall*, the Apothecary at the Lying-In Hospital in Manchester; by which Practitioners may have an opportunity of convincing themselves, of the utter impossibility of delivering, where there are such distorted *Pelves*, by any other means, than the *Cæsarean Operation*.—We have the satisfaction to say, that, the child is very strong, and hearty.



*John Adams*  
*John Adams*  
*John Adams*

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