

AN HISTORICAL NOTICE OF THE OPERATION OF CÆSAREAN SECTION FROM THE FIRST OPERATION TO THE MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

BY CHARLES GREENE CUMSTON, M.D., BOSTON.

IF we are to believe Pliny (Hist. Nat., Lib. 7, chap. 9), the Cæsarean operation was performed long before his time, or at least the first case, because he says: "*Enecla parente gignuntur sicut Scipio Africanus prior natus, primusque Cesarum a caeso matris utero dictus.*"

This sentence has been very differently interpreted by a number of writers; several have upheld that Pliny referred to Julius Cæsar, and they assure us that an incision was made in order to remove this illustrious being from the belly of his mother, but Bayle, in his famous Dictionary, unhesitatingly states that this is false, a fact which had been pointed out before him by Zonaras. It is evident that Bayle is quite right in opposing the inference that these writers have made on Pliny's text relative to Julius Cæsar, because, as he points out, Cæsar's mother Aurelia took great care of her son's education and died while he was waging war on the Gauls. However, it is possible that Aurelia survived the operation and, consequently, the opinion of those who have upheld that Cæsar was removed from his mother's uterus through an incision is not destroyed. Some have believed that the Cæsarean operation took its name from Cæsar, but, according to Pliny, it should rather be inferred that Cæsar took his name from the operation itself, because those who were borne by means of this surgical interference were, according to him, called *Cæsares* aut *Cæsones* a *caeso matris utero*.

If one is satisfied with the conjectures which naturally arise from the name of Cæsar and the remark made by Bayle, it would seem that one might conclude that the Cæsarean operation was performed on the living female, but these conjectures are far from being decisive, and there is

no certainty that in these far-off times surgeons dared to have recourse to it for saving the life of the mother and child. On the contrary, it is to be pointed out that up to the last century the profession was extremely skeptical as to the success of this operation, and I have been unable to discover any other reports of this operation before the commencement of the sixteenth century.

The first case recorded is that related by Bauhin, which he attributes to a butcher who performed it on his own wife. In the year 1500 the wife of Jacques Nufer was pregnant with her first child and, feeling labor pains for several days, had several midwives come to deliver her. They made many attempts to bring about labor, but they were all useless, and as the patient experienced very severe pains, and as there no longer was any hope of relieving her, her husband said that if she would confide in him he would undertake an operation which, by the grace of God, might possibly succeed. His wife replied that she would undergo anything to be relieved. As the affair was a delicate one the husband asked permission of the President of Fravenfelden to undertake this operation; the Judge at first would not consent, but being informed of the condition of the woman, and the willingness of the husband to relieve her, he at last allowed the operation to be performed. The husband returned home and told the midwives that those of them who were sufficiently courageous to help him might remain in the room, but that those who were not must withdraw. After imploring divine help, he laid his wife on a table, incised the abdominal wall and then the uterus, after which he quickly extracted the child. Several sutures were placed in the abdominal wall. The wound healed happily without any complication, and several years afterwards the woman was delivered of two children, one becoming a judge at Siergershenfen and who was alive in 1583.

François Rousset, who lived at the end of the sixteenth century, appears to be the first writer who undertook to advise the operation on living women. His book, which was published in 1581, is really a masterpiece and has for title: *Traité nouveau de l'Hysterotomotokie ou Enfancement Césarien, qui est extraction de l'enfant par incision latérale du ventre et matrice de la femme grosse ne pouvant autrement accoucher, et ce sans préjudicier à la vie de l'un et de l'autre ni l'empêcher la fécondité maternelle par après.* Paris, 1581.

In the first part of this book he first points out the utility of the operation when there is imminent danger for both mother and child in cases where delivery is impossible by the birth canal. Next he establishes the possibility of this operation by showing that wounds of the parts involved in the operation are not necessarily fatal. And, lastly, he goes into considerable detail of several obstetrical complications which are far more dangerous than the operation itself and which may be avoided if the operation is done. These complications he places under five headings. In the first he refers to women who, being pregnant and the child dying and becoming decomposed, has

caused death of the mother on account of uterine infection, and who might have been saved if this operation had been resorted to. In the second class he relates several cases of abscess of the uterus which were successfully opened by means of the actual cautery. In the third, he mentions several cases of ulcer of the womb (sic) which allowed the child to make its exit into the abdominal cavity, and was followed by abscess in the hypogastrium. This was opened without any danger to the mother. In the fourth he refers to several cases of amputation of the uterus performed with the knife, ligature or cautery and the women had lived. And lastly, in the fifth section he proves by several examples that a woman can conceive after this operation.

In the second part of his book, Rousset establishes the sureness of the Cæsarean operation and proves this by relating cases which had been given him from reliable sources, and, lastly, the operations that he advised to be performed.

These cases are seven in number. In the first, we have the history of a woman named Godard upon whom the operation was performed six times, all the children living. The patient died the seventh time she was pregnant because she could not obtain the services of the surgeon who had delivered her by the operation upon previous occasions. The second observation was that of a patient upon whom the operation had been performed three times by two surgeons by name Ambroise le Noir and Gilles le Brun. The author was desirous of seeing the patient, but learned that she had died shortly before from the plague which had ravished the town where she lived. The third observation is a letter written by Aliboux, a physician at Sens, in which he states that Jean Desmarais, a surgeon at Chastre en Berry, had performed the Cæsarean operation on his wife and that later she was delivered naturally of a daughter. The fourth observation is merely the simple recital of a similar operation told to the famous lithotomist of Paris, Laurent Colot, by Pelion, a physician of Angers. The fifth case refers to another operation which was quite as successful as the other four. In the sixth, Rousset says that he saw at the hospital of Châtillon, in company with Denis Armenaut, a physician of Gian, a woman who had on the right of the abdomen a hernia accompanied by a very long cicatrix, and having asked her the cause of the latter she replied that it was the result of an incision that had been made to deliver her and that the child was at that time seven years old. In the seventh observation he relates that, in 1556, a woman who had been four days in labor had been operated on successfully. Eighteen months afterwards her husband died, she married again and was afterwards delivered of a daughter, the labor being normal.

Some time before the publication of Rousset's book, Ambroise Paré gave to the world his work on surgery in which he strongly criticises the Cæsarean operation, the following being his exact words: "Or, je m'émerveille comme d'autres veulent affermer avoir vû des femmes auxquelles

pour extraire leurs enfants, l'on auroit incisé le ventre non-seulement une fois, mais plusieurs; car telle chose pour raison n'est du-tout impossible à croire, entendu que pour donner issue à l'enfant, il faudroit faire une grande plaie au muscles de l'épigastre et pareillement à la matrice, laquelle étant imbue d'une grande quintité de sang, et y faisant une division si grande, il y auroit une très-grande hémorrhagie dont la mort s'ensuivroit; d'avantage après avoir consolidé la plaie, la cicatrice ne permettroit pas à la matrice de se dilater pour porter l'enfant; il y a encore d'autres accidents qui en pourroient advenir, et le pis une mort subite à la mere; et partant, je ne conseillerai jamais de faire telle oeuvre où il y a si grand péril sans nul espoir en parlant humainement. Toutefois on m'a assuré qu'un nommé Maître Vincent, Chirurgien d'Hericy près Fontainebleau a fait cette périlleuse opération avec heureuse issue; la femme que l'on dit avoir été incisée, et ledit Maître Vincent, sont encore aujourd'hui vivans: tant de gens d'honneur dignes de foi me l'ont affermé, jusqu'à même à me dire avoir vû faire l'opération et extraire l'enfant, que je ne veux ni ose les mécroire, mais cela étant, j'ose bien dire que c'est un vrai miracle de nature," etc.

The operation referred to by Paré is reported in detail by Schenckius, who says that the surgeon who operated was not from Hericy, but from Nemours; that the patient's name was Nicole Beranger and that the operation was performed in 1542; he adds that the child was in decomposition and that there was such little hope of saving the mother that the surgeon only placed a few sutures in the skin, so that there resulted a ventral hernia for which the patient was obliged to wear a support. Schenckius also says that he saw the woman nearly two years after the operation and that she had been delivered of a daughter by the natural route.

It would appear that Paré was not always opposed to the Cæsarean operation because in the first edition of Rousset's book is to be found an Approbation by De Monanteuil, Regius Professor of Mathematics and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Paris, in which this physician greatly praises Rousset's work, and immediately below this Approbation is found: *J'atteste ce que dessus: AMBROISE PARÉ.*

In 1582, Gaspard Bauhin made a Latin translation of Rousset's book, which had for title, *Exsectio foetus vivi ex matre viva sine alterutrius vitæ periculo et absque faecunditatis ablatione, a Francisco Rosseto Gallice conscripta, a Gasp. Bauhino latine reddita et variis historiis aucta. Basil. 1582.* To this he added several operations which had been successfully performed in an appendix to the work. The majority of these observations were sent to Bauhin by Albosius and Saguerus; others were taken from the writings of Mauritius Cordaeus and Felix Plater, while several new ones were given by Rousset himself. At the end of his translation Bauhin says that this operation was performed on a woman named Elizabeth Turgois, and that afterwards she was delivered normally of four children.

In 1590, Rousset published his *Dialogus Apologeticus pro caesareo partu in malevoli cujusdam Pseudoprotei dicteria*. Paris. 1590. In this work he considers all the objections which had been made by his adversaries, and even takes it upon himself to expose them in their proper light, which gives him occasion to enlighten and fortify his own way of thinking. He deemed it *à propos* to give the sources from which he had obtained his knowledge, and speaks of noted men, with whose commerce he seems to have been familiar. Had his poem not been so long it might have placed him among the distinguished Latin poets of his day, while the object that he had in view would have suffered in no way. He gives to the ancients all necessary justice which is due them from those who have carefully meditated upon their writings, but he goes beyond timid admiration, which limits itself to respecting these early masters, and neglects to employ their knowledge in acquiring new. He proves by happy discoveries, unknown to these great men, that the genius of medicine did not become extinct with them, and that if they had lived in his time they would have made his own proofs more complete. Nothing can be simpler or more solid than his reasoning concerning the necessity of the Cæsarean operation, and nothing could be clearer or more precise than the instructions he gives. He describes the operation with great clearness, likewise his reasons in its favor.

This Dialogue brought forth many severe criticisms on the part of a certain Marchant, a surgeon of Paris, who published a work entitled: *In Francisci Rosseti Apologiam Jacobi Marchant, Regis et Parisiensis Chirurgi Declamatio*. In the first part of this work, Marchant combats the Cæsarean operation with the same arms as those employed by Paré, and rejects the first observation given by Rousset as false and contrary to all the laws of the animal economy. He then takes up the history of the woman of Châtillon and points out that the cicatrix observed on her abdomen by Rousset was not sufficient proof for believing that the operation had been done on her. I will quote him in his own words. "Combien ne voit-on pas de cicatrices de plaies accidentelles & d'abcès au ventre, qui pourroient faire croire que ce seroit une suite de l'opération Césarienne? Les habiles Chirurgiens, toujours zélés pour le bien public et pour le soulagement des malades, ont saisi avec empressement votre nouveau système, et ont voulu eux-mêmes être convaincus de sa vérité. Guillemeau fut le premier qui trouva l'occasion de faire l'opération Césarienne à une femme qui souffroit depuis plusieurs jours des douleurs cruelles, sans espérance de pouvoir accoucher; il opéra en présence d'Ambroise Paré et de plusieurs autres Chirurgiens de l'Hôtel Dieu de cette Ville, mais la malade mourut cinq jours après. Paré, Carbonet, Brunet et Viard ne furent pas plus heureux dans plusieurs autres occasions qui se présenterent." He ends the first part of his work by an enumeration of many of the causes which may prevent a natural delivery, but without referring to many conditions in which a normal delivery is really impossible he has the pretention

of upholding that a careful and skilled physician may overcome all these difficulties without having recourse to Cæsarean section, which, according to his way of thinking, always ends fatally.

Marchant's zeal carries him away in the second part of his book, and he no longer combats Rousset by logical reasoning, but gives himself up to insults directed against him, the book concluding by several satirical poems addressed to Rousset in which the criticisms are far from being what would be expected from a man of letters. It is quite true that much erudition, precision and distinctness of style are to be found in Marchant's writings, and from careful perusal one must admit the profound knowledge and skill of this surgeon.

Following these satires there is a letter by Guillemeau addressed to Rousset, in which he gives the reasons which caused him to oppose the Cæsarean operation in his works, but it must be said that this letter is written in much gentler language than that employed by Marchant, and by reading it the character of a friend is distinctly perceived. Guillemeau rather endeavors to dissuade Rousset from approving and favoring a practice which had had so little success in the hands of the most skillful surgeons of the time, but Rousset, still assured of the correctness of his cause, replied the same year with much erudition to Marchant, employing observation as the surest means to refute his adversaries. As a proof of this I would refer to an observation taken from the Latin edition of Rousset, which ends in these terms: *Haec anno Domini 1573 diligenter observavi, et in Adversariis meis annotavi*.

It is apparent that the Declamation of Marchant and some unfortunate results following the operation were the means of preventing its further performance, because Guillemeau expressly says in the fourth book of his "Chirurgie," chapter 28, that "ce qui determina M. Paré à se desister et retracter de cette operation, aussi-bien que le College des Chirurgiens et la plus saine partie de la Faculté de Médecine de Paris, dans la question qui fut agitée par feu M. Marchant dans ses deux Declamations qu'il fit, lorsqu'il eut l'honneur de passer Maître Chirurgien de Paris."

It is evident that these disputes were both for and against the operation; those published by Rousset show that it was not infrequently performed successfully, while the cases related by his opponents proved to the mind of the profession that the operation was dangerous, and undoubtedly it is for this reason that it was not placed among the current operations of surgery of the times. Rousset, however, continued his work in order to reassure the profession, and after considerably extending his researches in reference to this operation, he published, in 1590, a Latin edition of his work which was far more extensive than his first, its title being: *Caesarei partus assertio Historiolog*. Paris. 1590.

Besides the new and good reasons that he adds to those he had already given, he increases the value of the book by several new case-records in which a successful outcome had occurred. The first was the history of a woman upon whom the

operation had been performed in 1576. The child was dead and undergoing putrefaction. Some time later the patient again became pregnant and was delivered naturally. The second case was taken from a letter written to Rousset by Vertunianus, a physician of Poitiers, in which the latter tells of a woman who was delivered in this way and who recovered perfectly.

The third case was that of a woman whose child had succumbed *in utero*. This occurrence had happened some time before and every method known at the time had been employed in order to deliver her. As she was in a very critical condition, the surgeons decided to perform the Cæsarean section, and as soon as the uterus was opened a large quantity of fetid matter escaped. The patient suffered a great deal during the extraction of the child because the incision was hardly large enough to allow it to pass. However, no accident occurred, hemorrhage was only slight and much purulent matter came away with the lochia. Five weeks after, the patient was able to go out, and since this operation she had been happily delivered of five children. The fourth operation was performed successfully in the year 1580 by a surgeon named Jacotin. Rousset makes the remark that he saw this patient and that this surgeon told him that he had operated successfully upon two other women. The fifth and last case is the history of a successful operation performed in 1582, and the statement is made that the surgeon who performed it was not particularly dexterous, although he succeeded. Rousset, in his own words, says: "Haec femina secta fuit a Joanne Luca tunc parum sobrio; cui tunc bene poto si hoc non male successit quid ei non est sperandum, qui sobrius et mentis compos arte duce eo accedet?"

Scipio Mercuri, a surgeon of Rome, published, in 1604, a dissertation on obstetrics having for title "*La Commare Orucoglitrice*." In this work he relates cases of successful Cæsarean section, and advises that this operation should never be neglected in those cases where delivery is otherwise impossible. This author relates that at one time, being near Toulouse, he saw two women who had undergone the operation and that one of them had had children afterwards. He makes the rather remarkable statement that, in his day, this operation was almost as common in France as bleeding was in Italy for headache.

The writings of Schenckius refer to a letter from Albosius in which the latter states that he had performed the operation successfully upon one occasion.

In his work entitled, *Libro Observ. de morbis mulier*, Roonhuisen, a surgeon of Amsterdam, makes the statement that a physician of Bruges, by name Sonnius, had performed the operation seven times upon the same woman.

A famous Swedish physician, Olaus Rudrecius, saved his wife's life by this operation, which he performed himself, while Thomas Bartholini relates in his *Hist. Anat. Cent.* that when he was at Paris he knew the wife of a surgeon upon whom the Cæsarean operation had been done five times. In Theophile Renaud's work, *De ortu infantium*

contra naturam per sectionem Caesaream, autore Theoph. Renaudo Societ. Jesu Theolog. Lugd. 1637, three operations with a successful outcome are recorded. In the first he relates the testimony of the famous surgeon, Louis Panthot, who assured him that in the month of April, 1627, a woman near Lyons, after having suffered labor pains of great intensity for several days, was at length happily delivered by the Cæsarean operation. In the second case he states that a Jesuit had seen at La Flèche a woman who certified that she had submitted to the operation three times, and also that the Jesuit personally knew the surgeon who had operated. The third case is taken from a letter from Pellaire, a physician at Maurienne, in which it is stated that this operation was done successfully six times on a woman living at Ville d'Auçois.

In 1692, Saviard published in the *Journal des Sçavans* the case of a dressing that he had applied for a ventral hernia following an incision for Cæsarean section fourteen years previously. The patient finally died, and an autopsy was performed in the presence of several surgeons, there being found a cicatrix in the uterus, comprising the entire thickness of the walls of the organ and corresponding to the incision in the abdominal wall. This author adds that the surgeon who had performed the operation was obliged to leave on account of the bad treatment he received from the relatives of the woman, but it would appear, however, that Saviard did not know the real motive for this flight, because in the *Journal* for the month of June, 1693, it is stated that, being a Calvinist, he had considered it *à propos* to leave hurriedly, as many other Protestants had done, on account of the trouble which was preparing against those who had adopted the reformed religion.

In the same *Journal* are to be found two cases recorded by Jobert concerning two Cæsarean operations performed on a woman twenty months apart. The patient recovered perfectly and the author adds that the child which was delivered at the first operation was still living and presented a small cicatrix on the lower jaw caused by a slight cut it had received from the surgeon's knife at the time of delivery.

In 1693 a woman had been in labor for a long time, the midwife had attempted to deliver her by all known means and finally succeeded. A very severe complication resulted in the form of a vesico-vaginal fistula. The patient, in order to obtain relief, resorted to quacks, but their work only resulted in the production of a vaginal tumor which completely filled the canal. In spite of this the woman became pregnant again and when labor set in she was attended by Lankisch, a physician of Zittaw, who advised a Cæsarean section, which was successful as far as the mother was concerned. The account of this case is to be found in *Acta erudit. Lips. ann. 1693*.

In his *Dissert. du partu Cæsareo, Vitebergae edita anno 1695*, Vaterus mentions a similar operation which appears to have been quite as successful. The patient on whom it was performed had the entire vaginal cavity filled by a vegetating mass

following an ulcer (probably cancerous), so much so that the end of the little finger could hardly be made to enter.

In 1707, Ruleau, a surgeon at Xaintes, published a dissertation on the possibility and necessity of the Cæsarean operation. He brings up nearly all the reasons given by Rousset in order to prove how very necessary this operation is, and speaks of a successful case which occurred in his own practice. The patient had been in labor with severe pains for five days, and vaginal examination showed that the pelvis was so deformed that two fingers could hardly be introduced into the vagina. He, therefore, resorted to Cæsarean section, with the result that there was no hemorrhage, the lochia was discharged through the wound and the patient recovered nicely.

De la Motte relates in his work on obstetrics a similar case. A poor woman had suffered for three days and the child presented by the arm. The midwife who attempted to deliver the patient tore the arm away. A surgeon was called and, finding much difficulty in delivery, performed Cæsarean section, withdrawing a dead child, and then closed the abdomen with several sutures. The cure of this poor woman was, so to speak, left to the care of nature, because the surgeon saw her only very infrequently, leaving the care of the dressings to the husband. The wound suppurated, but in spite of this the patient recovered.

In 1739 the Académie Royale de Chirurgie caused a woman living in Guise, who had undergone the Cæsarean operation, to appear before it for examination. This patient had been in labor for three days and the midwife, being unable to deliver her, called a surgeon. He tried all the known means to deliver the woman but unsuccessfully, and finally the patient begged the surgeon to operate. The surgeon was astonished by this request and refused to perform the operation because he had never heard of it. However, pressed by the prayers of the patient and her husband, he finally consented. He made a longitudinal incision in the skin and muscles reaching to within three fingers' breadth of the umbilicus. As the intestines came out the surgeon had the husband hold them back with his hands. He then opened the uterus, making an incision sufficiently large for the introduction of the finger and then, feeling the movements of the child, he enlarged it sufficiently to extract the child and placenta. The incisions of the uterus and abdomen were united by a few sutures and then an ointment composed of fresh butter and chimney soot was applied to the wound. Three days after the operation the sutures broke away, but on account of the pain the patient would not allow the surgeon to introduce new ones. The lochia made its exit by the wound, which for several days was livid; afterwards it became crimson and was entirely healed at the end of three weeks. It would appear that during the entire illness the woman did not seem to be in danger, because she nursed the child. After this operation she had four children by the normal route; three were born dead, while the fourth was alive when the patient came to Paris.

The famous surgeon, De la Peyronie, relates the case of a woman twenty-five years of age who was delivered of her first child successfully. As she could not be delivered in her second pregnancy after a long labor, a surgeon by the name of L'Amiral was sent for, who made an incision on the left side of the hypogastrium and delivered the child and placenta. The mother recovered in fifteen days and the child was still living at the time the patient was seen. Several years after the operation the woman was again pregnant; the labor pains were severe, long and without effect. The same surgeon again performed the Cæsarean section.

Urban reported the following cases to the Académie de Chirurgie. A surgeon named De Thise, living at Bure, had performed during the last eight or ten years, and with success, the Cæsarean operation on three women. The first patient lived in the Duché of Luxembourg; she recovered perfectly and had other children afterwards. The second patient lived at Rochefort and died two years after the operation from colic. The third lived at Ave in the Duché of Bouillon. The Cæsarean section was done, convalescence was long because the patient was taken with violent coughing spells which caused the sutures to give way. One of the members of the Académie saw the latter case and wrote a letter to Houstet, dated Sept. 7, 1741, in which he says, "Qu'il étoit survenu à cette femme huit mois après l'opération une hernie ventrale de la grosseur et la forme d'un chapeau; que cette tumeur occupoit toute la region ombilicale droite; que l'enfant avoit vécu trois mois et demi, et que la malade avoit été guérie au bout de trois semaines; cette femme a eu trois enfans depuis l'opération."

A surgeon by the name of Brou, being unable to deliver a woman, performed the Cæsarean operation in the presence of her husband and the village priest. From his incision he withdrew a female child, who, at the time of writing, was eighteen years of age. The skin and muscles were united by a few sutures, which gave way after several days, but, nevertheless, the wound healed very well and some time afterwards De la Faye being in the neighborhood asked to see the woman and found a long cicatrix in the abdominal wall which had given rise to a large hernia. He found that the hernia was a little over thirteen inches long, ten inches wide and that the cicatrix was eight inches in length, while the distance from the umbilicus to the cicatrix was five inches.

Noyer reported a case to the Académie de Chirurgie of a woman successfully operated on on April 17, 1726. The patient was thirty-five years of age and he extracted a child which had been dead for several days. Several sutures were inserted and seventeen days later the cicatrix was perfect. This woman became pregnant later and after a long labor she sent for Noyer to operate again, but he was absent and she died. The patient had been delivered normally three times before the operation.

In the Histoire de l'Académie Royale des Sciences for the year 1730 is to be found the following

case. In 1723, Mme. Flandrin, a midwife in the town of Bulle in Fribourg, was called to attend a patient forty-eight years of age and pregnant for the first time. The head presented, but the pelvis was very narrow. Having tried for a day and a night all possible means of delivery, and being unsuccessful, she sent for Dr. Michel, who ordered a fortifying treatment, but on the fourth day, as the patient was still in labor, the doctor advised the midwife to draw the child with a crochet, and if this could not be done, to remove it piecemeal. As this was not successful, there alone remained the Cæsarean operation, which was decided on on the seventh day. It was done by the midwife herself with great courage and skill. The patient was delivered without any accident.

Helvetius, who communicated the above case, also produced a letter from Dr. Michel stating the facts to be true.

The wife of Dr. de Presseux, a physician of Spa, became pregnant for the first time at the age of thirty-five. When the labor pains set in a midwife was sent for, who informed the husband that the child was in good position. The pains continued for two hours and the membranes ruptured. Dr. de Presseux, perceiving that his wife suffered a great deal and that labor did not advance, made an examination himself and was greatly surprised to find that the presentation was a breech. He at once sent to Liege for a surgeon by the name of De Blierre, who arrived the next day and with the husband worked for eighteen hours endeavoring to perform version. As the child was dead and as it was impossible to change the position, the surgeon proposed the Cæsarean operation as the last resource. The husband was, in the first place, opposed to it, suggesting an instrumental delivery, but the surgeon replied that this could not be done because he had brought no instruments for it. As the patient was extremely weak, the husband finally consented. An incision was made and when the abdomen was opened the bladder was found tremendously distended, so much so that it almost covered the uterus, and as the size of the bladder prevented the surgeon from easily incising the uterus, he punctured it to the side of the fundus and emptied it completely. The uterus was then free and was opened and the child extracted. A few sutures were put in the muscles of the skin. The operation was not followed by any hemorrhage, the lochia passed by the vagina and was small in amount. Fever occurred several days after the operation, but was controlled by proper treatment. At the end of three weeks the sutures were removed and a little fecal matter came out at a point where the wound was not quite healed. By the application of certain remedies intended to accelerate cicatrization, the wound rapidly closed. This operation was done on the first day of the year 1738, and on Dec. 24, 1740, she was happily delivered normally of a female child.

In the month of April, 1740, Dr. Soumain was asked to see a woman aged thirty-seven years of age in the seventh month of pregnancy. At the first visit the patient appeared to be very worried

because she was aware that from infancy her body had been deformed. During the following visits this surgeon had the opportunity of examining the patient and found that all the bones were deformed, principally the lower part of the spine and the pubic bones, which were so close together that there was not more than a space of two inches. Soumain saw the unfortunate outlook and was ready for action. On the seventh of June labor pains commenced, the membranes ruptured and the amniotic fluid was expelled. Soumain examined the patient and found that no progress was being made. From the seventh to the tenth of the month the condition remained the same, the pains caused a slight dilatation of the cervix, which only showed that it would be an impossibility to deliver the patient by the vagina. Therefore, Cæsarean operation was decided on in consultation with Drs. Bourgeois, Puzos, Souchay, Verdier, Gervais, Gregoire, Iard, Chauvin and La Fitte. After careful examination they all came to the conclusion as to the impossibility of delivery, and were of the same opinion as Soumain. I would point out that the above men were the most illustrious in the profession at the time.

The patient was placed on the edge of her bed, the head and thorax being a little higher than the rest of the body. It is stated in the report that there was a "scirrhus hardness of the omentum" on the right side, so, therefore, the left side was chosen for the incision, all the more so because on this side the uterus bulged out on account of the oblique position of the child. Soumain incised the skin, muscles and peritoneum, and as soon as the latter was opened the intestines protruded, but were retained within the abdomen by the hand of one of the consultants. The uterus was then easily seen. As the amniotic fluid had been expelled, and as the uterus had retracted on the child, it was opened with great caution. The child presented by the lower part of the back and upper part of the breech. After extraction the cord was tied and, aided by Puzos, the placenta was removed. After this the intestines were replaced and the wound closed with a few sutures and the proper dressings applied. The hemorrhage which followed the detachment of the placenta was slight. A few days after the operation suppuration became established, the pus became laudable, and forty-seven days afterwards the patient was able to go to church. The child measured twenty inches in length and survived ten days. It was afterwards reported that it died on account of neglect on the part of the nurse.

I will not refer to any other writings on the question of Cæsarean section because all the authors resorted to the same reasoning as did Rousset and, therefore, this would be merely a repetition, but it may be said that many were greatly in favor of it. At a later date I hope that I may be able to publish a second paper dealing with the history of this operation from the middle of the eighteenth century to the present time.