

## Burton ("Dr. Slop"): His Forceps and His Foes.

By ALBAN DORAN, F.R.C.S.

## PART I.

## INTRODUCTION.

"OF all men in the world, Dr. Slop was the fittest for my father's purpose;—for though HIS NEWLY INVENTED FORCEPS was the armour he had proved, and what he maintained to be the safest instrument of deliverance,—yet it seems he had scattered a word or two in his book, in favour of the very thing which ran in my father's fancy;—though not with a view to the soul's good, in extracting by the feet, as was my father's system,—but for reasons merely obstetrical."

*Tristram Shandy*, Bk. II, Chap. xix.

This contribution is based on the above words, "newly invented forceps," for the name of Dr. Slop, in other words Dr. Burton, has always been associated with his forceps. We shall see presently that in practice he made use of another instrument, possibly also of his own contriving. *Tristram Shandy's* father, that is to say, Laurence Sterne, studied current works on Obstetrics, as will presently be explained. He was more correct than Gloucester, that is to say, Shakespeare:—

"For I have often heard my mother say,  
I came into the world with *my legs forward*;  
Had I had not reason, think ye, *to make haste*,  
And seek their ruin that usurp'd our right?"

3 *Hen.* VI, v. 6.

Sterne makes no allusion to spontaneous footling delivery, though Dr. Slop speaks of breech presentation elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> In the sentence quoted above he refers to podalic version. His allusion to "extracting by the feet" was made not long after the days when De la Motte practised version freely and successfully.<sup>2</sup> Gloucester, on the other

1. *Tristram Shandy*, Bk. III, Chap. xvii.

2. "Podalic version was his Alpha and Omega, and in that operation he certainly attained a skill which has perhaps never been reached by anyone before or after him." Ingerslev, *loc. cit.*, p. 32. *Tristram* was supposed to have been born in 1718, when De la Motte was flourishing, but long before Burton invented his forceps.

hand, was wrong in believing that a footling presentation meant a speedy spontaneous delivery, and there was a far better uncle than Richard III in the Shandy family. Hence in obstetrical knowledge Sterne was superior to Shakespeare, and we all prefer Uncle Toby to "great York's heir." Tristram's father wished that his son should be delivered by Cæsarean section, so that no part of the child's brain be pressed upon. Failing that extreme, to which his wife naturally objected, he would have liked turning, on theoretical grounds. Shandy senior, however, also knew of the forceps and knew of Burton. Let us dwell upon both.

#### WHO WAS DR. BURTON?

It is hardly necessary to ask such a question. All we know of Dusée, as I endeavoured to make manifest in a recent article contributed to the JOURNAL,<sup>1</sup> is at second-hand. Burton, on the contrary, is remembered as a leading obstetrician in his day and a distinguished antiquary, and is immortalized, under a pseudonym familiar to all lovers of English prose literature, by an enemy, an illustrious, though unfriendly, *vates sacer*.

John Burton, M.D., was the son of a London merchant, and his mother was the daughter of a clergyman named Leake. He was born at Colchester in 1710,<sup>2</sup> and educated at Merchant Taylor's School. In 1733, the year that Butter exhibited Dusée's forceps in Edinburgh, Burton took the degree of M.B. Cantab, having studied in St. John's College. Then he set up in practice at Heath, near Wakefield, where, as will be shown, he mixed himself up with politics. He married, and shortly afterwards went abroad. At Leyden he studied under Boerhaave, and the degree of M.D. was conferred on him at Rheims. On his return he settled permanently at York, and his work there, his foes, and their misdeeds will be discussed further on. According to Percy Fitzgerald, Burton acquired the nickname "Dr. Slop" early in his career, presumably before *Tristram Shandy* was written. That biographer brings forward evidence that Romney (who was in York in 1754, as a pupil of Steele of Kendal) correctly represents Burton, in his pictures of subjects from *Tristram Shandy*, where he gives to Dr. Slop a big head and short, fat body. Burton was long remembered, as an odd man strangely mounted, riding along Yorkshire bridle-roads on the way to assist poor countrywomen. At one time, according to an enemy's account, Burton "broke" for the sum of £5,000. He disposed of his papers on antiquities late in life in order to receive an

1. "Dusée: His Forceps," etc., September 1912; Dusée, De Windt, etc., October 1912.

2. Not to be confounded with a namesake, a learned clergyman, who was born in 1696, and died in the same year as the physician (1771).

annuity for his wife. They died in the same year and were buried in or near Holy Trinity Church, Micklegate. "A tablet on the south side of the Choir is

SACRED TO THE MEMORIES  
of  
JOHN BURTON, M.D., F.A.S.  
and  
MARY HIS WIFE.

He	died	19th January	1771, aged	62
She		28th October		58." <sup>1</sup>

He was always held to be, like Dr. Slop, a Roman Catholic, yet it will be seen that in *British Liberty Endangered* he addresses an Archbishop of Canterbury as though he were an Anglican, and, according to Fitzgerald, he wrote to Dr. Ducavel of the Archbishop as "so deservedly at the head of our Church."

He endured persecution from the Whigs, lived to be a subject of a Tory Guelph, and survived for nearly three years the great writer who immortalized him as "Dr. Slop."

We will now turn from the man to his forceps and then to his works, and his adventures.

THE INSTRUMENT KNOWN AS BURTON'S FORCEPS.

"Thou has left thy *tire-tête*—thy newly invented *forceps*—thy *crotchet*, thy *squirt* . . . behind thee!"

*Tristram Shandy*, Bk. II, Chap. xi.

I quote below, entire, the original description of the instrument known and figured in standard works as "Burton's forceps," taken from his *New System of Midwifry*, "Postscript," p. 383. Mr. Butterworth has reproduced the illustration, which is added to this description (Figs. 1—5). It may be seen that the instrument in Burton's drawing is the same as that labelled as "Burton's forceps" in the Obstetrical Museum of the University of Edinburgh (Figs. 6-7),<sup>2</sup> except that the latter is simpler about the lower part. Burton's "big screw *g*, Fig. 5," and the rivets around it are absent in the Edinburgh sample.

1. "St. Swithin," reply in *Notes and Queries*, 11th Series, vi, p. 375 (Nov. 9 1912) to my enquiries about the date of Burton's birth.

2. For this photograph I am indebted to Dr. R. W. Johnstone. Sir J. Byers informs me that no Burton's forceps is included in the collections at Trinity College, Dublin, the Rotunda Hospital and Belfast; nor, I understand, is one to be seen in the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow.

*Burton's Description of His Forceps.*

“ §6. In § 101 and 102, Page 211. I showed the Manner of using such Forceps as had hitherto been contrived, with the Advantages and Inconveniences that may attend the Use of them, both to Mother and Child, at the same Time I gave Rules how they are to be made; since which Time, I have invented a new Sort of Forceps, the Use of which is far less prejudicial either to the Woman or Child, and is much more commodious for the Operator. I will therefore first give a Description of the different Parts of the Instrument, with Directions how it should be made; and then shall shew the Manner of using it.

TAB. XVIII *Explained.*

*Fig. 1.* Lett. *a, a, b, b*, represent two sides or Wings of a Pair of Forceps, being in Length, from *a* to the Joint *c*, four Inches. The Ends, *a, a*, when the Forceps is fully extended, are above five Inches distant; and at that Time, the widest Part, as at *b, b*, will be about five Inches and one Quarter. When *a, a* are only extended four Inches, *b, b*, will be four Inches and six Tenths. When *a, a*, are three Inches distant, *b, b*, will be near four Inches; and when *a, a*, are but two Inches distant (the general Diameter of a Child's Neck) *b, b*, will be three Inches and a half; and when *a, a* are quite close, as in *Fig. 5*, *b, b*, will be two Inches and a half from Outside to Outside. Their Thickness is under two Tenths of an Inch.

“ Lett. *c*, shows a Hole in each Wing, in which the Fixed-Pin *a*, *Fig. 2*, is to be introduced.

“ *d*, shews the Pin that fixes the Wings to the lesser Staves, *e*; which are likewise fixed at the other End to the bigger Staff *g*, at *f*: Both the Joints, *d* and *f*, are a little moveable. The Distance betwixt the Hole *c*, and the Pin, *d*, in *Fig. 1* is eight Tenths, and the Distance between the Center of the two Holes, *c, c*, is one Inch and nine Tenths.

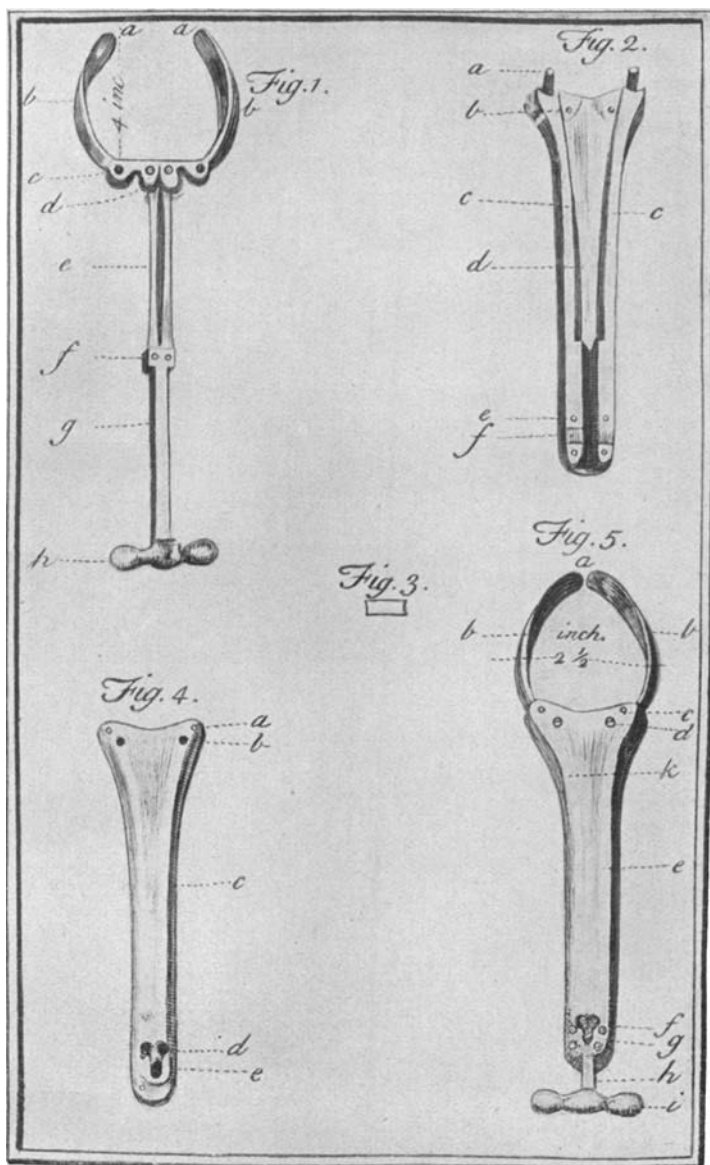
“ Lett. *h*, is the Handle, by which the Instrument may be easily opened or shut, by thrusting up, or pulling at it; these Staves may be about four Inches each in Length.

“ *Fig. 2* and *3* represent two flat Plates, each about one Eighth of an Inch thick; which, with the two Sides, *Fig. 2*, Lett. *c, c*, when fixed, form a Hollow or Cavity for *Fig. 1* to move in.

“ *a*, *Fig. 2*, shews the Pin, which goes through the Hole *c*, *Fig. 1*, into the Hole, *a*, *Fig. 4*, and appears at *c*, *Fig. 5*. This Pin is fixed at one End to the Plate, *Fig. 2*, but is not fixed at the other End. These two Pins serve the Wings to move on.

“ *b* shews the Holes through which the Screws are put to fix the Plates together, at the upper End of the Instrument.

“ *c, c*, are two Pieces riveted on, to form the Hollow for the Staves to move in.



Figs. 1 to 5.

“*d*, The Backside of the Plate.

“*e*, Four Holes, for Screws to hold the Plates together, and to fix them, when the great Screw *e*, *Fig. 4*, and *g*, *Fig. 5*, is used.

“*f*, is a small Nich, to admit the small Plate, *Fig. 3*, which is to be forced against the Staff, *g*, *Fig. 1*, by the great Screw, *e*, *Fig. 4*, and *g*, *Fig. 5*, to hold the Wings, *a, a*, at any Distance required.

“*Fig. 4* represents a flat Plate, to be screw'd on to *Fig. 2*.

“*e*, is a large Screw, which serves to fix the Wings, *Fig. (sic) a, a*, at any Distance required; and also serves the Operator to thrust his Thumb against, as he uses it; as will be shewn presently.

“*Fig. 5* represents the whole Instrument when ready for Use. The Breadth of the Head from Outside to Outside of the Plate, as at *c*, *Fig. 5*, is two Inches and a Quarter; at *e*, is eight Tenths of an Inch; and at *f*, is about one Inch. The Thickness of the whole Instrument is about half an Inch.

“That the Instrument-Makers may know to what Degree the Wings, *a, b*, *Fig. i (sic)* should be bent, I here give them a general Rule to go by—Let them draw an Ellipsis whose longest Diameter must be four Inches three Quarters; then let them draw a Line cross each End; where the Diameter shall be just two Inches and a half; and the two Sides of the Ellipsis, between the two Cross-Lines, will be the Length of the Wings; and at the same Time shews the Degree of Curvature necessary for them to be of.(!)

“When the Wings, *a, a* of this Forceps are to be extended without moving the Instrument itself, it is to be performed by putting the Fore-Finger round the great Screw, *g*, *Fig. 5*, and thrusting with the Palm, or any other Part of the Hand, against the Handle at *i*; when for every tenth Part of an Inch, that the Staff moves, the Wings *a, a*, will be extended one Inch and a Quarter. On the other Hand, when the Wings, *a, a*, are to be brought together again, as in *Fig. 5*, then the Operator may thrust the End of his Thumb against the great Screw, *g*, *Fig. 5* and pull the Handle, *i*, with his Fingers at the same Time; and if he would fix the Wings, *a, a*, at any certain Distance from each other, it is to be done by turning the great Screw, *g*, *Fig. 5*, with the Thumb of the Hand that is without the *Vagina*.

“I shall now show the Manner of using this Instrument:—Suppose, then, that a Child's Head had passed the *Os Uteri* in its natural Position, but proceeded no further, either from the Mother's Weakness, violent Flooding, or that the Head was something too large. In this Case, I introduce a Finger or two of my left Hand into the *Vagina*; and then I take my Forceps in the right Hand, with the Wings *a, a*, quite close, as in *Fig. 5*, which End I slide along my left Hand and Fingers which are within the *Vagina*, having the great Screw, *g*, *Fig. 5*, towards my left Hand; so that one Wing will be

towards the *Pubis*, and the other towards the *Perinæum*: Being thus introduced flat along the Side of the Child's Head, till the End, *a*, reach the Neck or Ear; I then with the right Hand, gently expand the Wings, *a, a*, in the Manner already described; I also slip one of the Wings *a*, edgeways between the *Os Pubis* of the Woman and the Head of the Child, which is done by gently turning the Handle, *i*, with the right Hand, while the Fingers of the left Hand, which are within the *Vagina*, assist also, and place the End, *a*, of one Wing against the Neck of the Child below the Ear; when of Course the other Wing must be parallel; I then try with a Finger to prevent anything being betwixt the Wings and the Child's Head; and with my right Hand draw the Wings as near together, in the Manner above directed, till I think the Child's Head sufficiently squeezed not to injure it, which I can judge of by the Fingers which are within the *Vagina*; I then fix the great Screw, *g*, *Fig. 5*, with my Thumb, as above mentioned; by this Means, the Head can be no more compressed, neither can the Instrument easily slip off. This being done, I withdraw the left Hand, and take hold of the Forceps about *k*, *Fig. 5*, and assist the right Hand in pulling out the Head, from which, when sufficiently advanced, I, with my right Thumb, loosen the Screw, *g*, and take away the Forceps.

"From what has been said, it is evident my Forceps are (*sic*) better than any yet contrived: *First*, because the instrument may be introduced at once, whereby the Operation will be sooner performed. *Secondly*, As the Wings from *a* to *c*, *Fig. 1* and *5* are within the *Pelvis*, they can be expanded, more or less without putting the Mother to any Pain. *Thirdly*, The Hand or Fingers, that are within the *Vagina*, will not only move less than when employed in fixing the other sort of Forceps, but also will do it in less Time; both which must occasion less Uneasiness to the Woman. *Fourthly*, As the Joints of these Forceps are within the *Pelvis* the Wings will be applied so as to fit any Child's Head; wherefore the Parts of the Woman will be less extended, than with the old Sort of Forceps, And, *Fifthly*, This Instrument is less prejudicial to the Child's Head, because the Wings can be so fixed, at any determinable Degree of Expansion, as not to compress the Head more than necessary; whereas, with the other Forceps, the more you pull the more you squeeze the Child's Head."

Such was Burton's forceps, as described by the inventor, as recognized by subsequent obstetricians and as represented in such authoritative sources of information as Mulder's and Kilian's illustrated works. It seems a clumsy instrument. Is it not possible that it really damaged the face of some infant,<sup>1</sup> or its breech or genitals,<sup>2</sup>

1. *Tristram Shandy*, Bk. III, Chap. xxvii.

2. *Ib.*, Chap. xvii.



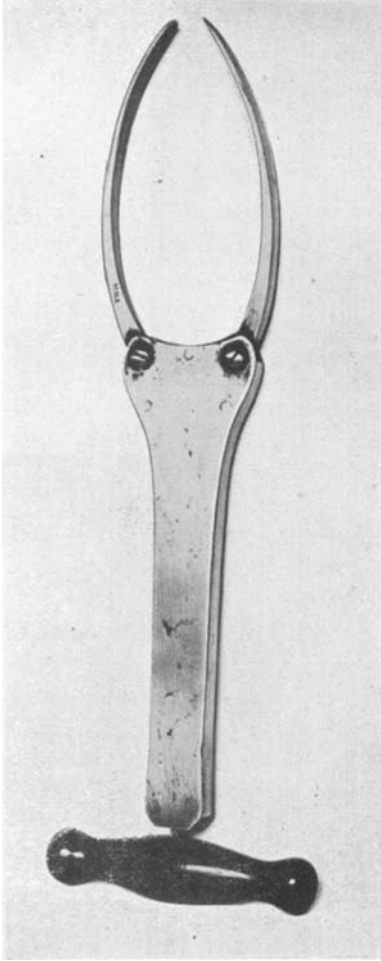


Fig. 6.

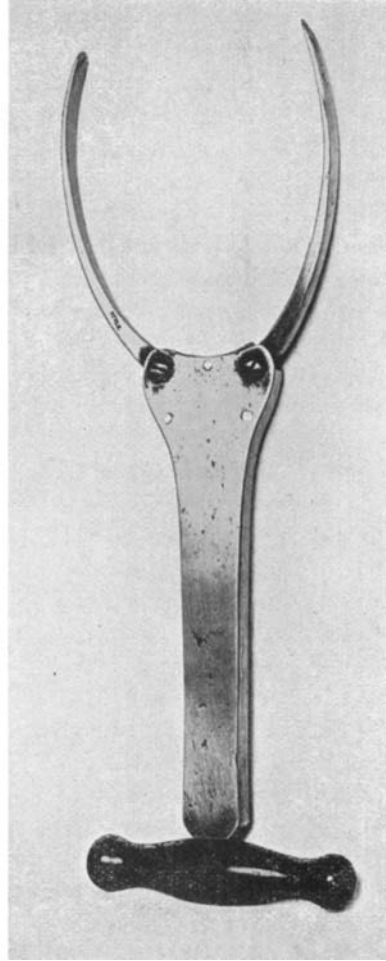


Fig. 7.



or that it actually wounded the hand of some colleague who "presented" his fist, as did good Uncle Toby,<sup>1</sup> to represent the fœtal head, on some occasion when Burton demonstrated the use of his instrument? Possibly the cut thumb<sup>2</sup> or damaged teeth<sup>3</sup> of Dr. Slop are allusions to some injury really received by the obstetrician from the forceps. Then Dr. Slop's remark that "the points of my forceps have not been sufficiently arm'd or the rivet wants closing,"<sup>4</sup> further imply that, as we can understand, the instrument proved a failure. *Anyhow the forceps which he actually used, and which is preserved at York is not the forceps which goes by his name.* Let us consider the York forceps.

#### BURTON'S OWN FORCEPS NOW AT YORK.

The instrument actually used by Dr. Burton is preserved in the Library of the York Medical Society in York. The honorary librarian, Mr. A. B. Northcote, has kindly copied the tickets placed in the case which holds the forceps:—

"Midwifery Forceps which belonged to Dr. John Burton (1710—1771) the prototype of Dr. Slop in *Tristram Shandy* (Compare *Illustrations of Sterne*, John Ferriar, M.D., 8vo, 1812). "Of all men in the world, Dr. Slop was the fittest for my father's purpose, for his newly-invented forceps was the armour he had proved to be the safest instrument in deliverance."—*Tristram Shandy*, Chap. xix.

"These forceps passed from Dr. Burton to his friend Edward Wallis, Surgeon, of York, and descended successively through Mr. Wallis, jun., Mr. B. Dodsworth and Mr. Ball, who presented them to the York Medical Society."

A further note relates how Burton was the original "Dr. Slop." "The spectator is invited to believe that these are the identical instruments with which the great Tristram was ushered into the world, but not without detriment to the bridge of his most illustrious nose."

"The case holding the forceps also contains two Book-plates (*Ex Libris*) of Burton, photographs, both in Jacobean Style.

"A. E. Libris Joannis Burton de Heath in comit. Eborac., M.B., M.D. (Printed).

"B. Joannes Burton, M.B., M.D. (in writing)."

This forceps is quite different from that which Burton describes in his *Essay*, as may be seen from the photogravures (Figs. 8 and 9) for which I am indebted to Mr. J. S. Gayner, M.R.C.S., of the York County Hospital. It is in many respects, of the Dusée type.

1. *Ib.*, Chap. xvi.

2. *Ib.*, Chap. xvi. It "made me a little awkward."

3. *Ib.*, Chap. x.

4. *Ib.*, Chap. xvi.

The York forceps, as it may conveniently be called (Figs. 8 and 9), is of about the same length as the Dusée's forceps in the Museum of the College of Surgeons. Each blade and handle are forged in one piece. Each handle is slightly flattened laterally and ends in a hook turning outwards and upwards for about two inches. The handles are not parallel to each other, as in Dusée's forceps, but are bowed strongly outwards. We can understand that the parallel handles in Dusée's instrument must have been unsatisfactory. There is only one lock, where a plain screw (without Dusée's thumb-piece) is fixed into a slotted joint to admit of a radial deviation. In this respect it resembles a modified Grégoire's forceps in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, where indeed the slot is even simpler, being without the two extra, smaller screws which in this forceps are fixed at each extremity of the slot.

In Grégoire's own instrument (as figured by Boehmer) the joint had a much more complicated slide-lock. The blades in the forceps at York cross at the lock, they have no pelvic or perineal curve, and the cephalic curve is much less marked than in Dusée's. It reminds the observer of the curve of the blades in Graily Hewitt's forceps. On the other hand, the blades, as in Dusée's forceps, are not fenestrated,<sup>1</sup> and terminate in a broad extremity which bears a concave notch meant to prevent pressure on the temporal vessels. The distance between the extremities of the blades when closed appears about 1 inch (2.5 cm.).

No drawing of a forceps precisely similar to this is to be found in either Mulder or Kilian's Atlases. Professor Kouwer, of Utrecht, has recently forwarded me two photographs of a forceps in the Mulder collection, which is not figured in Mulder's *Historia* (Figs. 10, 11). It more closely resembles the York forceps than any other similar instrument, but the lock is more complicated and the blades, non-fenestrated as in the York instrument, are shorter, more curved, and apparently not concave at their free extremities. Possibly Burton sent a sample of the York type to his old friends in Holland and this instrument is a subsequent modification, or else the York forceps was copied by Burton from a Dutch model.

This York forceps is of the old French type, before Levret introduced the pelvic curve, but with what Levret made out to be the one essential feature introduced by Dusée, namely, the concavity at the broad free end of each blade. Burton probably knew of Dusée's forceps through Butter's paper in the *Edinburgh Medical*

1. Bing's (of Copenhagen) forceps had non-fenestrated blades, but they were narrow and convex at their extremities, and the handles could be taken off or fitted on *below* the lock, which was of the French type and secured by a simple screw with a thumb-piece.

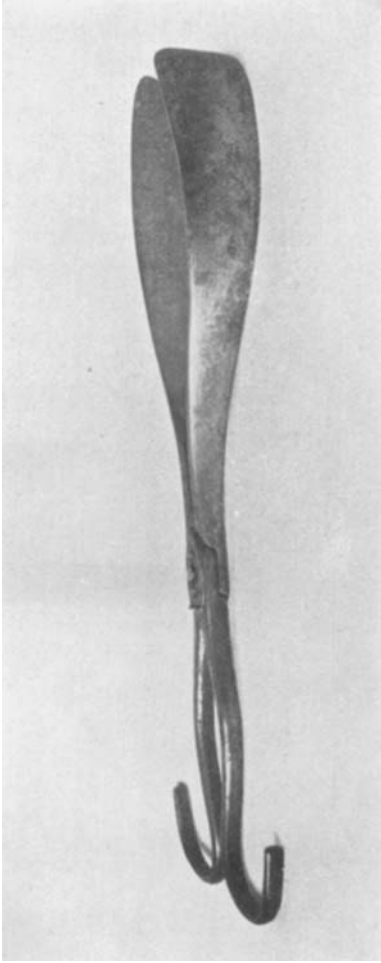


Fig. 8.

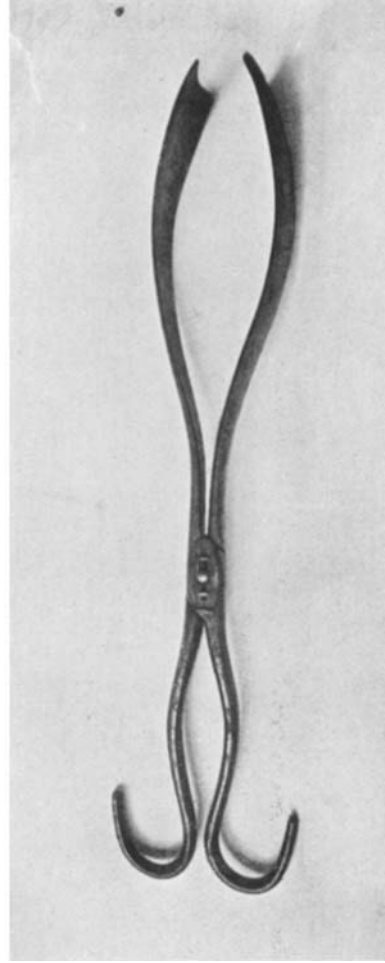


Fig. 9.

*Essays*, to which publication, as will be seen, Burton himself contributed.

Thus it is possible that Burton tried Dusée's forceps and found, as Smellie did, that it was in several respects unsatisfactory. He therefore modified it, and his modification is represented by the instrument preserved at York. Then he devised the forceps which goes by his name, but it proved too complicated, as is hinted at in *Tristram Shandy*, and so he fell back on the simpler instrument which ultimately came into his successor's hands and is preserved in the city with which his name is identified.

DR. BURTON'S TEXT-BOOK ON "MIDWIFRY."

"Sir," replied Dr. Slop, "it would astonish you to know what improvements we have made in late years, in all branches of obstetrical knowledge, but particularly in that one single point of the safe and expeditious extraction of the *fœtus*, which has received such lights, that, for my part" (holding up his hands) "I declare, I wonder how the world has——" "I wish," quoth my Uncle Toby, "you had seen what prodigious armies we had in Flanders."<sup>1</sup>

"It seems he had scattered a word or two in his book in favour of the very thing [podalic version] which ran in my father's fancy."<sup>2</sup>

"There was a scientific operator within so near a call as eight miles of us, and who, moreover, had expressly wrote (*sic*) a five shilling book upon the subject of midwifery, in which he had exposed not only the blunders of the sisterhood itself, but had likewise super-added many curious improvements for the quicker extraction of the *fœtus*."<sup>3</sup>

We will now turn to "Dr. Slop's" five shilling book with its account of advances made in those days in "all branches of obstetrical knowledge." The title-page is here reproduced in full:

An ESSAY towards a Complete New System of MIDWIFRY, THEORETICAL and PRACTICAL Together with The Descriptions, Causes and Methods of Removing or Relieving the Disorders peculiar to Pregnant and Lying-in WOMEN, and NEW-BORN INFANTS. Interspersed with Several NEW IMPROVEMENTS; Whereby WOMEN may be delivered, in the most dangerous Cases with more Ease, Safety and Expedition, than by any other Method heretofore practised: Part of which has been laid before the ROYAL SOCIETY at London, and the MEDICAL SOCIETY at *Edinburgh*; after having been perused by Many of the most Eminent of their Profession, both in *Great Britain* and *Ireland*; by whom they were greatly approved of.

1. *Tristram Shandy*, Bk. II, Chap. xviii.
2. *Ib.*, Chap. xix.
3. *Ib.*, Bk. I, Chap. xviii.

All Drawn up and Illustrated with Several Curious OBSERVATIONS, and Eighteen COPPER-PLATES. In FOUR PARTS.

By JOHN BURTON, M.D. *Si quid novisti rectius istis, Candidas imperti; si non, his utere mecum.* Hor.

London. Printed for JAMES HODGES, at the *Looking-Glass*, facing *St. Magnus' Church, London-Bridge.* MDCCLI.

Such is our author's title-page. His "Finis" is touching: "I own I have not completed the *Treatise* so full as it should be; but yet, I hope, it may be a means of spurring up some abler Head to finish what I have begun; as HORACE says upon another Occasion:

—*Fungar vice Cotis, acutum*

*Reddere quae Ferrum valet, exors sibi secandi.*

Art. Poet. Ver. 304."

Capital Latin, but did Dr. Slop mean "full" to be an adverb? After the title-page comes the following Address:—

To the PRESIDENTS AND MEMBERS of the ROYAL SOCIETY at *London* And of the MEDICAL SOCIETY at *Edinburgh.*

GENTLEMEN,

As the chief Motive for the very Foundation of Your several SOCIETIES was, to propagate all beneficial knowledge to the World in general; but more particularly that Branch of it whereby the Lives and Healths of Mankind are to be preserved, I take the Liberty, therefore to publish the following *Essay* under Your Protection; which I am the more induced to do, as some of the *Improvements* and *new Discoveries* in the Practice of Midwifry therein mentioned have already been laid before Your respective Societies after having been perused by many of the most Eminent in their Profession, in this Kingdom and *Ireland*, who have unanimously approved of them.

The Approbation of different SOCIETIES (the most remarkable in the World for their Learned and superior Skill in the Practice of every Branch of their respective Professions) is no less a Satisfaction, than an Honour done to me; as it will certainly be a Means of depriving Those who abound with *Ill-nature*, *Envy* and *Detraction*, of their most *poignant Pleasure*; And at the same Time will silence, or stop the Mouths of the most ignorant Part of Mankind, who will always find Fault with what they do not understand; when the only Defect is in their own Brains.

As I have not the Honour to be personally known, except to very Few of You, it cannot be supposed that Your Approbation of the *Improvements* laid before You, could proceed from any other Motive, than from Your generous Concern for the Welfare of Mankind, and from Your humane Disposition to forward whatever may contribute towards the Advancement of any Branch of Medicinal Knowledge.

THAT Your several SOCIETIES may still improve in every Branch of Learning and ever be an Honour to the BRITISH Nation, is the hearty Prayer of

GENTLEMEN,

*Your most Devoted and Most Obligated  
Humble Servant,*

JOHN BURTON.

York, May 29,  
1751.

After this Address comes the Preface proper. The following characteristic passages may interest the reader :—

*“But for those People who like Birds of Night scream in the Dark, when none can see them; and like cowardly Enemies, unseen, shoot their envenomed Darts at me in secret Whispers or anonymous Papers, such Creatures may spit their malignant Choler, till it consume Themselves, before I shall regard them in the least.”*

These words were written over nine years before the appearance of the first instalment of *Tristram Shandy* and about five years after Burton's persecution by Dr. Jaques Sterne and the Whigs of York.

With characteristic sensitiveness he states in his Preface, in respect to his illustrations :—

*“The Whole is interspersed with Eighteen Copper-Plates . . . . Some inconsiderate People look upon Copper-Plates, in this Case, to be useless, but judicious Persons must be sensible that in describing objects not to be seen, the Reader will have a better Idea of them from a true Representation on a Plate than only from a bare Description, as is evident in all Branches of Philosophy.”*

The Preface is followed by a list of the names of the authors and books quoted in the main text. Giffard, Mauriceau, De la Motte and Heister are included, whilst the Chamberlens (!), Smellie and Chapman are conspicuous by their absence. The first part of the text is a fair sketch of the Anatomy and Physiology of Pregnancy, which takes up over one-third of the *Essay*, and includes some excellent practical observations about the character of the os uteri, etc. The next part, on the Diseases of Pregnant Women, occupies only fourteen pages; the third directs the reader how to assist mother and child in preternatural labours; and the fourth treats of abortions. Lastly, there is a “Postscript” of twenty-four pages, which includes the description of Burton's forceps and the illustrations reproduced in this article. The touching *Fungar vice Cotis*, also noted above, brings up the rear.

In truth this *Essay* is a very fair manual, and of credit to its author. We must dwell on certain passages which more specially

concern us. As, like Sterne's *Hafen Slawkenbergius De Nasis*, it is not at everybody's disposition, so "it may not be unacceptable to the learned reader to see the specimen of a few pages of his original."<sup>1</sup>

Burton condemns the crotchet,<sup>2</sup> and considers that the double or forceps crotchet, really a different instrument, is safer, but it is too bulky. In arguing the difficulty of applying the crotchet he refers to tables of measurements of the female pelvis and the foetal head, ending: "From all that I have here said, we see what Inconveniences attend even the Forceps."<sup>3</sup>

When the pelvis is only a little narrowed, or the mother and the uterine contractions weak, "and if there be any Reason to imagine that the Child is living, and be so far advanced *that it cannot be turned to be brought by the Feet*,<sup>4</sup> then the best Instrument is certainly a *Proper*<sup>5</sup> Forceps, which had better be too little than too big because of the pliable Texture of the Child's Head which will easily yield to Pressure."

"Some Persons are for having the Forceps and other Instruments covered with Leather or some such Thing; but this is very wrong, and is very prejudicial to the Mother. This Kind of Forceps is twisted with Leather in a spiral Manner, round the Bow, or that Part which goes on each Side of the Child's Head, and is betwixt it and the *Uterus* and *Vagina* of the *Woman*." Burton then shows how the vaginal mucus is a better lubricant than leather which is most objectionable for other reasons. We will return to this passage when we treat of the *Letter to William Smellie*.

Burton describes Mauriceau's *tire-tête*,<sup>6</sup> and Ould's *terebra occulta*,<sup>7</sup> a trephine perforator first used in 1739, but Burton adds that Deventer nearly fifty years ago (about 1700) used a piercer, guarded by a sheath, to perforate the head or abdomen of a dropsical child. "I also have made use of one of the same Kind of *Terebra Occultæ* as Ould's, upwards of seventeen years ago (about 1734),"<sup>8</sup> made at York. He found Ould's instrument, even after he had made a modification, hard to clean. This modification was doubtless "thy *tire-tête*" mentioned in the eleventh chapter of the second book of *Tristram Shandy*. Smellie was more generous to Burton than the latter was to him. In his *Treatise* (McClintock's N.S.S. Ed., vol. i,

1. A footnote to the amusing parallel Latin and English versions of Slawkenbergius' tale, *Tristram Shandy*, introduction to Bk. IV. The Latin is not given in many editions.

2. P. 209.

3. P. 214.

4. The italics are our own.

5. In italics in the original.

6. P. 220.

7. P. 223.

8. P. 226.



p. 293), when discussing substitutes for the crotchet, Smellie mentions "Ould's terebra occulta, with the improvement made in it by Dr. Burton of York." Burton criticizes freely other primitive perforators used in his days.<sup>1</sup> Amongst them is a ring scalpel employed by "Dr. SIMPSON, Physician at *St. Andrew's* in *Scotland*."

The drawing (*loc. cit.*, Pl. XVI, Fig. 11) shows that this instrument was simply the ring-knife for opening abscesses ascribed originally to Albucasis; two samples are preserved in the Museum of the College of Surgeons. In Vol. v, Pt. I of the *Edinburgh Medical Essays* Monro in "A Description of several Chirurgical Instruments," figures a similar ring-scalpel as "A Sort of *Bistoir* cachée in Mr. *John Douglas's* <sup>2</sup> Possession," apparently unaware that it was an ancient instrument. Simpson, of St. Andrews, put the ring-scalpel on his finger, perforated the foetal head with the knife, and thrust his finger into the cranial cavity, making it act as a *tire-tête*! Did Burton take Simpson's statements for granted? If Smellie had even suggested such a thing we can guess what his adversary would have said.

Further on Burton strongly condemned the practice of amputating a presenting arm, which "can never forward the Birth in the least."<sup>3</sup> Speaking of the inconveniences of reckless foeticide, he notes: "There are also many Husbands, who would lose the Life-Estate upon the Death of their Wives for Want of having a Child born alive."<sup>4</sup> In cases of cicatricial contraction of the os externum or "if the Orifice becomes scirrhus, so as to admit of no Dilatation,"<sup>5</sup> an incision must be made. But Cæsarean section may be needed. Incision, Burton teaches, is attended with much danger. "The Manner of performing this Operation (incision) is more the Province of a Surgeon to direct than for me."<sup>6</sup> Burton dwells a little on Cæsarean section, "as there has been so much said for and against this terrible Operation."

The chapter on Abortion, containing several clinical reports and references to Giffard and other contemporaries and the pages devoted to the lochia and lactation are fairly well prepared. To the case of a

1. Burton's own "extractor" or *tire-tête* perforator (p. 231) is figured, Pl. XVII, Figs. 6, 7, 8 and 9; the drawing is very coarsely executed and much too small.

2. Douglas was another opponent of Smellie, objecting especially to his wooden forceps. He disliked men-midwives in general, attacking them in 1736 in his *Short Account of the State of Midwifery in London*, etc. Next year, 1737, Chapman published a *Reply*. Mrs. Nihell, the midwife, abused male obstetricians in her *Treatise on the Art of Midwifery* (1760), where she writes as offensively of Smellie as Sterne wrote of Dr. Slop.

3. P. 247.

4. P. 254.

5. P. 259.

6. P. 260.

uterine polypus and of a headless fœtus, with drawings, I refer elsewhere in this article.

The "Postscript," as the author calls it, is really an extra chapter, and includes, besides the description of Burton's forceps quoted here in full, some notes on the male and female pelvis from Monro's *Anatomy of the Human Bones*, "presented to me by its excellent Author."

The plates are of very unequal merit. For the most part they are coarsely executed, but that which illustrates Burton's forceps and is here reproduced is a good copper-plate. It compares favourably with the very ill-finished drawings of Burton's combined tire-tête and perforator on Plate XVII, an instrument immortalized together with the forceps in *Tristram Shandy*. It bears, as can be seen, no name. I shall refer again to this plate of the forceps when I come to discuss the *Monasticon*.

#### BURTON'S LETTER TO SMELLIE.

The title-page of this remarkable epistle deserves reproduction :

A LETTER to WILLIAM SMELLIE, M.D.—Containing CRITICAL and PRACTICAL REMARKS Upon his TREATISE on the THEORY and PRACTICE of MIDWIFERY. By JOHN BURTON, M.D. Wherein the various Gross Mistakes and dangerous Methods of Practice mentioned and recommended by that Writer, are fully demonstrated and generally corrected, Likewise the several Advantages or Dangers to both Mother and Child, attending the Turning the last in the Womb to extract by the Feet, or that accrue from the Use of each particular Kind of Instrument, employ'd in delivering Women, are shown in a more ample Manner than heretofore.

Being as an APPENDIX, to both the above-mentioned Author's *Treatises on Midwifery*; absolutely necessary to be perused by all who have read the former's Book, or attended his Lectures with a View to Practice.

To which is affixed a COPPER-PLATE, representing several Sorts of Instruments used by the Ancients, with the Fillet as improved by the Author thereof. LONDON: Printed for W. OWEN at *Homer's* Head Temple-Bar. MDCCLIII.<sup>1</sup>

The *Letter* takes up two hundred and thirty-three pages of a small octavo book, printed in fairly large type. Its tone is uncourteous and hypercritical. Burton's literary method is decidedly clever, for in order that the public who read his *Letter* should miss nothing brought against Smellie, he begins with two summaries, the first being in the form of a preface, headed "To the Reader," and

1. Although this *Letter* was written only two years after Burton's "*Midwifry*" the word *Midwifery* is spelt throughout in the modern manner.

the second a very complete table of contents. Burton was wise, for the reader soon gets weary of the writer's monotonous depreciatory criticism, whilst on the other hand, if he only desires to find out what the rivals thought about the anatomy of the pelvis, or if, on the contrary, he is solely interested in their views about forceps, he will find what he seeks at a glance on consulting the table of contents. Should a more desultory reader seek for a brief digest of the whole letter, to save him the trouble of wading through it from beginning to end, he will find that the preface is an excellent digest. In that preface Burton systematically condemns Smellie as an historical writer, as an anatomist, as a theorist and as a lecturer or practitioner, the full terms of the condemnation being the *Letter* itself. The tone of the preface is unpleasantly personal, and that of "The Contents" worse, as the first lines read: "*Proved that Smellie (or the Person he copies from) has never read the Author's quoted, never understood them, or wilfully misrepresented their Meaning, from Page 1 to 59.*"

The beginning of the *Letter* is highly unconciliatory:—

"Sir. Upon a cursory Perusal of your Treatise on the *Theory and Practice of Midwifery*, with the Introduction thereto; and comparing them with a few common-place Remarks I had made some years ago upon this Subject, I cannot help thinking you are grossly mistaken in various Parts."

The second paragraph concludes with some words which the reader of *Tristram Shandy* will recognize as old acquaintances. After accusing Smellie of confounding all nature, palming on his readers "an author that never existed" and misrepresenting other authorities, Burton concludes: "If any Thing can be added to shock human Faith, or prejudice your Character as an Historiān or Translator, it is your having converted *Lithopædii Senonensis Icon* (which you call *Lithopædus Senonensis*) an inanimate petrefied (*sic*) Substance, into an Author, after you had been *six years cooking up your Book.*"

Of course the italics in the last sentence are from the original, although such a typographical resource is hardly necessary for emphasis: Smellie is accused of never having read Hippocrates and his medical descendants. He appears to have culled his knowledge of the ancients from Spachius, and we cannot help thinking that Smellie "or the person he copies from" was really content more than once with second-hand information. Burton, at p. 21, returns to the *Lithopædus* blunder:—

"The seventeenth Author, collected, as you tell us, by *Spachius* is *Lithopædus Senonensis*, which instead of being an Author, is only the Drawing of a petrefied Child, when taken from its Mother, after she was opened; and this is evident from the Title, *Lithopædus*

*Senonensis Icon*, which, with the Explanation, is contained in one single Page only. The Account of it, as published by *Albosius* in 1582, in Octavo, may be seen at the End of *Cordaeus's Works* in *Spachius*, whence again, I think, it is evident you must have taken your Extracts from some bad Copier. Your next Author that follows *Lithopaedus Senonensis*, as you call him, is *Caspar Bauhinus, &c.*" A footnote in reference to *Spachius's* quotation of *Albosius* reads: "This Error is corrected in the second Edition; but how the Author, as he tells us, *he was six years in cooking up this performance*, could at first mistake the Title, and represent the petrified Child as an Author that he had perused and taken Extracts from *for the Information of those who have not Time or Opportunity to peruse the Books from which they are collected*, is what surprises me very much." We suspect that *Smellie* wrote and corrected much of his work in a hurry.

The biography of *Sterne* and the critics of *Tristram Shandy*, especially *Wilbur Cross*, lay great stress on this exposure of *Smellie's* error as it affords the clearest proof that *Dr. Slop* was meant for *Burton*.

In Chapter XIX of the second book, which includes the allusions to *Slop's* "newly invented forceps" the autobiographer, as we may call *Tristram*, states: "My father, who had dipped into all kinds of books, upon looking into *Lithopaedus Senonensis de Partu difficili*, published by *Adrianus Smelvgot*,<sup>1</sup> has found out, &c."<sup>2</sup> An asterisk is placed after *Senonensis* and the footnote it indicates reminds us of the grave nonsense appended to passages in *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel*, the *Waverley Novels* and the *Ingoldsby Legends*.

"The author is here twice mistaken; for *Lithopaedus* should be wrote thus, *Lithopaedii Senonensis Icon*. The second mistake is that this *Lithopaedus* is not an author, but a drawing of a petrified child. The account of this, published by *Athosius (sic)*, 1580, may be seen at the end of *Cordaeus's* works in *Spachius*. Mr. *Tristram Shandy* has been led into this error either from seeing *Lithopaedus's* name of late in a catalogue of learned writers in *Dr. —*, or by mistaking *Lithopaedus* for *Trinecavellius*,—from the too great similitude of the names."

It is not clear why *Sterne* burlesqued a passage in *Burton's Letter* in which that obstetrician really "scored" over his adversary, indicating a great oversight. *Smellie's* name was, we have seen, omitted in the "catalogue of learned writers" in *Burton's Essay*.

1. *Smelvgot*=*Smellie*.

2. The rest of this sentence refers to the pressure on the foetal head during parturition. *Sterne* speaks of "the bones of the *cranium* having no sutures," and of "the force of the woman's efforts," not of the uterine musculature. Comment is needless.

Before dismissing this "lithopaedus question" let us take a glance at the original authorities. Albosius, misprinted "Athosius" in *Tristram Shandy*, was Jean Aillebout, and his original report *Portentosum lithopaedium, sive Embryon petrifactum urbis Senonensis* appeared in 1587. Gaspard Bauhin, the first anatomist to describe the ileo-cæcal valve accurately, published in 1591 a Latin translation of Rousset's *Cas singulier d'opération césarienne, nécessité par un fœtus pétrifié*. Bauhin, Spach and others quoted Albosius. Vettore Trincavelli of Venice left, after his death in 1568, manuscript published as the *Opera Trincavelli*, in 1586. Maurice de la Corde (Cordaeus) published a commentary on Hippocrates' views on gynæcology, and shortly afterwards (1591) Spach issued his *Gynaeciorum*.

Dr. Burton, at p. 113, strongly condemns Dr. Smellie's teaching about the delivery of the placenta, quoting the latter's words:—

"When the Placenta is to be extracted, you direct the Person 'to take hold of the Navel-string with the left Hand, and pull gently from Side to Side, and desire the Woman to assist your Endeavour, by straining as if she were at Stool, blowing forcibly into her Hand, or provoking her to reach (*sic*) by thrusting her Finger into her Throat; as *Ould* has directed in his Midwifery.'"

Posterity which has adopted Smellie's forceps and rejected his critic's instrument, has justified Burton in his strong animadversions against Smellie's management of the placenta.

I will spare the reader any further analysis of Burton's *Letter*. Smellie is made out to be all wrong all through, whilst "my method" is all right, "as I have already shown." The most important passages in this spiteful epistle are those wherein the forceps is discussed. "I think, that my forceps is as good, if not better than any yet continued" (*sic*).<sup>1</sup> Burton is in fact as self-sufficient as Chapman.<sup>2</sup> Then he proceeds to denounce Smellie's practice of wrapping leather round the forceps. He repeats his objections already published in his *Essay*, and quoted in full above. It is interesting to note that in the *Essay* he concludes (p. 216) with this sentence:—

"Some Part of the Blood and Waters must be sucked up by the Leather, and lodge betwixt it and the steel-work, where it will corrupt and stink, let the Maker be as careful as he will in covering it."

In his *Letter*, this sentence is reproduced down to "corrupt and stink," and for "let the Maker . . . etc.," Burton substitutes these words: "and in some Cases, perhaps, may convey Infection" (p. 140-141).

1. *Loc. cit.*, p. 142. 'Continued' is no doubt a misprint for 'contrived.'

2. See Chapman's preface to his *Essay on the Improvement of Midwifery*, 1733.

Why "perhaps"? Burton need not have been so timid for here we know that he was in the right at last. *Magna est veritas*. Smellie's forceps proved, on experience, to be satisfactory. As for Burton's, Sir Alexander Simpson speaks of them as "the ingenious, but very unserviceable, forceps, working like a lobster's claw, contrived by Smellie's contemporary and critic, Dr. Burton of York."<sup>1</sup>

Lowder calls Burton's forceps "a very whimsical contrivance where both blades must be applied at one time—we cannot call this an instrument attended with any improvement as they (*sic*) require more room than we expect to have when we use forceps." (MSS. *Lectures*, 1782, Library Royal Soc. Med.)

On the other hand, who thinks of encasing blades in leather in these days? Smellie insisted that, as Burton puts it, "the Blades of the Forceps ought to be new covered with Stripes (*sic*) of washed Leather, after they have been used, so that every Operator must learn the Art of covering the Forceps to Perfection, because an Artist is not to be found in all Places." Thus Burton was truly scientific and practical in his objections to leather. It is remarkable that "Infection" is only mentioned in the *Letter*, as though the skill of the "Maker" of which we heard in the *Essay* were the first thing to be considered. Yet later on in Davis's *Elements of Operative Midwifery*, a fine illustrated work published in London in 1825, we read (p. 43) about the longer blade, of his asymmetrical forceps, "well padded with soft flannel and the whole covered with leather." Davis's forceps, several varieties, leather and all, are to be seen in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons of England. The long blade of his jointed forceps bears two layers of leather with the soft flannel sandwiched between them. They are enough to make a modern obstetrician shudder! Yet leather was used down to a much later date than 1825.

Having vindicated himself and confounded his rival, Smellie, Dr. Burton adds an Appendix. It is a truly Parthian shaft aimed at another gentleman who had incurred his displeasure. The cause of offence, as explained in the first paragraph of this Appendix, is perfectly clear:—

"Having this Opportunity, I could not, in Justice both to the Public and myself, omit taking some notice of the Cavillings and Misrepresentations wrote (*sic*) against my *Essays on Midwifery*, by one *Kirkpatric* an Irishman, and published in the monthly *Review* for *September* 1751, Artic. 33. Which otherways are too inconsiderable to have any such Regard paid to them." A footnote informs

1. "Address to the Midland Medical Society at Birmingham, on 26th October 1900," *Scottish Med. and Surg. Journ.*, Dec. 1900. Sir A. Simpson was referring to the forceps of Burton's *Essay*, not to the York Museum instrument.

us that when the article appeared "The Writer then lodged near the new Church in the *Strand*; but has since removed to some other Place."

The furious diatribes in this "letter" hurled by Burton at a member of his own profession were possibly parodied in the form of excommunication ascribed to Bishop Ernulphus, of Burton's own faith, which Dr. Slop, after his cursing of poor Obadiah, is made to read aloud to Tristram's father and Uncle Toby (*Tristram Shandy*, Bk. III, Chap. xi). The Lithopaedus footnote proves that Sterne had read and studied the *Letter to Smellie*.

Space will not allow of discussion of the question from Smellie's point of view. The main features are given in detail in McClintock's edition of that great Scotch obstetrician's standard work and related in Sir John Byers's recent address.

#### BURTON AND THE NON-NATURALS.

A notice of some of Burton's minor medical works may be of some interest to the reader. I will begin with a quaint little publication. The title-page we will give in full:—

A TREATISE ON THE NON-NATURALS. In which the Great Influence They have on HUMAN BODIES is Set forth and Mechanically accounted for. To which is subjoin'd, A Short Essay on the CHINCOUGH, with A NEW METHOD OF TREATING THAT OBSTINATE DISTEMPER. By JOHN BURTON, M.B. Cantab., M.D. Rhem. *He that contemneth small Things, shall fall by little and little.* Eccles, xix, 1. YORK: Printed by A. STAPLES and J. HILDYARD, Bookseller in York [here follow the names of six London booksellers who sold the Treatise]. MDCCLXXXVIII.

According to Murray's *New English Dictionary* the non-naturals in "old medicine" were "the six things necessary to health, but liable, by abuse or accident, to become the cause of disease, *viz.*, air, meat and drink, sleep and waking, motion and rest, excretion and retention, the affections of the mind." The term excited the mirth of the author of *Tristram Shandy*, who could not understand "why the most natural actions of a man's life should be called his non-naturals?"<sup>1</sup>

The title-page is followed by a really graceful, though very flowery dedication of the *Treatise* to Boerhaave, under whom he had studied at Leyden. The Preface, on the other hand, is written in Burton's worst style, being lengthy, wordy and egotistical, redeemed in part by a gracious repetition of his feelings of gratitude for his

1. *Tristram Shandy*, Bk. I, Chap. xxiii. That work, as will be shown, contains other references to Burton's *Treatise on the Non-Naturals*.



master "the great Boerhaave." I need not dwell on the *Treatise* itself, which is mainly based on obsolete physiological theories and hygienic principles. The fourth chapter includes some rather interesting observations on the cold and warm bath, showing that Boerhaave and Burton were, in respect to cleanliness, before their time.

*The Short Essay on the Chin-Cough* appended to Burton's *Non-Naturals* originally appeared in the *Edinburgh Medical Essays*, Vol. ii, p. 509.

#### BURTON AND THE ROYAL SOCIETY.

Dr. Burton contributed a report of a case of fibro-myomatous polypus of the uterus to the *Philosophical Transactions*, Vol. xlv, 1749-50, p. 520:—"XXI. A Letter from John Burton, M.D., to C. Mortimer, M.D., and Sec. R.S. concerning the Exhibition of an Excrecence from the Womb." This letter is dated York, March 28, 1750, and was read on July 5th in the same year. The tumour is figured, *ib.* Pl. I, Fig. 6. This case is included in Burton's *Essay*, p. 363, Observation XXX, with a smaller drawing, Pl. XVII, Fig. 4. Strange to say, Burton seems to have taken this fibroid polypus for a rarity, and writes in his version of the case in his *Essay*: "Mr. Fell, an eminent Man-Midwife and Surgeon in York, was sent for; but not having met with a Case like this, desired me also to attend the Patient."

Of another contribution made by Burton to the *Philosophical Transactions* (Vol. xlv, 1747), purely antiquarian, more will be said when we turn to his archæological work. The case of snake-bite contributed to the same *Transactions* in 1736, was a report written by a William Burton.

#### BURTON AND "MEDICAL ESSAYS."

In 1736 Dr. Burton contributed *An Account of a monstrous Child to Medical Essays and Observations Revised and Published by a Society in Edinburgh*, it is published in Part I of Volume v of *Medical Essays*, p. 338. The child "had no Parts of Generation proper either to Male or Female . . . Half way between the Navel and *Os pubis* . . . was a circular Orifice of about an Inch Diameter, in which was a spongy Substance resembling the End of the *Glans Penis* excoriated. Through the several and almost innumerable Pores or Orifices of that spongy Body the Urine oozed continually." The child died of small-pox when about five years old. Burton concludes: "To the Truth of this I can bring many certificates, as well as living Witnesses, if it was thought necessary." This case, evidently an instance of ectopia vesicæ the nature of which Burton failed to interpret thoroughly, must not be confounded



Fig. 10.

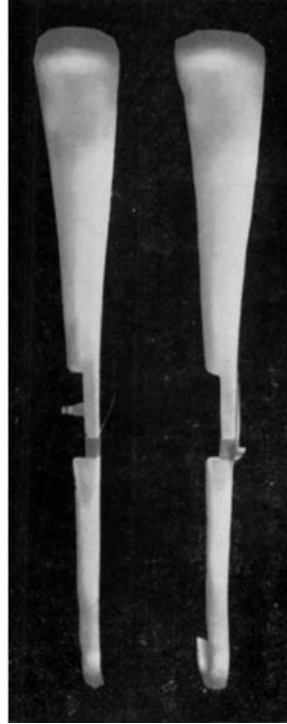


Fig. 11.

with the "monster born without a Head, of which I delivered a Woman in this City (*York*) in January, 1749." The specimen is represented in Pl. XVII of his own *Essay on Midwifry*. In this monster all four extremities were deformed, but the drawings are badly executed, especially about the shoulders and neck, so that the teratology of the suppression of the head is not clear.

It is easy to understand how there has been confusion about the "monstrous child," as the monster reported in Burton's *Essay* has been confounded with the case of ectopia described in *Medical Essays* years before the headless fœtus was born. Again, there is a second edition and also an abstract edition<sup>1</sup> of the *Edinburgh Essays*, which adds to the confusion. I have been able to discover the first report of both monsters in the library of the College of Surgeons.

In a future number of the JOURNAL we will consider Burton's philanthropic work, his persecution, and his antiquarian labours; and will conclude with observations on *Tristram Shandy*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

Figs. 1 to 5. Photograph of Burton's copperplate engraving of his forceps, in his *New System of Midwifry*. The lettering is explained in Burton's original description of the instrument quoted in full in this paper.

Figs. 6, 7. Photographs of a Burton's Forceps in the Obstetrical Collection, Museum of the Edinburgh University. Taken by Dr. R. W. Johnstone. It closely resembles the instrument represented in Figs. 1 to 5, but is simpler about the lower part. Compare Fig. 5, *f, g, h*; also Mulder, *Historia Forcipum*, Pl. III, Fig. 8.

Figs. 8 and 9. Photographs of forceps actually used in practice by Dr. Burton, and preserved in the Library of the York Medical Society. Taken by J. S. Gayner, Esq., M.R.C.S. It is of quite a different type to the forceps drawn in Figs. 1 to 5 and Figs. 6 and 7.

Figs. 10 and 11. Photographs of forceps in the Mulder Collection resembling the instrument, Figs. 8 and 9, used by Dr. Burton. Taken by Professor Kouwer of Utrecht.

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## Burton ("Dr. Slop"): His Forceps and His Foes.

By ALBAN DORAN, F.R.C.S.

### PART II.

#### FOUNDATION OF THE YORK COUNTY HOSPITAL AND PERSECUTION OF DR. BURTON.

IN the first part of this memoir, Burton's two forceps were described and his purely professional writings reviewed, with references to allusions in the pages of Sterne's novel. This part will treat of his public work, of his political labours and consequent persecution, and of Burton as an antiquary, and will end with a consideration of the doings and sayings of Dr. Slop as chronicled in *Tristram Shandy*.

The history of the foundation of the York Hospital and the political entanglements of the learned doctor is presented to us in detail in his *British Liberty Endangered*. Of this work, the College of Surgeons possesses a copy, purchased at the sale of Dr. Merriman's library. The title page, here reproduced, is missing in the College copy:—

*BRITISH LIBERTY ENDANGERED*, a Narrative, wherein it is proved that John Burton has been a better friend to the English Constitution in Church and State than his Persecutors. 1749. "This personal narrative of Dr. John Burton, the author of the *Monasticon Eboracense*, is excessively rare and gave rise to the quarrel between him and Sterne, for which the latter immortalised Burton as Dr. Slop in his *Tristram Shandy*." (Extract from Thorpe's Catalogue, *Bibliotheca Britannica*, 1839, pasted in the College copy.)

*British Liberty* is dedicated "To the Right Reverend Father in God Thomas, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury."<sup>1</sup> "Your Grace will pardon the Freedom I take, in dedicating the following Sheets to you, being the most proper Person I could have addressed 'em to." The pamphlet is a relation of what happened to Dr. Burton from the

1. Thomas Herring, translated from York in 1747.

York County Election in 1734 till the end of the " 'forty-five." The narrative is worth relating.

When in practice near Wakefield in 1734 Burton actively canvassed for the Tory member during the election for the County of York, and " did signal Service by attending at one of the Booths, and preventing several from being poll'd in an unfair manner." His candidate, the Tory, Sir Miles Stapylton,<sup>1</sup> obtained a majority over Sir Rowland Wynne, the Whig, whom Dr. Jaques Sterne was supporting. Nephew Laurence actively assisted Dr. Sterne in his parliamentary work, yet it appears that no writings of Laurence Sterne in connection with these contested elections are preserved.

Burton found out very soon after the election that Tory voters and tenants were subjected to all kinds of annoyance. Summons and litigation ensued, and when at length somebody paid the expenses of Sir Miles' friends " all Actions ceased."

In January 1734-5, Burton married a Miss Hewson, who had small private means. Then he went abroad and studied under Boerhaave. On his return he set up in practice in York and soon became engaged in a great philanthropic work.

Before reporting Dr. Burton's own history of his public work and his persecution, I will turn the reader's attention to an independent account of the foundation of the York Hospital published by Mr. Robert Davies in an article on Dr. Burton in the *Yorkshire Archæological and Topographical Journal* for 1871-2. Mr. Gayner and Mr. Neden have kindly committed this important quotation to my notice:—

According to the usage of that period, Dr. Burton combined the practice of accoucheur with that of the higher branch of his profession. To use his own words he followed the profession as a physician and man mid-wife. From the time of his first settling at York he set apart a certain time every day to give his advice to all who went to ask it; and those who were so bad that they could not with safety venture out, he went to visit at their own houses. Hence he daily saw the misery that the poorer sort of people underwent, and that numbers frequently died, not only for want of advice and medicines, but also for want of common necessaries. He therefore projected the building of an Infirmary for the city and county of York, and published proposals for raising a subscription for that purpose. A year and a half passed without much being done towards accomplishing that object. At length a public meeting was called at the instance of Geo. Fox, Esq., one of the representatives of the City in Parliament, and a liberal

1. The name is so spelt in Burton's narrative and in the List of Subscribers in his *Monasticon*.

subscription was entered into, chiefly by the Tory party. According to Burton's account of it, none of the Whigs or Ministerialists were present at the meeting.

In 1740 the building of the Hospital was commenced. In due time it was completed and Dr. Burton and Dr. Barnard were appointed to be the first honorary physicians. Mr. Francis Drake, whose celebrated History of York had been recently published, was one of the first honorary surgeons.

We will now consider Dr. Burton's version of his share in this good work. He speaks for himself in *British Liberty Endangered*, p. 15. "When I came to York, I daily saw the Misery, that the poorer Sort of People underwent, and that numbers frequently died not only for want of Advice and Medicines, but also for want of common Necessaries; I therefore projected the building an Infirmary, for the City and County of *York*, and published Proposals in order to raise a Subscription for that Purpose. Not much was done towards forwarding this good Work, for a Year and a Half and though most People wished for an Hospital for Sick and lame Poor, yet none would undertake to begin a Subscription till *George Fox*, Esq., a worthy Representative in Parliament for the City of *York* published also Proposals and advertised a Meeting to which all well-disposed Persons were invited." No Whig, it appears was present at the Meeting and many opposed the project more particularly 'a Clergyman then in a high Station in the Cathedral of *York* who hearing that Lady *Elizabeth Hastings* intended to give 500*l* towards erecting the Infirmary wrote to her to prevent it.' Her Ladyship showed this *Sterne* epistle, as we may correctly call it, to another Cathedral dignitary, more favourable to the project, and at last 'all things succeeded.'

Mr. Wallace Hargrove informs us in his *York County Hospital, its Origin and History*,<sup>1</sup> that Lady E. Hastings, it was found, bequeathed £500, dying in December 1739. According to the Hospital Trust Deed, dated February 1742, Richard Harland of Sutton in Galtres made over an acre of ground to the Hospital. Among the trustees are Philip Harland, the "Oxmoor Squire" of *Tristram Shandy*,<sup>2</sup> incorporated with Shandy senior in the novel. There are also a Perrott and a Wentworth, other members of whose families appear in the list of subscribers to the *Monasticon*.

Burton, continuing his narrative, explains how he visited the hospital daily, and called on poor patients at their own homes when they were too ill to be moved. "This, together with some other Acts of Humanity gained me some Esteem." In other words his philanthropic services were utilized for fresh electioneering purposes. When the next election came on in 1741 (*Wilbur Cross, loc.*

1. Reprinted from the *Yorkshire Herald*, July 8 and 15 1905.

2. Bk. IV, Chap. XXXI, and *Wilbur Cross, loc. cit.* pp. 64, 244.



*cit.*, p. 76, *British Liberty* here gives no dates) the excitement and recriminations grew worse than before. Several pages are devoted to the exposure of Whig villainy. He rather humorously speaks of them as "these *Pretenders* to support *Liberty*," and two pages later on, he taunts the Whigs with "promoting Jacobitism" by maltreatment and persecution. We may assume that he was a Tory who was loyal to King George and did not talk about "Hanover rats" like Squire Western in *Tom Jones*. Burton lived in Coney Street at this time and applied to the Corporation for a more suitable residence. His political enemies tried, unsuccessfully, to prevent the lease, but a few years later came their chance to ruin if not to slay him.

A better known "Pretender to support liberty" landed in Scotland. On November 22 1745, an express arrived at York announcing that the Highland army was at Kendal. Burton feared for his estates, Birkwith and South-House in the Lordship of Nuby, where his rents were due. The conduct of Place, the Recorder of York, was very suspicious in association with what followed. Burton asked the Recorder's advice, and that powerful functionary reminded him that if he went he might be taken prisoner and then he would blame those who had advised him. Burton replied that he would never blame those who gave advice with a good intent whatever happened. "*I would only ask him, what he would do, was (sic) he in my Situation?*" He replied, *he would post away and be there before 'em. Well then, said I, I'll start to-Morrow Morning for that Purpose;* and so we parted." Burton took further precautions, and the Lord Mayor gave him permission to go out of the city gates at what hour he pleased next morning. Burton left York on November 23 and reached Settle after 9 p.m., where he learned that the Highlanders had taken the road towards Lancaster. He sent letters to the Recorder and to Mrs. Burton announcing the news and stating that he hoped to be back within a day or two. He started in the morning for Hornby, but was taken prisoner, when he was being shaved, by some Highlanders who were escorting Lord Elcho. "I then returned to *Settle* that Night, where my Tenants and Workmen were waiting for me according to Order at my Inn." Then he paid them off and left Settle next morning, and he notes that no authority or functionary touched him there. He reached York at 9 p.m. Here we may note that he says not a word about parole, nor about being set free, nor according to his statements could the Highlanders have taken him to Lancaster. But, anyhow, Burton was betrayed. Was he a clever plotter after all? Dr. Ferriar<sup>1</sup> is

1. John Ferriar, M.D. Edin. (1761—1815), was a physician who practised in Manchester. His *Illustrations of Sterne*, literary not pictorial, first appeared in 1798. The quotations in this article are from the second edition

inclined to side with the Whig view of the charge against him, but perhaps Ferriar was a Whig, or an enemy of the papists.

Burton maintains that he knew who betrayed him. "On my being seen (although a Prisoner) with the *Highlanders*, a Quaker, one *B-rb-k* of *Settle*," sent the news express to York, to the dismay of Burton's friends and the joy of his enemies. Mrs. Burton knew that he carried pistols<sup>1</sup> and had often declared that he would shoot the first man who would attack him. She now believed that the Guards would possibly arrest him at Mickelgate Bar, and after duly taking advice she sent a person to meet him and desire that in the case of such an attempt he would not offer to make any resistance.

Just as the net was closing around him, poor Burton had professional dealings with the warning messenger :

"She [Mrs. Burton] sent one *Robinson*, who met me at the South End of *Dring-houses*, and told me what my Wife requested of me; I made him no other Return, than to enquire how his Wife did, who (at that Time was my Patient) he told me, that he should be glad if I would go that Night to see her. I begg'd to be excus'd as it was so late, and as I was so tir'd unless her Situation requir'd it, and that I desir'd he would come and send to my House, and I would prescribe for her, since he had told me how her Disorder had alter'd after I had seen her; he then reply'd that as it would be so much out of his way, he would be oblig'd to me, to call at any public House and give him Directions; I call'd, prescrib'd, and then went on to my own House. The Prescription, he that Night gave to his Servant to carry to the Apothecary, who kept it upon the Files as usual. The Patient after this Prescription recover'd. This was afterwards mention'd as an aggravating Circumstance, or rather as they would have it a Proof that I must have been on treasonable Business, for right or wrong it must be a Plot, because there was a Papist concern'd, or because they knew not what to make of it."

*Longa est Injuria, longae Ambages*, as Burton says in this pamphlet. Latin quotations were ever soothing to the Eighteenth-century soul in affliction, but the full record of what ensued would be very wearying to the reader. The Doctor was not arrested at the Gate, Mrs. Burton told him of the Quaker's treacherous information,

1. "Thou hast come forth unarmed; thou hast left thy *tire-tête*, thy newly-invented *forceps* . . . behind thee : by Heaven! at this moment they are hanging up in a green baize bag between thy *two pistols* at the bed's head." *Tristram Shandy*, Bk. II, Chap. XI.

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(1812). There is some mystery about Burton's own itinerary. He went to Hornby (*British Liberty*, p. 27) which is in Lancashire, between Settle and Lancaster, not to be confounded with the Hornby near Richmond, thirty miles north-east of Settle. Yet further on (p. 40) he speaks of "My Return to York from *Lancaster*." Perhaps he meant *Lancashire*.

and Dr. Burton at once reported his arrival to the Recorder, who sent for him. "Notwithstanding I was so wearied, I went, and over a Bottle of Wine told him every Thing that had befell me." Then came some parleying with the Archbishop<sup>1</sup> next morning, November 28 1745, and certain legal precautions were taken. A "priest,"<sup>2</sup> as Burton calls him, put in an appearance and made out that, according to a letter received from a friend, Burton had invited the rebels to come to York. The Recorder behaved oddly, Burton openly faced his accusers in the Guildhall where he was walking and talking with several magistrates, but they insisted on his commitment.

"But before they durst commit me, the R-c-rd-r sent for all the Party that could be met with in the Streets, Coffee-Houses, etc., to attend the Hall, though 'tis very well known, they had no Business there, either as Evidences or Magistrates. One of the Priests made a great Blustering, and talked much, but it was *vox et praeterea nihil*; he was often in such a Hurry with Party Fury, that he could not utter his Words for *vox faucibus haesit*, and he perfectly foamed at the Mouth, especially when I laughed at him and told him, that I set him and all his Party at Defiance unless false Witness were to appear, which I own, I was not altogether without apprehensions about."

"About two o'clock that Afternoon, I was committed to *York Castle*, and a Copy of the Commitment is as follows:—

"West Riding of the County of *York*: To the Keeper of his Majesty's Goal (*sic*), the Castle of *York*.

*Whereas by the Examination of John Burton of the City of York, Physician, taken before us, Two of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the said County and Riding, the 30th Day of November 1745. It appears, that on Sunday last, he was at Hornby Castle in Company with some of the Rebels, and from thence was carry'd, as the said Examinant confesses by them, Prisoner to Lancaster, where he was permitted to go at large as such, upon his Parole of Honour, and continued there as such 'till Tuesday Morning, at which Time he was dismiss'd with a Pass for his Safety, signed J. Murray. From all which above Premises and other Circumstances, it appears to us that the said John Burton is a suspicious Person to his Majesty's Government.*

*These are therefore to require and command you, that you receive and safely detain the said John Burton in yuor (sic) Custody, upon the Premises abovesaid, untill he shall be duly discharg'd by Law. Given under our Hands and Seals this 30th of November 1745.*

T. Place.

J. Sterne."

1. "Our then Archbishop Dr. Thomas Herring" (1743—1747), translated to Canterbury, 1747, died 1757.

2. This "priest," as Wilbur Cross explains (*loc. cit.*, p. 77), was Dr. Jaques Sterne himself.

The conduct of Place, the Recorder, with whom Burton was so candid, "over a bottle of wine" seems strange.

Burton being in durance "Dr. S——n" published a paragraph in one of the local newspapers on Dec. 3rd, and it was re-printed in the *London Evening Post*. It grossly prejudged the case, and stated that on his own confession Burton had conversed at Lancaster "with Lord *George Murray* and a Person call'd his *Royal Highness Prince Charles*. There was the greatest Satisfaction express'd at his Commitment from the highest to the lowest Person in the City, that has been known here upon any occasion."<sup>1</sup>

The last sentence is a deliberate "terminological inexactitude." There was deep sympathy with Burton, who declares that Sterne's printer advised the omission of this lying statement, "but S——n order'd him to print it as *he had wrote it*."

Then matters took a worse turn. A fellow prisoner, James Nesbit, gave false information about Burton having drunk a treasonable toast in gaol. The unhappy physician had given notice that he would be prepared with sufficient bail, but on the declaration of the informer Nesbit before the Lord Chief Justice the following Warrant of Detainer was signed:—

"Castle of *York*, Dec. 14 1745. To the Keeper of his Majesty's Goal (*sic*) or Castle of *York*, or his Deputy.

*You are hereby required and commanded to keep the Body of John Burton, Physician, already in your Custody; in safe Custody, and not suffer him to be discharged; in order to answer a farther Charge made against him upon the Oath of James Nesbit taken before us this 14th Day of December, and this shall be your Authority for so doing. Given under our Hands and Seals, this 14 Day of December 1745.*

Jaques Sterne.  
Mar. Braithwaite.  
Rt. Oates.  
Jos. Stillington."

Surely Laurence Sterne must have chaffed Uncle Jaques about his reverend name appearing with an Oates, in the matter of a Papist charged with treason!

Dr. Sterne and Place the Recorder believed in Nesbit's evidence, and then signed the following Warrant of Detainer:—

1. When, in 1745, a defence fund was raised in York at the outbreak of the Jacobite rebellion, Laurence subscribed £10 and his uncle £50, and soon afterwards Laurence wrote for *Lloyd's Evening Post* a congratulatory letter on the arrest of Dr. Burton (Sir S. Lee, *Dict. Nat. Biog.*). For the part Dr. Sterne played in the direct attack on Burton and Drake, see Wilbur Cross, *loc. cit.*, pp. 74-5.

“ To the Keeper of his Majesty’s Goal (*sic*), or Castle of *York*, or his lawful Deputy.

*Let the Justices of the Peace for the County of York take Care, that Dr. Burton be not admitted to Bail: The Information of James Nesbit taken on Oath before us, amounting (as we think) to High Treason.*

Jaques Sterne.  
Mar. Braithwaite.  
Jos. Stillington.  
Robt. Oates.”

However, Burton’s friends saved him. Just before the Assizes the Secretary of State intervened with an order that the prisoner be conveyed up to London for examination before the Privy Council. Mr. William Dick, Burton’s friend, accompanied him to London on March 12 1745–6. It is quite clear from the minutes of the York County Hospital<sup>1</sup> that Dr. Burton wrote to the Board resigning his post on the Hospital staff, his letter being dated on the same day that he was taken to London. It is significant that in that same year 1746 Jaques Sterne applied for the Freedom of the City of York, offering £200, but was refused. In May Burton was examined at the Cockpit, in September he was allowed to go out and at last, on March 25 1747 he was discharged on bail, to appear at York Assizes in July. But as the Act of Grace was passed at the conclusion of the parliamentary session, Burton, although he had been so much persecuted, was not prosecuted after all.

Soon after “ the ’45 ” Laurence Sterne contributed to a new Whig newspaper published in York, but a little later he suddenly informed his uncle that he would write for the Whigs no more, and a very vulgar quarrel between these worthy clergymen and kinsmen occurred in 1747. The grasping pluralist uncle wanted more sinecures, but was disappointed of immediate reward.<sup>2</sup> He had grown unpopular, not solely on account of his persecution of Burton, but also for his behaviour to another member of the staff of the York Hospital, Francis Drake, the first honorary surgeon, an antiquary like his colleague; Dr. Sterne likewise made enemies about his attitude to a “ Popish nunnery.”<sup>3</sup> Drake, to whom we shall return, was born at Pontefract in 1696; he was a staunch Jacobite and persistently refused to take the oaths to government. During “ the ’45 ” he was called upon to enter into recognizances to keep the peace and not

1. For this important piece of evidence I am indebted to Mr. Frederick Neden, Secretary and Manager, York County Hospital. Wilbur Cross is therefore incorrect when he states that “ Dr. Burton lost his place on the hospital Board ” (*loc. cit.*, p. 78).

2. Wilbur Cross, *loc. cit.*, p. 83.

3. Wilbur Cross, *loc. cit.*, p. 83.

to travel five miles from home without a license. He was superseded in the office of City Surgeon, which he had held since 1727 at a meeting summoned by the Corporation on December 20 1745, and it was not until July 1746 that he obtained a discharge.<sup>1</sup> There were more domestic troubles in the Sterne family shortly afterwards. Laurence's mother was an objectionable woman, who, with his younger sister, got a great deal of money out of him, but, even according to his own account, his conduct was not filial, and Uncle Jacques held him up to scorn on that account. The old woman was, it is said, a prisoner in "the common goal at York" for a time before her decease in 1759.<sup>2</sup> The son did not show much regret for her, and when the place-hunting uncle died a month later and Laurence found that he had been left out in the will "he did not putt on Mourning tho' he had it ready."

When Burton lay under arrest in London he spent his time in better ways than in sordid quarrels with relatives. He conversed with some Jacobite prisoners, and published what he learned from them in *A Genuine and True Journal of the Most Miraculous Escape of the Young Chevalier*, a book published in 1749. By that time too, according to Wilbur Cross (*loc. cit.*, p. 78) he had begun, under the influence of Drake, his systematic archæological studies. They resulted in the *Monasticon*, which was issued a year before his pamphlet on the Young Pretender. Burton's practice returned to him on his release, so that he was clearly esteemed at York. A few years later the famous *Essay and Letter* were published. It will be seen that he had pecuniary troubles before 1756. The precise date I cannot find, but it is very probable that his imprisonment was the cause of these difficulties.

In the autumn of 1754, when Burton was dining at the house of Jubb, an apothecary who had been elected Sheriff, he remained seated when the Lord Mayor proposed the then usual toast to the memory of King William III. Mr. George Thompson, a Whig guest, filliped a cork at the physician and afterwards tried to compel him to drink everlasting disappointment (or damnation) to the Pretender and all his adherents. As John Byrom sang "God bless—no harm in blessing—the Pretender," it was hard to expect a Catholic physician to curse him. Burton declined to drink damnation to anybody. He was ejected after gallantly defending himself with his cane, "levelling to the floor two gentlemen" (Wilbur Cross, *loc. cit.*, p. 79). Thompson published *An Account of what passed between Mr. George Thompson of York and Dr. John Burton of that City, Physician and Man-midwife at Mr. Sheriff Jubb's Entertain-*

1. G. Goodwin. Art. "Drake : Francis." Sir S. Lee's *Dict. Nation. Biog.*

2. There is some uncertainty about the last days of Sterne's mother. See Wilbur Cross, *loc. cit.*, pp. 183-4.

ment, and the Consequences thereon (1756). The author sarcastically alludes to "this great patriot personage" who would redress certain illegalities whilst "he himself broke for upwards of five thousand pounds and paid ten shillings in the pound," living afterwards for awhile on his wife's fortune. Yet Thompson wished Burton success in the subscriptions he was at the time soliciting for his *Monasticon*, as it would prove useful if a Catholic ruler were to come into power and resume the Church and Abbey Lands, making the present usurpers accountable for dilapidations! (Ferriar, *Illustrations of Sterne*, 2nd Ed., vol. i, p. 141). The host, Jubb, was a subscriber, as will be seen, to Burton's *magnum opus*.

I may note that the excommunication which Dr. Slop reads in full (*Tristram Shandy*, Bk. III, Chap. xi), possibly suggested by the *Letter to Smellie*, is followed by Uncle Toby's expression of regret that the Devil was, as Dr. Slop casually observes, "damned already to all eternity," just as Burns later on grieved for the "puir Deil."<sup>1</sup> Sterne and Thompson seems to have looked on Burton's toleration for the Pretender as profanity pure and simple.

#### THE OBSTETRICIAN AS AN ANTIQUARY.

Laurence Sterne knew well enough that Burton was a great antiquary, and no mere amateur. Our readers, I trust, will be gratified to learn what a scholar this man was, who earned his bread by medicine and obstetrics. Among his antiquarian works there remains a masterpiece. It appeared nearly two years before *Tristram Shandy*, and in that work Sterne makes a cruel reference to Burton as an antiquary. As Trim reads out Yorick's sermon on Conscience, Slop favours the company with comments. Misunderstanding one of his remarks, Uncle Toby asks him if the Inquisition is an ancient building or a modern one. "'I know nothing of architecture,' replied Dr. Slop."<sup>2</sup> Sterne describes Dr. Slop as "fully as hobby-horsical" as Uncle Toby himself, and the hobby is obstetrics. Probably this sentence about architecture was written expressly to tease Dr. Burton who would have preferred antiquities to "shop," as the particular hobby ascribed to himself in *Tristram Shandy*.

In the preface to his *Monasticon*, Dr. Burton states that:

"From the time I went to St. John's College at Cambridge, I had a kind of natural curiosity to penetrate into the darkest and most remote state of my country in general, which increased upon me as I proceeded; and I may say, became so established, upon my travelling in foreign countries, that at my return home, and

1. *Address to the Deil*, final verse.

2. *Loc. cit.*, Bk. II, Ch. xvii.

3. *Ib.*, Bk. III, Ch. xiii.



making my abode in it, to follow my profession as physician and man-midwife, I spared neither labour nor expence to pick up what materials I could; which my profession enabled me to do, by being more in gentleman's families; than, in all probability, on any other occasion I might have been; and on some accounts, being obliged to attend for some days at a place, it gave me an opportunity of making enquiries in the respective neighbourhoods. And altho' the science of physic will not enable either me, or others of my profession, to preserve the lives of my fellow creatures to an anteduluvian age, I have, at least, attempted (notwithstanding the difficulty) to preserve all that can be left of them—I mean their memories."<sup>1</sup>

A pleasing *Apologia*, refreshing to read after Burton's vitriolic criticism of Smellie. The manner in which he combined physic and archæology is interesting. Let it be noted that he is not ashamed to call himself a "man-midwife" in 1758. If we turn to *Tristram Shandy*, in the twelfth chapter of the second book written in 1759, where Tristram's father accuses Uncle Toby of bothering, with his fad or hobby-horse, "'the man-midwife'—'Accoucheur, if you please,' quoth Dr. Slop."<sup>2</sup>

In the same preface Burton speaks of Dr. Nathaniel Johnston<sup>3</sup> of Pontefract, who in the seventeenth century collected about a hundred manuscript volumes of matters relating to Yorkshire.

In the spring of 1745, so fateful as has been explained to both of them, Burton and his colleague at the Hospital, Francis Drake, explored a district between York and the coast in order to fix the site of Delgovitia. Two years later, when both had been freed from their troubles, namely, on May 28 1747, Burton read, before the Royal Society, a paper which is published in the forty-fourth volume of the *Philosophical Transactions*, pp. 541 to 552, and is headed *A Dissertation of the Situation of the Ancient Roman Station of Delgovitia in Yorkshire by John Burton of York, M.D.* This communication is followed (p. 553) by *An Appendix to the foregoing Paper*, by Mr. Fr. Drake. I have inspected the paper in a copy

1. In the *Monasticon* (1758), as in Smellie's *Treatise* (1779, edition in Library R.C.S.), the initials of common nouns are no longer printed in capitals.

2. *Accoucheur* as meaning an obstetrician, came into vogue in France in the seventeenth century. *Accoucher* in old French simply meant "to take to one's bed." "Le jour de Noël, environ minuit, *accoucha* au lit malade le roy Charles" (*i.e.*, Charles le Bel). *Chroniques de St. Denis*.

3. B. 1627, d. 1705, M.D. King's College, Cambridge, in 1656, and Fellow of the College of Physicians 1687. He practised for a time at Pontefract, but, unlike Burton, allowed his antiquarian and other studies to ruin his practice. He went to London, took, like Burton, to Tory politics, and was ruined by the accession of William III. A son and a grandson of Johnston's were members of our profession. See Norman Moore, Article "Johnston, Nathaniel." Sir S. Lee's *Dict. Nation. Biog.*

of the *Transactions* belonging to the library of the College of Surgeons. There are two fairly drawn plates, inferior to the illustration of the forceps in Burton's *System* reproduced in the first part of the article, but superior to the remaining plates in that work. They bear no artists' names. Drake states that Burton had all the Roman "works" measured and planned at his own expense; Burton fixed the situation of Delgovitia at Millington between Bridlington and York.

In 1754 Burton and Drake<sup>1</sup> explored the so-called "Danes' hills" on Skipworth Common. Drake took great interest in the *Monasticon*. We will now turn to Dr. Burton's archæological masterpiece.

*The Monasticon Eboracense.*

Burton's *Magnum Opus* is a very rare work. The library of the Athenæum Club possesses a copy in perfect condition with the title-page and a frontispiece, a plan of Fountains Abbey, alike free from blemish. It was presented to the library by Mr. Edward Hailstone, F.S.A.<sup>2</sup> in 1883. The two fine plans, one of Fountains and other of Kirkstall Abbey, are marked *Thos. Atkinson, Ebor. Delint.*, to the former "*Fras. Perry, Sculp.*," is added, and *R. Ledger, Sculp.* follows Atkinson's name at the foot of the second plan. A map of Hemingborough is included; it is simply a surveyor's plan. The drawing of Burton's forceps reproduced in the first part of this article bears no engraver's name, but though in no sense an expert, I cannot help thinking that it was probably executed by the same engraver, Atkinson, who drew the plans of the two abbeys.<sup>3</sup>

The title-page, as in many similar works, includes what is practically a table of contents, so that it is here reproduced:—

*MONASTICON EBORACENSE AND THE ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF YORKSHIRE* CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT of the first Introduction and Progress of CHRISTIANITY in that Diocese, until the End of *WILLIAM* the Conqueror's Reign. ALSO The Description of the Situation, Fabric, Times of Endowments of all CHURCHES, Collegiate,, Conventual, Parochial, or of peculiar

1. Drake's *Eboracum*, once a standard work on York, had already appeared, in 1736. In later years he compiled a *Parliamentary History* in several volumes. He was an F.R.S. and for a time an F.S.A. He died in retirement at Pontefract in 1771 (Gordon Goodwin, *loc. cit.*).

2. Edward Hailstone, F.S.A. (1818—1890), of Walton Hill, Wakefield. His great collection of works relating to Yorkshire were for the greater part bequeathed to the library of the Dean and Chapter, York. He was the author of *Portraits of Yorkshire Worthies* (1869). H. R. Tedder, Sir Sidney Lee's *Dict. Nation. Biog.*

3. Wilbur Cross (*loc. cit.*, p. 140) writes: "Burton's books, now of great rarity, were worth owning, even in Sterne's day, for their copperplates etched by George Stubbs, the horse-painter." This name does not appear in the plates in the *Monasticon*. No doubt the forceps is very well etched.

Jurisdiction; and of other RELIGIOUS PLACES in that District, and to whose Memory they were dedicated. TOGETHER WITH AN Account of such MONUMENTS and INSCRIPTIONS as are worthy of Notice, as well as of the Rise, Progress, Establishment, Privileges, and Suppression of each Order, Religious or Military, fixed therein, WITH THE Catalogues of all the Abbots, and other Superiors of those Places, and of all the Patrons, Rectors, Vicars, Cantarists, &c., of each Church, Chapel, &c., from the earliest Account down to the present Time. Collected from the best Historians and antient Manuscripts in the *Bodleian, Cottonian,* and other Libraries in *London, Oxford, Cambridge,* and several Cathedrals; as also from other public Records, Registers and Chartularies in the *Tower* and other Offices in *London,* and in the Archiepiscopal, Episcopal, and Deans and Chapters Offices in the Cathedrals of *York, Durham* and *Chester,* and in private Hands and from Parochial Registers. With above *Two Thousand Copies of Original Charters and Deeds never yet published.* Adorned with COPPER-PLATES, representing the Ichnographies of some of their Churches, Abbies, Ruins, &c., and other curious Things worthy of Observation. To which is added, A SCHEME and PROPOSALS, in order to form a Society for compiling a complete Civil and Natural HISTORY of the Antient and Present STATE of YORKSHIRE. With a Chorographical & Topographical Description thereof; and for a Set of accurate MAPS, taken from actual Surveys. To this is subjoined a short Historical Account of the Parish of *Hemingbrough,* as a Specimen; showing what Materials the Author has collected toward assisting such a Society, according to the above Proposals. By John Burton, M.D. York. Printed for the Author by N. Nickson, in *Coffee-Yard,* M.DCC,LVIII.

One hundred and twenty names appear under the List of Subscribers, including five Doctors of Medicine, namely, Dr. W. Cowper of Chester, Dr. Robert Dolman Junr. of Pocklington, Dr. Christopher Hodgson of Wakefield, Dr. W. Richardson of Ripon, and Dr. W. Roundel of York. There is at least one surgeon, Burton's friend, "Mr. Francis Drake, fellow of the Royal and Antiquarian Societies," and one apothecary, Henry Jubb, the host at the dinner in 1756 where Burton was ejected. The list is headed by Hay Drummond, then Bishop of St. Asaph, translated to York three years later. Philip Harland<sup>1</sup> and Sir Brian Stapylton are in evidence, as are the

1. The Squire of Sutton, one of Sterne's vicarages. He contributed liberally to the county hospital at York, of which he was one of the founders (*vide supra*). Being a Tory, Sterne as a Whig disliked him. Philip Harland's experiments in farming were ridiculed in Mr. Shandy's troubles with the Ox-moor. Harland must not be confounded with Stephen Croft, Squire of Stillington, Sterne's other vicarage, who saved the manuscript of the first part of *Tristram Shandy* from the flames (see Percy Fitzgerald and Wilbur Cross, *loc. cit.*, *passim*).

Duke of Norfolk and the Earl of Northumberland. We find, without the least surprise, that the name of Sterne is conspicuous by its absence. The work is dedicated to Lord Willoughby of Parham, President of the Antiquarian Society, to Richard Frank, Recorder of Pontefract and Doncaster,<sup>1</sup> and to the rest of the members of the Antiquarian Society.

As the title-page indicates, the treatise, a big folio of 448 pages of text and also a good index of places and another index of names, is very exhaustive. The historical summary at the beginning is excellent. Dr. Burton in reference to the famous disputes between the British and Roman Churches, makes himself out no bigot. "Was (*sic*) it not for the daily experience we have of the force of custom in common life, it would not be easy to conceive how well-meaning and pious men should fall into heats, scarce compatible with Christian charity, in disputing, whether the hair of Ecclesiastics should be clipped on the top of the crown in the form of a circle, or only in the fore-part of the head from ear to ear, something like a semi-circle, which last is thought to be the British fashion."<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately Dr. Burton "fell into heats" himself rather frequently. In the case of Dr. Sterne who tried to hang him, he had every excuse, but his too well-known *Letter* to Smellie was much too fiery. The great Scotchman proved to be in the right about forceps, and Burton made too much of the *Lithopaedus* blunder. Yet posterity has justified his "falling into heats" about teachers who recommend tugging at the placenta.

This splendid antiquarian monograph does not contain much matter of direct interest to us. "By hospitals" the Author reminds us, "in the following work, I mean houses for the relief of poor and impotent people; in which generally were two or three religious, one to be Master or Prior, and one or two to be Chaplains or Confessors, and these observed the rule of St. Austin."<sup>3</sup>

The second volume of the *Monasticon* never appeared, a few pages are preserved in the King's Library, British Museum, with the first volume. Burton also wrote two tracts on Yorkshire Antiquities in the *Archæologia*, 1768 and 1771.<sup>4</sup>

TRISTRAM SHANDY.

"Who has a breast so pure,  
But some uncleanly apprehensions  
Keep leets and law-days and in session sit  
With meditations lawful?"

Shakespeare, *Othello*, Act III, Sc. 3.

1. It was Frank who allowed Burton access to Nathaniel Johnstone's antiquarian manuscript (Norman Moore, *loc. cit.*).

2. *Monasticon*, p. 11.

3. *Loc. cit.*, p. 63.

4. See Rev. C. J. Robinson, "Burton, John, M.D." Sir Sidney Lee's *Dict. Nation. Biog.*, 2nd ed., for details about the disposal of the MS. of *Monasticon*.

There is, it cannot be denied, much matter in *Tristram Shandy* repugnant to twentieth century taste, and its author was unpardonably gross and spiteful in many of his references to men with whom he disagreed. Still, the novel is a masterpiece and posterity has forgiven Sterne for all his shortcomings for the sake of Uncle Toby. It is unfortunate that the great novelist hardly strived to live up to the level of that lovable character whom he created. Uncle Toby would not kill a fly. Sterne held up to ridicule and contempt Dr. Burton, the man whom Uncle Jaques tried to hang, very possibly with the secret aid of Laurence himself.

The long-winded discussions of obstetrical questions in *Tristram Shandy* were not offensive in the relatively aristocratic era when the novel appeared. Percy Fitzgerald points out that according to allusions in newspapers of those days young ladies carried this plain-speaking work in their pockets. The truth is that midwifery was not an indelicate subject if associated with the begetting and bringing into the world of an heir apparent,<sup>1</sup> a lord or, in this case, "A Shandy." Dr. Allport considers that Sterne knew where to draw the line, yet it seems odd that the novelist who turned light on the conjugal couch in his first chapter, kept his readers out of the lying-in chamber further on. Voltaire wrote in the same sense on the philosophy of paternity in *L'homme aux Quarante Ecus*,<sup>2</sup> a novel, by the way, published seven years after the issue of Sterne's work. The first part of *Tristram Shandy* appeared in January 1760. Johnson's *Rasselas*<sup>3</sup> and Voltaire's *Candide*<sup>4</sup> were published entire in 1759, and *L'homme aux Quarante Ecus* came out in 1767.

1. "Sa Majesté devint grosse; le roi en fut ravi." Madame Campan, *Mémoires sur la Vie Privée de Marie Antoinette*, Vol. I, Chap. viii. This was the usual plain way of speaking of the prospect of a Dauphin. British letter-writers used even plainer language about royal and noble pregnancies.

2. Voltaire expressed his admiration of *Tristram Shandy* in his article "Conscience" (*Dictionnaire Philosophique*), and in a review of a French translation preserved in his *Mélanges littéraires*, written in 1777 within a year of his death.

3. In October 1759 Sterne wrote to Dodsley, the London publisher: "I propose . . . to print a lean edition [of *Tristram Shandy*], in two small volumes, of the size of *Rasselas*." (Wilbur Cross, *loc. cit.*, p. 181. For the latest information about the precise date of publication of *Tristram Shandy*, Bk. I, see *ibid.*, Chap. viii. The "York 1759 edition is a myth.")

4. There is a direct allusion to *Candide* and la belle Cunégonde in *Tristram Shandy*, Bk. I, Chap. ix. Of the three great writers, Voltaire the vindicator of Calas, Sirven and De la Barre, appreciated doctors the most: "Est-il rien de plus estimable au monde qu'un médecin qui, ayant dans sa jeunesse étudié la nature, connu les ressorts du corps humain, les maux qui le tourmentent, les remèdes qui peuvent le soulager, exerce son art en s'en défiant, soigne également les pauvres et les riches, ne reçoit d'honoraires qu'à regret et emploie ces honoraires à secourir l'indigent?" (*Dict. Philosophique*. Article "Médecins.")

Tristram is supposed to have been born in 1718, hence "Dr. Slop" is an anachronism, for Burton was only eight years of age, and Palfyn did not make public his *mains de fer* till two years later. The address on pre-natal baptism (*Tristram Shandy*, Bk. I, Chap. xx) was (really) addressed to the Sorbonne on April 30 1733, and Chapman's *Essay* was published in the same year. Burton's *Essay* was issued in 1751, Smellie's in 1752, and Burton's *Letter to Smellie* in 1753. The reference to the Smellie ("Smelvgot") and his error about "Lithopaedus" (T. S., Bk. II, Chap. xix) proves that Sterne had at least studied the *Letter*. Whether he had any notion that the Chamberlens had made use of the forceps for many years prior to 1718 remains uncertain.

Most of our readers must be familiar with Sterne's famous work and are quite competent to pass judgment on "Yorick's" views about obstetrics. Many important critical references to Dr. Slop have appeared in recent addresses and papers by Sir John Byers, Dr. Fairbairn, Dr. W. Storey and Dr. Allport of Chicago. I also have already discussed several passages where Sterne deals with the doctor and his ways, but a more systematic abstract account of Dr. Slop's adventures at Shandy Hall will, I think, make a suitable conclusion to this communication.

Owing to certain matrimonial arrangements explained with some minuteness, it was arranged that Mrs. Shandy should lie in at her husband's country house. She would have preferred London where "the famous Dr. Manningham" would have attended her.<sup>1</sup> On one point she insisted; she must secure the services of an experienced midwife "notwithstanding there was a scientific operator within so near a call as eight miles of us," author, Tristram adds, of "a five shilling book." Sterne clearly disparages Burton as compared with Sir Richard Manningham, F.R.S. The latter was author of the *Artis Obstetriciae Compendium* published in 1739, and revised and issued in 1756 under the name *Aphorismata Medica*. In the interval, his *Abstract of Midwifery* (1744) appeared. Manningham is chiefly remembered for his exposure of Mary Tofts,<sup>2</sup> who pretended to give birth to rabbits (1726). She is represented doing so in Hogarth's well-known picture *Credulity and Superstition*. Shandy agrees to the midwife but insists on the attendance of Dr. Slop. "In a word, my mother was to have the old woman and the operator

1. *Loc. cit.*, Bk. I., Chap. xviii.

2. His pamphlet, bound up with others relating to the case of Mary Tofts is preserved in the library of the College of Surgeons, and there is another copy in the library of the Royal Society of Medicine. Boehmer, a pupil of Grégoire junior, published in 1746, a Latin translation of Manningham's *Artis Obstetriciae Compendium*, and added a description of his teacher's forceps. Like Dusée, Grégoire never published any account of his own instrument.



was to have license to drink a bottle of wine with my father and my uncle Toby Shandy in the back parlour, for which he was to be paid five guineas" (Bk. I, Chap. xviii). The midwife and her qualifications are discussed in the seventh chapter of the first book which includes an insulting reference to Dr. Mead, then deceased, and introduces us to Didius, that is to say Dr. Topham. The latter was satirized in Sterne's *Good Warm Watch Coat*, but Topham was a lawyer, not a medical man. Mrs. Nihell's *Treatise on the Art of Midwifery*, attacking Smellie and the other men-midwives, was published in 1760 after the issue of the first book of *Tristram Shandy* in January of the same year.<sup>1</sup>

Shandy's father was particular about Christian names, and we all know how that which he most hated was given in error to Tristram at his baptism. Chapter twenty, where that rite is discussed, contains a full quotation from Deventer of the appeal addressed to the Doctors of the Sorbonne in April 1733 by a surgeon asking for the right of baptizing an unborn child by means of a cannula "*Anglice a squirt.*" *Les théologiens de France ne sont pas épargués*, Voltaire characteristically observes, in quoting this perfectly authentic appeal,<sup>2</sup> which is published in full in some editions of *Tristram Shandy* and is of some interest to obstetricians. In that year 1733 Dr. Burton set up in practice at Heath, Butter exhibited Dusée's forceps at Edinburgh and Chapman's *Essay* was published.

Mrs. Shandy is suddenly taken with labour pains, and Obadiah the man-servant mounts horse and goes forth to meet Dr. Slop, who happened by chance to be on his way to ask how the lady fared. Obadiah meets him, and then follows the well-known burlesque incident of the upsetting of the doctor, who enters Shandy Hall in a sad plight, stout, stunted and uncouth as Romney drew him. He is not aware that "a daughter of Lucina is put obstetrically over his head." Fitzgerald and Wilbur Cross assure us that Sterne's friends made him prune a great part of the manuscript, especially the passage on "the mischance that befel Dr. Slop,"<sup>3</sup> for all who saw the manuscript knew that Burton was intended. The original uncorrupted text must have been *very* hard on poor Burton. Sterne seems to have "mixed" his characters, as the *Lithopaedus* error was a triumph of Burton over Smellie and it was Burton who declined to curse at Mr. Jubb's banquet, though his letter to Smellie was highly maledictory.

Dr. Slop sends Obadiah for his instruments of which much was

1. There is no space in this article for a relation of the midwife question in Sterne's days. See Sir J. Byers, and Dr. Fairbairn, *loc. cit.* Sterne gives the reader a clear idea of the licensing of midwives in the chapter above quoted.

2. *Dictionnaire Philosophique*. Art. "Conscience."

3. Wilbur Cross, *loc. cit.*, p. 180.



said in the first part of this article, and I have also alluded to the pistols, in reference to the fateful return from Settle. In the meantime Shandy senior, Uncle Toby and the doctor chat by the fireside. The long twelfth chapter of the second book is perhaps the most typically "Shandean" passage in all Sterne's works. Uncle Toby, mounting his "hobby horse," discusses Stevinus on the art of fortifications. Mr. Shandy rebukes his brother for having his "head so full of curtains and horn-work." Dr. Slop, always placed by Sterne in an unfavourable light, makes a vulgar jest,<sup>1</sup> after the manner of Jaques and the Lord who killed the deer in *As You Like It*, and Uncle Toby "goes on" about Stevinus. Mr. Shandy soon loses his temper, and accuses Toby of turning off from Mrs. Shandy the attention of "the man-midwife." This irritates Slop, who makes the interpellation "*Accoucheur* if you please," and deeply wounds the feelings of the dear old uncle. (We are here reminded parenthetically by Tristram Shandy how Uncle Toby once caught a fly that kept buzzing around his nose, but let it out of the opened window instead of squashing it.) Mr. Shandy, from a glance which his injured brother casts at him, feels "sorry he spoke," and makes a fervent apology. The good uncle implores his brother to think nothing of the matter, and thanks him for perpetuating the Shandy family at his time of life. Then comes a chapter consisting of three lines. Toby says that his brother increases the Shandy family "out of *principle*," "'In a family way, I suppose,' quoth Dr. Slop." Thus Sterne after showing forth Uncle Toby in charming language disparages Burton, his enemy, by making Dr. Slop utter a vulgar joke. Taste was not, however, "Yorick's" strong point. The gallant captain turns once more to Stevinus and speaks of that great engineer's sailing chariot. Then Dr. Slop remarks that Uncle Toby need not send his lame servant Trim for the engineer's text-book as he himself knows something about the chariot, in fact he walked, when in Holland, two miles to see it in action. Uncle Toby snubs him—Dr. Slop is always snubbed—by speaking of Peireskius who went five hundred miles to inspect the same chariot. Dr. Slop, in reply to an observation from Mr. Shandy, wonders why the gentry on the wide plain of York, "especially they whose wives are not past child-bearing," do not set up sailing chariots. Such vehicles would be expeditious for a sudden obstetrical summons and the winds cost nothing and eat nothing, unlike horses "which (the Devil take 'em) both cost and eat a great deal." Corporal Trim now comes in with

1. Possibly an allusion to a strange passage in the preface to Burton's *Treatise on the Non-Naturals*. A wise cuckold took to announcing his domestic misfortunes whenever he found himself "in company," in order to forestall ridicule. Burton declares that he, acting on the same principle, admits all his shortcomings, in his *Treatise*, in order to anticipate spiteful criticism (from Smellie, *subintelligitur*).

Toby's copy of Stevinus for reference, and on opening the book a sermon falls out. Then follows the grave humour of the reading of Yorick's sermon on Conscience where Dr. Slop makes interpellations favourable to Rome, a sermon which was approved of by the Philosopher of Ferney. On its conclusion, Dr. Slop thinks that it was about time for him to have a look at his patient, but Mr. Shandy reminds him that his services are only auxiliary to the midwife's management of the case. Dr. Slop demurs, naturally, and speaks to Uncle Toby of the recent advances made by men-midwives, the Captain, as already quoted, inconsequentially referring to armies in Flanders. I have already noted several passages in the nineteenth chapter of the second book, which is a long disquisition on Mr. Shandy's obstetrical readings, including "Smelygot's" error about Lithopaedus, "spotted" by Burton himself. Mr. Shandy's other son was born head-foremost and proved a fool; altogether Shandy would have preferred Cæsarean section for the coming Tristram so as to avoid pressure of the child's cerebrum towards his cerebellum, and a midwife was no authority on such a question, so Mr. Shandy was in favour of a man of science who (as has been noted in my abstract of Burton's *Essay*, the "five shilling book" which Mr. Shandy had studied) was an advocate of Cæsarean section under extreme circumstances. Shandy was a prophet, and Dr. Amand Routh in this very JOURNAL has chronicled the ultimate triumph of Cæsarean section. The day of triumph was, however, far off in Shandy's time; the forceps, on the other hand, was already in fairly general use. Dr. Slop tries to open the bag, but the strings are tightly knotted and he cuts his thumb to the bone in solving the Gordian knot with a pen-knife. He curses Obadiah, and then the two Shandys make him read Ernulphus' excommunication.<sup>1</sup> On the possible signification of the cursing I have already dwelt. Sterne probably chronicled some real misadventures in his hints about clumsiness and cutting knots in a hurry, and his allusion to Dr. Slop's knocking out three of his best teeth with the handle of his forceps "formerly in a hard labour."<sup>2</sup> At last Dr. Slop is wanted upstairs for "the pains are gone" and the nurse has cut her arm and the midwife has bruised her hip. There is, of course, a squabble

1. Many years later the name of Dr. Slop, as associated with maledictions, was revived. It was bestowed, Mr. F. W. Hackwood informs us (*William Hone, His Life and Times*, p. 225), on Dr. John Stoddart, who was dismissed from the staff of the *Times* on account of the profane curses lavished on him by Napoleon. Hence Hone's once famous *Slap at Slop* (1822). Like Dr. Topham, Sterne's "Didius," Stoddart (1773—1856) was a lawyer, not an M.D. He was knighted in 1826, and wrote on philology (G. C. Boase, "Stoddart: Sir John," Sir Sidney Lee's *Dict. Nation. Biog.*).

2. *Tristram Shandy*, Bk. III, Chap. x.

about etiquette in respect to Dr. Slop and the midwife, and Uncle Toby talks of subordination and the evils of a mutiny in 1710. Dr. Slop, fully as "hobby-horsical" as the Captain, declares that all the womankind of the house are in a mutiny.<sup>1</sup> Some obscure allusions follow, and Dr. Slop, it is implied, tries his "newly invented forceps" on Uncle Toby's fist, tearing the skin and squashing his knuckles. The danger of applying the blade to the child's breech is next discussed. I repeat that the forceps of Burton's *Essay* which I have figured (Pt. I, Figs. 1 to 5), not the instrument now in the York Museum (Figs. 8, 9), may really have inflicted injuries on some occasions and that therefore we may assume that Burton wisely rejected it for the latter which was more serviceable.

Dr. Slop damages Tristram's nose with the blades of the forceps and goes down to the kitchen to "make a false bridge with a piece of cotton and a thin piece of whalebone out of Susannah's stays, to raise it up." Uncle Toby, of course, misunderstands the rumours which he hears about making a bridge, and at once takes to a little military engineering with Trim out in the garden. Old Shandy is disconsolate, for he lays great stress on noses and he dreads yet more that the network of Tristram's intellectual web may through uterine action have been "rent and torn to a thousand tatters" by "a pressure of 470 pounds of avoirdupois weight acting perpendicularly" on the apex of Tristram's undelivered head.<sup>2</sup> This brings us back to the observations at the beginning of the first part of this article. Mr. Shandy did not, like Gloucester, think that spontaneous birth feet forward hastened delivery. He greatly dreaded pressure on the brain, and believed that turning would have minimized it, but if only Cæsarean section could have been managed then, he fancied, Tristram's cerebrum, cerebellum, and nose would have entered the world unscathed!

Dr. Slop's obstetrical services are now at an end. He is consulted, however, later on about an injury to the infant Tristram which, he pronounces, "will end in a *phimosis*."<sup>3</sup> "In waddled Dr. Slop," just as Corporal Trim is discussing radical heat and moisture. The gallant corporal recalls the ditch dug round each tent pitched in the swamps around Limerick, and concludes that the water which collected outside the tent was "radical moisture" and the dish full

1. *Loc. cit.*, Bk. III, Chap. XIII. See also the humorous observations (*ib.*, Bk. IV, Chap. XII) of Mr. Shandy about all the womankind of a house becoming an inch taller when there is a baby born, followed by Uncle Toby's pathetic expression of respect for pregnant women, "'Tis a piteous burden upon 'em," and Mr. Shandy's declaration of a somewhat modified sympathy.

2. *Tristram Shandy*, Bk. V, Chaps. xvii, xxxix and xli, and Bk. VI, Chaps. iii, iv and xiv. "Dr Slop made ten times more of it than there was occasion."

3. *Loc. cit.*, Bk. II, Chap. XIX.

of brandy burnt—by those who could afford it—inside the tent, was “radical heat.” Dr. Slop declares that these two principles are mainly preserved by *consubstantials, impriments and occludents*, and remarks that “the corporal has had the misfortune to have heard some superficial empiric discourse upon this nice point. Sterne here clearly ridicules Burton’s *Treatise on the Non-Naturals* where at page 4 he states that “This generous Undertaking of his [Boerhaave] has given great Offence to those who, not having their Heads turn’d that Way delight in their occult Qualities, *radical Moistures*, Malignities and such like Jargon, *Emperic (sic)* like.” To “emperic” the following footnote is appended: “The Author does not mean that Sect of Physicians among the Ancients so-called, which took its Rise in the 38th (*sic*) Century, in the Reign of the Second or Third *Ptolemy*; but he means the modern Empirics (*sic*).”

Once more Dr. Slop appears in *Tristram Shandy*.<sup>1</sup> Widow Wadman makes delicate enquiries as to the prognosis of Uncle Toby’s wound. It seems that Sterne knew that the ladies of York had the greatest confidence in Dr. Burton. Ferriar,<sup>2</sup> however, makes out that this particular narrative where impotence was suspected owing to a wound received in battle, was taken and recast from a foreign work. In Book VIII, Chap. xv, Dr. Slop describes to Uncle Toby the relations of the cæcum. Dr. Slop’s opinion about barren cows is asked in the last chapter of *Tristram Shandy*.

The biographers of Sterne have been compelled to treat of the significance of a character who is so prominent in the earlier books of *Tristram Shandy*. They have, however, met with no difficulty in identification, and indeed internal evidence, as the “higher criticism” would say, is quite sufficient for the purpose. The “five shilling book on midwifery” and the parody of a passage in the *Letter to Smellie* prove that Burton was meant, even if the ample external evidence at the biographer’s disposal had been wiped off the face of the earth. Ample while such evidence is, as regards Burton’s electioneering and persecution, facts which explain why Sterne disliked and therefore ridiculed him, the records of the effect of the satire on the victim are scanty. Percy Fitzgerald states that Burton “boldly disclaimed all consciousness of any resemblance in the picture.” Wilbur Cross makes a similar statement, but adds that Burton showed that he was “wofully lacking in a sense of humour.” Jaques observes,<sup>3</sup> I may add, that “he that a fool doth very wisely hit, doth very foolishly although he smart not to seem senseless of the bob.” Sterne was no fool, *Tristram Shandy* was read far and wide, and Burton may have had good reasons for simply disclaiming

1. Bk. ix, Chap. xxvi.
2. *Loc. cit.*, Chap. VII, “Story of Sorlisi.”
3. *As You Like It*, Act II, Sc. 12.

the alleged identity without rushing into print about it. Another doctor, putting himself quite needlessly forward when Book II was issued, made out that the splashing and fouling of Dr. Slop when he fell from his horse betrayed him, not Burton. "Sir," said Sterne, "I have not hurt *you*. But take care, *I am not born yet* and you cannot know what I may do in the next two volumes." Both Fitzgerald and Cross relate this anecdote, which implies that Sterne meant, "I *have* hurt Burton." Yet Burton's friends, as has been explained, considered that the very same narrative betrayed him as Dr. Slop. Hence, as I have suggested, Sterne may have mixed up his characters, but in vain, for although two doctors might have had bad "croppers," only one, and a well-known one, wrote on the *Lithopaedus* error.

#### CONCLUSION.

I have endeavoured to compare Burton as he was with Burton as Sterne made him out to be. Dr. John Burton was an able scientific obstetrician, and his *Essay* shows that he was a man of practical experience. He was also a prominent citizen of York, the founder of its hospital, a noble philanthropic work the benefits of which are continued to this day. Besides, this famous obstetrician was a highly distinguished antiquary, author of a standard work still much prized by librarians. Doctors and archæologists quoted above, have alike testified to his merits. In days when the man-midwife was looked down upon, Burton lived, a gentleman and a scholar.

Percy Fitzgerald and Wilbur Cross have clearly shown, what indeed is very evident, that political and theological hatred accounts for the cruel persecution of Burton and for the burlesque character representing him in *Tristram Shandy*. "Dr. Slop runs through *Tristram Shandy*, an ill-tempered, ill-mannered, and vulgar Papist, the butt of all the current jests and prejudices against Roman Catholics. Sterne's frightful caricature of an able physician and learned antiquary is unexplainable without reference to the fierce religious passions awakened by the events of 1745."<sup>1</sup>

Ferriar, it is interesting to bear in mind, points out that Laurence Sterne avoids all allusion to Burton's Toryism, because he himself had grown disgusted with party violence.<sup>2</sup>

1. Wilbur Cross, *loc. cit.* pp. 80-81.

2. Illustrations of Sterne, 2nd ed. Vol. I., p. 139.