



A

Complete Practice
OF
MIDWIFERY.



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Complete Practice
of
MIDWIFERY.

Consisting of
Upwards of FORTY CASES OF
OBSERVATIONS in that valuable
ART, selected from many Others, in
the Course of a very EXTENSIVE
PRACTICE.

And Interspersed
With many necessary CAUTIONS and
useful INSTRUCTIONS, proper to be
observed in the most Dangerous and Critical
Exigencies, as well when the Delivery is
difficult in its own Nature, as when it becomes
so by the Rashness or Ignorance of Unex-
perienc'd Pretenders.

Recommended to
All FEMALE PRACTITIONERS in an
Art so important to the LIVES and WELL-BEING
of the SEX.

By SARAH STONE,
Of PICCADILLY.

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TO THE
QUEEN'S
Most Excellent Majesty.

MADAM,

ORGIVE my presuming to approach YOUR MAJESTY with the following Sheets ; a liberty I should not dare to take with the greatest of Queens, was I not at the same time encouraged by that Universal Benevolence, which stiles You

A the

the Nursing-mother of a most happy people.

YOUR MAJESTY's tender regard to our Sex's modesty, makes a Treatise of Midwifery implore Your Royal Protection ; the practice of which is generally so little understood by Women Midwives, especially in the Country : where tho' the Women are commonly more robust, and pure Nature in great measure assists, the least difficulty has frequently baffled the Midwife's judgment, and she often forced to send for a Man ; when the Labour has been no more than a common Café, as a Child's pitching wrong, &c.

And there's another misfortune, that 'tis rare to find in the Country, Gentlemen that are grave and old experienc'd Practitioners ; which forces our Sex to submit to every boyish Pretender ; by which our modesty is expos'd, and the Midwife's reputation hurt : to prevent which (as far as in my power) I resolv'd to publish some Observations in my Practice ; in hopes they'll prove instructive to some Women Midwives, especially those of the lower clafs. And in this undertaking, to whom can I fly for Protection, but to YOUR MAJESTY, the Fountain of all perfect Vir-

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tue, and the generous Encou-
rager of all Arts and Sciences.

I will not venture to touch
on YOUR MAJESTY's Excel-
lencies ; that many learned
pens have tried, and all fell
infinitely short of : and there-
fore must unwillingly be
silent where I ought to express
most ; and, imploring YOUR
MAJESTY's Royal Protection
and Forgiveness, beg leave to
subscribe myself,

YOUR MAJESTY's

Most Obedient, and most

Humbly Devoted Servant,

Sarah Stone



THE
P R E F A C E
TO THE
R E A D E R.

HE Occasion of my publishing this small Treatise is, in hopes it may prove instructive to some Women Professors in the Art of Midwifery ; and inform them in a right, safe, and just practice of that Art : that they may be able to deliver in difficult Labours, as well as those that are not so. For I cannot

cannot comprehend, why Women are not capable of compleating this busines when begun, without calling in of Men to their affistance, who are often sent for, when the Work is near finish'd; and then the Mid-wife, who has taken all the pains, is accounted of little value, and the young men command all the praise. Which unskilful practices of Women-Midwives being often repeated, give occasion for Pregnant Women to bespeak them, so that it is become quite a fashion ; especially with the *Bristol Ladies.*

I am well assured, unless the Women-Midwives give themselves more to the Study of this Art, and learn the difficult part of their busines, that the Modesty of our Sex will be in great danger of being lost, for

want of good Women-Midwives, by being so much exposed to the Men professing this Art: for 'tis arrived to that height already, that almost every young Man, who hath served his Apprenticeship to a Barber-Surgeon, immediately sets up for a Man-Midwife; altho' as ignorant, and, indeed, much ignorer, than the meanest Woman of the Profession.

But these young Gentlemen-Professors put on a finish'd assurance, with pretence that their Knowledge exceeds any Woman's, because they have seen, or gone thro', a Course of Anatomy: and so, if the Mother, or Child, or both die, as it often happens, then they die *Secundum Artem*; for a Man was there, and the Woman-Midwife bears all the blame. Then it is, that

that our young and well-assur'd pretenders boast, had they been there soon, neither should have died. Tho' I have made it my Observation within these few years, That more Women and Children have died by the hands of such Professors, than by the greatest imbecillity and ignorance of some Women-Midwives, who never went thro', or so much as heard of, a Course of Anatomy. For, give me leave to tell those young Gentlemen pretenders, who undertake the Practice of Midwifery with only the knowledge of dissecting the Dead, that all the Living who have or shall come under their care, in any difficulty, have and may severely pay for what knowledge they attain to in the Art of Midwifery ; especially such young ones as now pretend to practise :

by whom (I am well assured) there are many sufferers both Mothers and Children ; yea, Infants have been born alive, with their Brains working out of their Heads : occasion'd by the too common use of Instruments : which I never found but very little use to be made of, in all my practice. I have had the opportunity of going thro' a great number of difficult Labours, living in and near *Taunton*, a place where there was no Man-Midwife, and a town wholly depending on the Woollen Manufactory, the Combing and Weaving Part, which many Women are bred to there ; and, I believe, has been the occasion of many Wrong Births and Bad Labours, which I was obliged to be at, among the poorer sort of Women. And as I never

found Instruments requisite above four times in my life; so I am certain, where twenty Women are deliver'd with Instruments (which is now become a common practice) that nineteen of them might be deliver'd without, if not the twentieth, as will appear in my Observations. Wherefore it is my intention (with God's assistance) to instruct my Sisters of the Profession; that it may be in their power to deliver all manner of Births, with more ease and safety, than has hitherto been practis'd by many of them, and without exposing the Lives of their Women and Children to every boyish Pretender. For disflecting the Dead, and being just and tender to the Living, are vastly different; for it must be supposed that there is a tender regard one Woman

bears to another, and a natural Sympathy in those that have gone thro' the Pangs of Child-bearing ; which, doubtless, occasion a compassion for those that labour under those circumstances, which no man can be a judge of.

I have seen several Women open'd ; and 'tis not improper for all of the Profession to see Dissections, and read Anatomy, as I have done. But had I inspected into them all my life, and not been instructed in Midwifery by my Mother, and Deputy to her full six years, it would have signified but little ; nor should I have dared to have undertaken such a Profession, lest any Life should have been lost thro' my ignorance ; which I am well assured, thro' the blessing of God, has never hap-

pened. I am not in the leaft condemning juſt Practitioners, men of erudition, grave and ſedate, and whose judgments are unquestionable : they, without doubt, are juſtly to be eſteem'd. But my whole deſign in this ſmall piece is to be plain in my iñſtructions, that Midwives of the loweft capacity may be able to Deliver their Women, without calling in, or ſending for, a Man, in every little ſeem-ing difficulty ; but if they have not strength, which I take to be the oceafion of requiring their affiſtance in ſome circum-ſtances ; I would advise the Midwives of *Bristol*, to take ſpecial care to ſend for a juſt Practitioner ; and, if poſſible, one without partiality : who values a Mother's and Child's Life, and the Midwife's Repu-tation.

tation, more than his own sinister Ends.

In my humble opinion, it is necessary that Midwives should employ three years at leaft, with ſome ingenious woman practizing this Art. For if ſeven years muſt be ſerved to learn a Trade, I think three years as little as poſſible to be inſtrucred in an Art where Life depends.

I believe I ſhall make it appear, that a great part of the Miscarriage of many Midwives, occaſioning the ſufferings of fe-veral Mothers and Children, is for want of knowledge when to affiſt a Woman, and when to omit it. I have often been call'd to the affiſtance of many Mid-wives, and have found Mothers and Children in the utmoſt dan-ger ; which has been by begin-
ing

ing their work before its due time ; they imagining every uncertain Pain a Woman hath, to be her Labour : which Pains are common, and attend many Women a Month or Six Weeks before their Time of Delivery (which I have found by experience.)

I shall not fill any part of this book, with needless discourses on the Parts of Generation, nor the Reasons of Conception ; neither shall I concern myself, or give my opinion, why some Women do not conceive ; many Authors being copious on such Subjects. For my part, I think all the Disorders of Teeming Women do not belong to Midwives ; but they ought to commit themselves to the Care of a Phyfician ; a Midwife's busi-
ness

ness being only to be well instructed in her Profession : then with a good Resolution, and the Blessing of God, she needs not fear going thro' the most difficult part of her busines, with as good success as I have done these five and thirty years. For I am well assured, that abundance of hard Labours are owing to the want of good judgment in the first beginnings of Travail.

Excuse me if I have been guilty of Prolixity, Tautology, or Circumlocution ; my design in this Treatise being to instruct the meanest capacity, and not to meddle with those of Erudition, &c. I heartily wish what I have wrote may be of service to my Sisters Professors in the Art of Midwifery : and that

the

xx *The PREFACE.*

the Omnipotent, Omniscient,
and Omnipresent God, may
grant you All Success, is the
hearty and sincere Prayer, of

Your True and Faithful

Friend and Servant,

*From my House in Pic-
cadilly, over-against
the Right Hon. the
Earl of Burlington's.*

Sarah Stone.