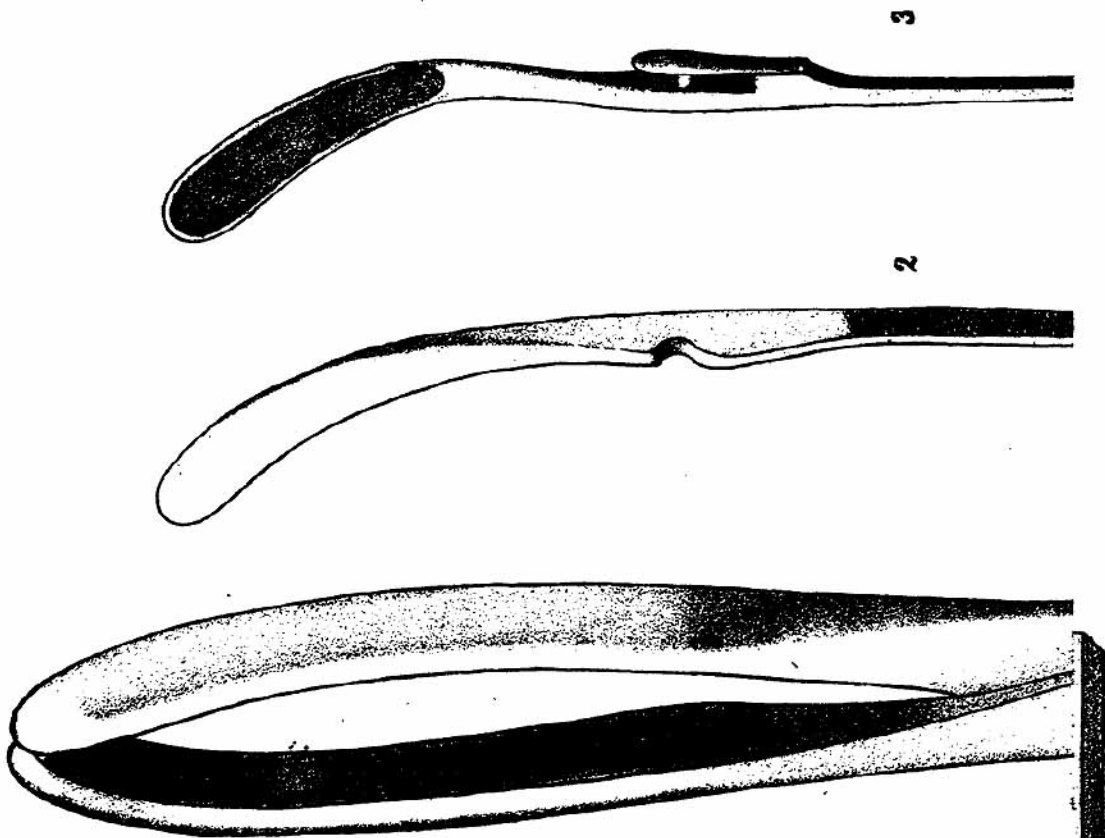


**ART. II. Notice of M. Baudelocque's instrument, the Céphalotribe, for the reduction of the Head of the child in labors naturally impossible.** By L. C. MCPHAIL, Lecturer on Obstetrics, Baltimore, Md.—followed by the report thereon, made to the Royal Academy of Sciences of Paris, by Messieurs DUMERIL and BOYER.

AMONG the many instruments that have been devised for the termination of laborious accouchment, none appears to be so well adapted to the purpose, as those lately invented by M. Baudelocque, (nephew) of Paris. This gentleman's mechanical ingenuity has enabled him to invent several instruments—the most useful of which, promises to be his *céphalotribe* or *brise tête*. I have known it applied with complete success in a case in which the crotchet could have been of no avail. The danger attending the use of cutting and pointed instruments, in the practice of midwifery, is too well established to need any further comments: the many deaths that have occurred from their use—the many fistulæ that have followed the injuries inflicted with them, upon the rectum and bladder—the many lacerations of the vagina, and tearings of the perinæum—and last, though not least, the great risk run by the accoucheur of mortally wounding himself, during his manipulations necessary to their application—should induce us to hail as a public benefactor, one whose fruitful genius has conceived and brought to perfection, a means of obviating all these. M. Baudelocque, therefore, is entitled to the highest praise for his invention of the *céphalotribe*, and should receive the most grateful considerations, especially, from those, to the study and investigations of whose affections he is exclusively devoted. Its use is sanctioned by experience; the danger apprehended from its application, although put forth by the high authority of Messieurs Boyer and Duméril,



*Fig. 1. The Ins.  
Fig. 2 & 3. branch  
Fig. 4. a handle  
by a spring  
during th.*

*Dra*

is entirely imaginary. The instrument, as now perfected, can be readily applied, and will effect what no other is capable of; the diminishing of the base of the child's skull, and at the same time assuring the mother's safety. The céphalotribe presents other decided advantages; it enables us to deliver *instantly*—there is no necessity for piercing the head to let out the brain, no use for the *tire-tête*, in a word it is complete of itself.

M. Baudelocque devotes the first lesson of each of his courses, to the demonstration of the readiness with which the child's head may be reduced by his instrument.—I have had frequent opportunities of seeing this in his hall, Rue des Boucheries—Saint-Germain, Paris.

I subjoin a "*Report made to the Royal Academy of Sciences of Paris, by Messieurs Boyer and Duméril, on a memoir on the crushing of the head of the child dead in the body of the mother—a new means of terminating laborious accouchment; presented by M. Baudelocque, (nephew.)*"

*Royal Academy of Sciences, Paris, 19th October, 1829.*

The Academy has charged us, M. Duméril and myself, to make it a report on a memoir which has been presented to it by M. Baudelocque, (nephew,) doctor in medicine and private professor of midwifery, and which has for title "*On the crushing of the head of the child dead in the body of the mother; a new means of terminating laborious accouchment.*"

The object which M. Baudelocque proposes in this memoir, is to make known an *instrument* that he has invented, for to break down the head of the child dead in the body of the mother, to reduce it in an instant to the smallest possible volume; but before giving the description of it he indicates the case in which it can be usefully employed.

When the basin is so badly conformed and so narrow that the delivery is absolutely impossible by the natural passages, either when they make use of the forceps or when they turn the child; if this is living they ought to have recourse to the cæsarean operation, or to the section of the symphysis pubis, according to the extent of the sacro-pubic diameter of the superior strait of the basin; but if the infant is dead, nothing can render excusable operations upon the body of the woman for the extraction of a corpse.

These principles are generally admitted by authors; but in practice their application often presents great difficulties, these are owing to many causes: on the one hand it is extremely difficult to appreciate exactly the extent of the sacro-pubic diameter



of the superior strait of the basin below which delivery is physically impossible—on the other it is not less difficult to judge if the child be really dead or not, the signs that are regarded as proper to make known that it has ceased to live being nearly all uncertain. Hence, it results that sometimes they neglect to practice an operation that might save the life of the mother and that of the child; again, believing this last dead whilst it yet lives, they proceed to use instruments upon its body which deprive it of life, and which in the same time seriously compromise that of the mother.

But when one has at the same time, the certainty of the death of the child, and the absolute impossibility of the accouchement by the natural ways, nearly all authors counsel to open the head, evacuate its contents, and diminish it, so as to destroy the disproportion that may exist between its volume and the dimensions of the basin.

This operation which could it be performed without any risk to the organs of the woman should merit the preference over all others, if the diminution which it produces in the volume of the head overcomes the disproportion between this volume and the dimensions of the basin; but as it makes no change in the size of the base of the cranium, there results, that after having perforated and emptied the skull, one is obliged to break down its base with pointed crotchets or cutting pincers: *now we easily conceive how dangerous is the use of these instruments to the woman—whose womb, vagina and surrounding parts may be torn, and even for the operator who can readily wound his fingers with them.\**

It is for to obviate such serious inconveniences, that M. Baudelocque has imagined an instrument, by the means of which we can in an instant crush the head of the child and reduce it to so small a volume that it can be afterwards readily removed from the most narrow basin.

\* J. L. Baudelocque says in his memoir on the cæsarean operation inserted in the 5th vol. of the Recueil Périodique de la Société de Médecine de Paris: "How much ought not they to fear for the woman the use of the sharp pointed crotchet—conducted deeply, without guide, and as if by hazard! Can one be assured of implanting its point constantly upon the head of the fœtus, and when will it free itself, in turning from the parts of the mother which so closely embrace it!" We have constantly observed contusions and tearings of the womb, bladder, vagina, and rectum, and the neighboring parts at the post mortems of women, dead from the consequences of the use of the sharp pointed crotchet.

Note of Baudelocque, (nephew.)

This instrument is composed like the forceps of two branches, which cross and mutually rest upon each other nearly in the same manner as Smellie's forceps. The spoons have no opening, they are entire, three lines in thickness and sixteen in breadth, so as to be able to traverse with the greatest facility, a deformed pelvis, of which the superior strait is but *two* inches, or even twenty lines in its antero-posterior diameter; their length is such, that they can seize a head situated above the basin—their curvature corresponds to that of the parts of the woman. The handles measured from the middle of the instrument, or from its axis, are an inch longer than the spoons, five inches thick, and seven in breadth, and are screw-pierced at one of their extremities, for to receive a vice screw six inches and a half long, to which is attached a handle six inches in length.

This instrument is applied upon the head of the fœtus, in the same manner as the forceps—observing the same precautions. When it is placed, they bring the spoons together by turning the handle; the head is thus compressed with such a force, that the vault and base of the cranium, are effaced in an instant—the cerebral matter running out by the orbits, openings of the nose and the mouth. Nearly constantly, the scalp resists the action of the instrument, and the bones which constitute the base of the cranium, are forced out from their situations, and slide over one another, without forming any splinters. After the head has been thus crushed, they take out the screw, and withdraw the branches of the instrument one after the other, and then abandon the expulsion of the fœtus to the contractions of the womb.\*

This instrument acts with a force very proper to fulfil the object of its inventor—to wit: the crushing of the head and its réduction to the smallest possible volume. But will it have all the advantages which M. Baudelocque promises for it? Will it be easy, and above all slightly dangerous, to carry into the womb above the superior strait of a badly conformed, and very narrow basin, an instrument weighing near seven pounds, and of two feet in length?† We think not, and our opinion will be

\*M. Baudelocque has invented another instrument, by means of which, the body and every part of the child may be cut into *mince* portions, without running any risk of wounding the parts of the mother.—So that there can be now no case, which is beyond the resources of our art. McP.

† Since then I have diminished the weight of my instrument, which now weighs but five pounds and a half in the whole. They can see an instrument, as perfect as can be, at the museum of the faculty of medicine (Paris.)

Note of M. Baudelocque (n.)



partaken of, without doubt, by the persons, who will call to mind, that, with ordinary forceps, one has frequently torn or perforated the uterus and vagina, in the circumstances wherein, even these, had been applied to the head, already down in the pelvic excavation. If such like disorders have been made with an instrument, of which the weight is but a pound and a half, and the length but eighteen to twenty inches, what will they not have to fear, when they make use of an instrument, longer and nearly four times as heavy—consequently a great deal more difficult to manage, and which ought to be carried to a much greater height? These inconveniences are serious without doubt; *but they are a great deal less so than those of the pointed crotchets with which they commonly serve themselves in the case for which M. Baudelocque proposes his instrument, which appears to us ought consequently to be preferred.*

M. Baudelocque has served himself, with his instrument, with success, in a case which we are going to report textually in his own words: "I have employed this instrument, on the ninth of February last, upon a woman in labor, of small stature, serofulous constitution, affected with an inflammation of the womb and peritonæum (*métro-péritonite*) which I combatted by anti-phlogistic treatment. After having taken the advice of two skillful accoucheurs, who proved the narrowness of the basin, and the impossibility of natural accouchment, and the serious state in which the woman was, I applied my instrument, and the volume of the head being considerably diminished—I extracted the fœtus which weighed six pounds—the perinæum was not torn. The same symptoms of inflammation of the womb, which manifested themselves during labor, having reappeared, I bled repeatedly. The fifth day the woman was without fever, and on the eighth she quitted the house of the midwife in which she had been delivered, and walked home on foot—where she was visited by Doctor Hervez de Chégoïn, who found her convalescent."\*

The invention of M. Baudelocque is a proof of his zeal for the perfecting of an art, in the teaching and practice of which, his uncle, the celebrated Professor Baudelocque made so great a reputation, and this zeal appears to us worthy of praise.

\*Since this time I have practised twice the crushing of the head with the same success.  
Note of M. Baudelocque (n.)

The great desire which M. Baudelocque has to make known, through the medical journals, his instrument, merits also in our estimation to be praised. (Signed) DUMERIL, }  
 BOYER, } *Reporters.*

The Academy adopts the conclusions of this report—Certified conformably—Perpetual secretary, counsellor of state, grand officer of the Legion of Honor, BARON CUVIER.