

## REMARKS ON THE WRITINGS OF LOUYSE BOURGEOIS.

BY HUNTER ROBB, M. D., *Associate in Gynecology.*

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Shortly after being asked by the President of our Society to read a paper on Louyse Bourgeois I wrote to Prof. Goodell of Philadelphia, who was kind enough to send me a copy of a paper on the same subject which he prepared as the annual address before the Philadelphia County Medical Society in 1876. Some of my hearers have no doubt read this address, and for those who have not done so there is a treat in store whenever they can lay their hands on a copy. They will find here not only an excellent sketch of the life of this celebrated woman and of her career as a midwife, but also a graphic picture of certain phases of court life as it existed at that time.

The first edition of Louyse Bourgeois' works on Obstetrics appeared in 1608. A second edition in 1617 contains an additional book with a long list of clinical cases, and the account of "How she became a Midwife," being followed by "A true Description of the Births and Baptisms of the Children of France," and "Advice to my Daughter." Under the date of 1626 there is another edition augmented by a third book. In 1634 the sixth edition appeared with an appendix, "A Collection of the Secrets of Louyse Bourgeois," of which last we may say, "Good had it been for that book had it never been published." The dates in the edition which I have been studying are 1652 and 1653.

The life of Louyse Bourgeois has been so well put before us by Prof. Goodell, and he has given such an excellent and entertaining account not only of the woman but of the royal midwife, that there seems but little left for me to do. I have therefore refrained from going over the ground which he has covered, and have contented myself with going a little more into detail in the discussion of her first and greatest book. It is only necessary by way of preface to say that Louyse Bourgeois was born in 1563 just outside the walls of Paris. She married Monsieur Boursier, a surgeon who was an assistant of the celebrated Ambrose Paré, many of whose precepts are no doubt embodied in this work. She was midwife to Marie de Medici, wife of Henry IV of France, and she was the first midwife to write a book upon the subject of obstetrics. She lived to a ripe old age, but the date and place of her death are unknown.

The title-page of this work is adorned with an allegorical picture showing the Assumption of the Virgin and Child at the upper portion of the page, with the Pope kneeling on one side and a figure of John the Baptist on the other. Lower down on either side is a figure, one with a child in her arms and bearing a cornucopia with the legend "Timor Dei." The other, bearing the legend "Gratia Dei," has a palm in one hand and a basket in the other. Beneath the right-hand figure there is a child lying on a sheaf. Between these two figures is a scroll on which the name of the book appears; just above the scroll is the lily of France, just below the name of the bookseller. At the bottom of the whole picture is the inscription, "Natura humana fragilitas humana."

The queen to whom she dedicates the book was Marie de Medici, wife of Henry IV of France. The work is divided into several parts. The first book is entitled—"Divers Observations on Sterility, Loss of the Ovum after Fecundation, Fecundity and Childbirth, Diseases of Women and of Newborn Infants—amply treated of and practised with success by L. Bourgeois, called Boursier, midwife to the Queen. A work useful and necessary for everybody." The language throughout is very quaint old French and is at first more or less confusing. One is again and again reminded how closely the French is connected with the Latin; for example, the modern word for bed, *lit*, no doubt is derived from the Latin *lectus*, a couch. In this book it is spelled *licet*, the *c* being retained, and similar instances occur throughout the work. In the edition I show you to-night the Observations are divided into three parts, and although there is no date on the title-page of the first

book we have on the first pages of the other two books the date of 1652. To these three books there is added a work entitled "A Collection of the Secrets of Louyse Bourgeois," published in 1653. In the first book of the *Secrets* she gives the treatment for internal diseases—headache, hydrophobia, catarrh, for which she declares that she has a sovereign remedy but says it is very difficult to make, although this probably will not account for the fact that it is not used at the present time. Then comes a long chapter on the treatment of the eyes. For the treatment of deafness and the teeth she has quite a *materia medica*. She also considers diseases of the chest, coughs, pleurisy, etc. Fevers are then taken up. In speaking of the plague she says a piece of the root of *enula campana*, the size of a pea, held in the mouth is a certain prophylactic, and if one has the



<sup>1</sup>I have also to thank Prof. Goodell for the loan of the woodcut which accompanies this article.

disease already it will cure it. She also considers the diseases of the liver and kidneys, dropsy, gravel and stone in the bladder, and next the diseases of the intestines, such as diarrhœa, or "flux of the belly" as she calls it; for the last she advocates the milk of a cow, goat or sheep, which should be milked on the day of St. John the Baptist, namely, on June 24th; of this cheese is made and it is given to the patient to eat. For hemorrhoids she has a great many prescriptions, mostly salves. She also has remedies for neuralgia. In the next section she speaks of poultices of hot apples for inflammation or for curing tumors. For cancer she recommends egg-shells prepared in a peculiar manner and given to the patient to eat. She also gives an ointment for swellings and old ulcers and "things that have been pronounced incurable by other people." She also gives all sorts of remedies for dog-bites. In the third section she returns to the diseases of women.

In speaking of the remedies for diseases of women before marriage and during pregnancy, during and after labor, she recommends that the breasts should be kept firm so that they never may hang down, by rubbing on them the egg of the partridge. She quotes Pliny in support of this treatment. Then she speaks of what she calls embellishments and gives her prescriptions for taking away smallpox marks and making the face beautiful and white, and for doing away with warts, moles and freckles, and which are also for beautifying the hands. She ends up with a list of remedies which are good for almost anything. She has a very fine pill which she describes as being good for many kinds of pains and poisons, and the frequent use of which preserves from syncope and trembling and renders the chest sound and well.

She also has what she calls an *eau celeste* which has all the virtues and properties which are hereafter noted. The description of its virtues and properties takes up about two pages, the recipe itself about one and a half. But I spare you.

To return to her first book of the "Observations." After the usual references to adverse critics of which the writers of those times were so fond, she writes a preface to the Queen and to the reader, pointing out that her great aim is to enable the reader to regain the precious flower of health. Then there are a few verses to various persons, one to each of the several court physicians.

She starts out by describing sterility and its causes. While recognizing the fact that it is possible that the man is at fault in some cases, she holds that the condition is usually due to some disease of the woman. The most frequent cause is the fact that the female sex is extremely humid but nevertheless choleric. Now the uterus is the receptacle to receive the life of the blood and to expel it from the body. Those women that abound more in choleric than in good blood are likely to produce moles or bad germs, because nature, wise as she is, cannot make a good garment out of bad stuff. Such women ought to be bled and purged, and should not allow themselves to give way to fits of anger. She says that in these cases an external examination will be of no use, for the malady is an internal one, and when recognized by the skilled physician can easily be cured. Now there are others again, she says, who are sterile from too great humidity of the uterus. The humidity coming from the brain and passing down the spine and back,

moistens and cools the uterus until there is so little of the maternal heat left that the substance out of which the fetus is to be nourished cannot be preserved. She recommends medicines which will act by drying these up, and says that the physician should address his efforts to the stomach, as to a bad cook who neglects his duty and will not cook the food which can be made to serve for a nourishment of the whole body. "These remedies will cure the patient to the content of the physician and that of the patient as well."

Then she speaks of *leucorrhœa* and the *retention of the menses*, the latter of which she thinks is likely to lead to cancer, and recommends internal rather than external remedies. She says that there are some women who have a cold humor which blocks up the entrance of the womb and sometimes causes displacements.

Another cause of sterility she holds to be a long and hardened cervix, which instead of presenting the appearance of the mouth of a purse looks like a flageolet, and prevents the menstrual flow from getting out, the retention causing vapors in the brain and "marvelous suffocations of the uterus," in some women causing convulsions, and movements of the uterus as if there was something rolling about inside the body, and the women then think that they are pregnant and avoid anything that will tend to disperse the humor. A skilled midwife recognizing this elongation of the cervix would know that it could not possibly be the cervix of a pregnant uterus, but that the enlargement is due to retention of the menstrual flow. She quotes the case of a woman between forty-eight and fifty years of age who never had any children, but had milk in the breasts, with great enlargement of the uterus, attacks of vomiting, and desire for strange foods, and thought she felt the uterus move. Louyse Bourgeois distinguishes between the movements of the fetus and these false movements—"A child will make a little movement just like the beating of the wings of a little bird." The movements of the non-pregnant uterus she compares to those of a cat sitting in front of the fire and arching its back. She says that women feel sick at the monthly periods because the vapors of the uterus are sent up to the brain and fall back again on the uterus, just as when a pot is boiling the lid is lifted up and allowed to fall again. The condition is relieved by clysters. She quotes the case of a woman whose abdomen was enlarged as if in the ninth month of pregnancy, who had such suffocations of the uterus that she had a convulsion every hour. She was purged, bathed and bled till at last the doctors gave her up for lost. She remained two days without any medicines at all and the attacks got worse. At this time Louyse Bourgeois was called in and persuaded her to take a fumigation which attracted the uterus downwards. The patient then had labor pains, brought forth a thing which looked like clotted blood, half-decomposed and stinking so that no one could stay in the room, and soon became better. With great modesty Louyse Bourgeois attributed the cure not only to the fumigation but to the treatment received from the doctors beforehand. She then talks about cases of amenorrhœa with vicarious hemorrhage from the nose.

Another cause of sterility she attributes to the habit of drinking too strong wine and eating highly seasoned foods, which act by heating the blood too much and consuming the

fluid. "Such women are subject to ulcers of the veins and uterus." She evidently has seen post-mortem examinations, because she says she has seen opened several bodies of patients who had died from this. She recommends all such women to apply at once to physicians or good midwives. Her account of *chlorosis* is excellent. She says that it was supposed to be very often due to being crossed in love. She cured a young man of chlorosis who was in love with a girl and had one or two relapses until he gave up his hopeless suit. Still in many instances, more especially in girls, she confesses that the patients were too young to know anything about love. She anticipated modern treatment by prescribing iron and purgatives.

Among the causes of abortion she says the principal one is paroxysms of anger, and she warns such women to consider the evil that they bring about, in that they prevent the perfection of the work of God, having received a human soul from God to glorify it eternally which they have not guarded, and thus have done violence to the holy sacrament of baptism. There are some, she regrets to say, who although this catastrophe has been brought about by their own fault, will argue that the child not having lived had no soul. For such sinners she has a fearful denunciation. "Although human laws condemn to death those who destroy the beings, which are not created but for the use of man and have only a vegetative soul, what punishment is meet for her who wilfully prevents the birth of an infant who has a vegetative, sensitive and reasonable soul? Again, what might not the child become in the world?" Evidently the authoress is very much impressed with having assisted at the entrance of royalty into the world, and is deeply imbued with the extreme benefit which such personages confer upon mankind. "What is commonly called willful abortion is punished by the laws of man; and those who cause abortion from want of forethought or carelessness, though they escape punishment in this world, can they hope to avoid the just laws of God?" Nor do those who lend themselves to the production of abortion escape her condemnation.

Pregnancy she points out is generally accompanied by some pathological symptoms, such as debility and perverted appetite. She warns her patients to control themselves lest they should produce abortion, or lest their children should be born with marks upon them. She warns against too great eagerness to know whether pregnancy exists or not. "Miscarriages have been caused by unskillful and over-anxious midwives, who have thrust their finger into the uterus and have caused hemorrhages which resulted fatally to the fetus." She says that during the first and second months a competent midwife can diagnose pregnancy on finding the os open; after this time a certain diagnosis is impossible, "because the mouth of the uterus being closed, the enlargement she feels may be due to retention of menses, and she must depend on other signs."

"If the mother is full-blooded, and if the infant is not able to use all the menstrual flow for its nutrition, and the remainder is too great to be absorbed by the breasts, it must find some outlet from the body." This she holds to be an explanation of the fact that some women appear to menstruate during pregnancy. In these cases she recommends bleeding at certain intervals. For those who are feeble and emotional she recom-

mends wine and meat, but she begs them to try to control their emotions; for she says such emotions make the woman swell, so that the uterus being pressed upon opens and casts the infant out. She attributes miscarriages from falls, etc., to undue relaxation of ligaments of the uterus. Such a misfortune may also be caused by raising the arms too high up, and she therefore cautions ladies of quality to beware how they exert themselves in doing up their hair, and tells her more humble clients that hanging out linen is very often prejudicial to their condition. She points out the difference in this matter between women bred in the country and those who are town-bred. For pregnant women who have fallen or who have otherwise injured themselves and are threatened with miscarriages she recommends rest in bed and a recipe which she says has been successful in more than two hundred cases of her own.

She then speaks of hydrocephalus, and attributes this to the same cause that brings about premature birth, namely, that the infant has found insufficient nourishment for its proper growth. She compares a premature infant to a good general of a besieged city, who, finding his provisions exhausted, accepts the situation and capitulates. She recognizes in certain cases the necessity of bringing on premature labor. She deplors the fact that certain midwives never call in a physician until the case is practically lost. "Such women are those who prefer filthy lucre to true honor, and keep their establishments full of women who have no husbands." She thinks it only right to say that physicians attending midwifery patients should cease to attend cases of smallpox and other contagious diseases.

In making the diagnosis of pregnancy she recommends the midwife to ascertain the date of the last menstruation, as well as the color and quantity of the flow. "Some women have amenorrhœa from fright and emotion, and we should inform these that there is no sign of pregnancy. Other women we should remember may suffer from amenorrhœa without being pregnant. We should inquire whether their appetites are changed or are capricious, and if they have desires for strange foods, whether, as is the custom in pregnant women in the first two and a half months, their bellies seem very flat so that they think their clothes are going to fall off of them, or whether they suffer from hypersensitiveness of the skin." She adds a list of other symptoms: (1) palpitation of the heart; (2) morning vomiting; (3) general irritability; (4) enlargement and firmness of the breasts; (5) change in the color of the nipple, which becomes red in blondes and darker in color in brunettes; (6) enlargement of one side; (7) a feeling of heaviness after eating. Lastly she recommends a digital examination in order to find out whether the mouth of the womb is shut "like the mouth of a bag through which you cannot push a grain of wheat." "Above all never try to push the finger into the uterus, and be sure that the cervix is not hard, because, as we said in the beginning, this occurs in sterile women."

Talking of moles, she says that they absorb the blood like a sponge. Women in such cases grow large all of a sudden, and are more swollen at the end of a month than a pregnant woman at the end of three months.

In case of an accident to a pregnant woman which would otherwise prove fatal, premature labor should be brought on, no matter at what period, in order to preserve her life.

After speaking of the behavior of the midwife in case of premature labor, in the next chapter she goes on to speak of births at term where the infants do not present well, and of the various presentations, of which she mentions twelve. (1) The worst one of all is the presentation of the navel, when the belly comes first, the legs and arms being behind and the cord prolapsed. She suggests turning if possible, and says that such presentations are generally fatal unless the infant is small and the body, *i. e.* the pelvis, of the woman is large. If possible, the cord should be replaced. The accident is dangerous "because the cord gets cold and the circulation is interfered with and the respiration of the child stops. For while in the body of the woman he breathes through the cord because he is swimming in water, and he cannot like a fish breathe through his nose without getting his mouth full of water." She suggests putting the woman across the bed with the head low and the hips elevated, so as to assist the presenting part to go back, and then having greased the hand with fresh butter, to try and bring the legs down, pulling gently on the child during a pain. (2) For a transverse position, which she considers about as bad, she suggests also bringing down the feet. (3) In a shoulder presentation she recommends turning, and after allowing the patient to rest, that she should be placed in a convenient chair when she has pains, so that the weight of the head may bring it down. (4) When the arm presents she says this must be replaced instantly, the best way being to have a bowl of cold water ready and to allow the infant's hand to rest in it, whereupon it will pull it back very soon. If, however, it is too feeble to do this, grease the arm before it has time to swell, replace it gently, and then turn by the feet. (5) If two hands present she recommends that these should be replaced in the same way, and the midwife must then decide whether it is better to bring down the feet or try to make the head present. (6) If one foot presents, and if the pains are strong, she tells the midwife to bring down the other foot as well. If the pains are feeble the patient should rest and a clyster should be given to produce a stool and at the same time to bring on the pains. (7) If the breech presents she says that it is very dangerous to allow an infant to come out doubled up, and recommends the midwife to bring down the feet. (8) The prolapse of the cord in front of the head she holds to be due to too much amniotic fluid. "On no account should the woman be allowed to stand up or sit in a chair. She should lie down with her head low, the cord should be replaced, and a pad of cotton should be thrust in where the cord is trying to come out, just like a cork into a cask." (9) The presentation of the hand before the head. (10) A face presentation, she says, can be mistaken for a breech presentation, and she recommends the hastening of labor by stimulants or, if necessary, by an injection. (11) When the head presents more on one side than on the other she says the condition is very annoying, because it may be mistaken for a normal presentation. The patient should be put on her side so that the weight of the head will bring it into the middle. If this is not successful some manipulation will be necessary.

(12) Even in the real normal presentation, when the head comes down in the middle line, she holds that the aid of the midwife is necessary. Sometimes the cord is entangled about the neck and must be disengaged. If this cannot be done, the cord must be cut and disentangled and both ends ligated. The ligation of one end is necessary in order to prevent the infant from losing blood; to the other end a string must be tied, which is fastened to the thigh of the woman for fear of losing it. The midwife must be prepared for another accident, as sometimes after the head is born the shoulders are large, and it may become necessary to pass the finger under the armpit and make traction.

In Chapter VIII, premature rupture of the membranes is described. She says: "I have seen cases in which the membranes ruptured twelve, eight, six or four days before labor. If labor does not come on two or three hours after rupture then it will not come on for at least twenty-four hours. The rupture is due to weakness of the membranes rather than to an excess of the waters." She deprecates the rupture of the bag of waters purposely, for several reasons—(1) Because it may produce prolapse of the cord, or (2) prolapse of the hand or foot. She prefers to try to give strength to the mother that she may rupture them by her own efforts. "This premature rupture is considered very dangerous to the child, but in cases where the rupture has taken place twelve hours before labor there remains sufficient amniotic fluid to moisten the natural passages. These can also be lubricated by means of fresh butter." She warns women, however, in whom rupture of the membranes has taken place, not to go out of doors for fear the air may enter the womb. She says that she has seen cases in which the air did enter the womb and compressed the vessels, and the woman had convulsions. She begs them "to remain in bed and await the hour of God."

In speaking of false labor pains she says they are due sometimes to colic, sometimes to other intestinal disorders. "Colicky pains, if they begin above, never pass below the navel, and if they begin below, never pass above it. For these pains try hot linen, and if they are colicky pains they will pass off; if a real labor pain, this treatment will increase it." She also advises a vaginal examination.

As to the position of the woman during labor. "A woman who wishes to keep about and can do so until she is just ready to give birth to the child, may be allowed to stand with her legs apart, supported during the pains by two strong people, or she can have a low stool with a pillow on it, in front of a table, and can kneel on the pillow and put her arms on the table." Our author, however, prefers to keep the patient in bed unless the labor is too long, and does not think it advisable to let the woman leave her bed at any rate after the head has engaged in the os. With this limitation, if it comforts the woman (and she thinks the woman needs comfort at this time), she allows her to do as she pleases, especially as she says that she has often seen patients made worse by being forced by too solicitous mothers to keep in bed.

The bed itself ought to be high at the head and coming to a point at the foot. A large faggot placed in such a way that it will touch the feet when the legs are not fully extended should be used to hold the feet. There are some women who,

on the best of beds, think they are going to be suffocated. These women she says she has delivered sitting or standing up. She has known cases where the child was delivered with the mother in this position in the absence of the midwife, when the woman was not expecting it, and falling on the floor, has been killed.

She says although it has been denied by some that twins are ever of the same sex, this idea is contrary to her experience. "In the case of twins the labor is longer. Sometimes the first child comes well and the other badly. It is certain that the first born is the stronger because it has broken through the membranes first. In one case a second child was left to nature and was born twelve hours afterwards, and though it lived, it was at first very weak." In such a case she thinks that nature ought to be aided, the labor pains excited and the bag of waters ruptured. If the second child presents badly the membranes should be ruptured, and turning by the feet performed. The cord of the first child should be cut and ligated before the second one is born.

With reference to medicines which are to be given to a woman in labor, she is not in favor of employing violent remedies unless in cases of extreme necessity, "as this procedure is apt to cause marvelous fevers after child-birth." The two extremes must be avoided, "repletion and inanition." Nourishing broths, the yolk of an egg, and ammonia water to fortify the heart are recommended. "Not too much, however, for fear of causing fever." She mentions other recipes, but prefers that the doctor should decide what the patient should or should not take. She gives recipes which are recommended by learned physicians, as in some cases the idea of sending for a physician frightens the patient unnecessarily or makes her believe that the midwife is incompetent.

*The Delivery of the Afterbirth.*—To make the diagnosis she places the infant on the edge of the bed with the head and abdomen covered, taking care that nothing touches the face; then with the hand on the abdomen of the woman she finds out on which side the placenta is situated. Friction being made on the side where the placenta is found, the woman is ordered to close her fist and blow into it, or put her finger into her mouth to produce nausea, or to strain as if she was going to stool. If this does not succeed, she is made to take the raw yolk of an egg. "The knowledge that the egg is raw produces nausea and excites the stomach, and often even the thought of it will have the same effect. Asafœtida and such like remedies may be useful." In two thousand labors she says that she has never had occasion to put her hand into the uterus to get the placenta except in two cases. The one case had been mismanaged by another midwife; the other one was of fever, where the uterus was so dry that the placenta could not be expelled. She gives three rules in which this procedure is justifiable—(1) If the woman is bleeding, (2) where there are convulsions, (3) when the woman has fever and the womb has become too dry. She has seen bad results in cases where doctors and midwives have been too hasty in this matter.

Chapter XVI deals with the after-pains, which are said to be often due to rolling of the uterus in the belly and to displacements.

Post-partum hemorrhages (she holds) occur in some women

because they have too much blood, and in others because they have taken too many heating remedies during their labor, so that the blood is heated and hemorrhage occurs. This is followed by great weakness, which must be met by wine in small doses, and by a moderately tight bandage, which she thinks compresses the vessels. The white of an egg is recommended to restore the natural heat of the stomach, which is diffused all over the body, and at the same time along the spine, over the course of the vena cava, a napkin which has been wetted with a mixture of vinegar and water should be placed. She does not allow the woman to go to sleep while the bleeding is going on, because she thinks that she is more likely to die under these circumstances. When the hemorrhage is partially controlled she orders that the astringent be taken off and a little of the blood allowed to come away slowly, so that it will not do harm by remaining in the womb.

Chapter XVIII treats of the puerperal state. "As soon as the woman is delivered, after a hard labor she must be put in the skin of a black sheep which has been flayed alive. This is applied to the back. To the belly is applied the skin of a hare which has also been flayed alive. The animal having been flayed, its throat should be cut and the warm blood should be rubbed on the inside of the skin and applied to the body of the woman. This blood chases away the melancholic blood. In winter these remedies must be kept on two hours and in summer one hour." She then describes rather a complicated abdominal bandage which she was in the habit of using. "After this is taken off, hot linen should be applied to the breasts for about twelve hours before giving proper remedies for producing milk." "These galactogues should not be put on till later, because the blood is still too excited."

For women who have little blood she orders nourishment. She has found that those who lose but little blood are apt to persuade themselves that they would be better if they lost more, so that they want to be bled. She warns the doctor not to listen to the entreaties of such patients. "Some women whose discharges are white think there ought to be blood in them, whereas these white discharges are in reality blood which has gone to the breasts to be made into milk, and not having been utilized is returned to the uterus, whence it is discharged."

She expressly states that the rules of life are not the same for every woman in the puerperal state, and that one cannot give the same diet to a society lady in town and the peasant woman in the country. "The stomach of the one is stronger; if you offer it soup it acts like a mill that is grinding without anything in it. To delicately nurtured women give very light diet, soups, jellies of veal and chicken, but not of mutton, for fear of fever, and the wine should be diluted. Combat insomnia by barley water. After eight days the nourishment can be increased."

For eight days after labor she recommends a daily injection of honey water with extract of roses, holding that milk is dangerous and is not so cleansing.

Chapter XXIII treats of antilactogues. "There are many such remedies. Some nurses use their favorite remedy on all their patients. This is just like applying the same saddle to many horses." "These," she adds with scorn, "are

often secret remedies." She expresses the opinion that although some people say that a midwife need not be a nurse, no woman unless she is a good nurse can be a good midwife. Then she speaks of inflamed breasts and suppuration. She says that she has known cancer to come from unwise applications to the breasts. She mentions an autopsy in a case of cancer in which in the uterus were found great red tumors, which were caused by the milk which had been present since the birth of the last child, and having returned from the diseased breast to the uterus had brought with it some of the cancerous growth. She holds that this could have been avoided by proper applications to the breasts. She recommends great care where the breasts have been fissured by the infant. She warns against the danger of catching cold in the breasts.

The taking of drugs by the mouth in the first days of the puerperal state she thinks dangerous.

*The care of the newborn child.* "It is the custom of learned doctors to give to the child as soon as it is born a teaspoonful of pure wine to revive it after the agitation it has gone through in being born. Others believe that wine cuts the phlegm which is ordinarily found in the throat. Others again believe that the vapor of the wine mounts to the head and makes the brain firm. Such children are thus protected from epilepsy in after life, since epilepsy comes from debility of the brain. The umbilical vein should be ligated firmly, and if it be full of blood it ought to be emptied, for fear that this should turn into pus. It should be ligated two finger-breadths away from the belly, and cut three finger-breadths below the ligature. If the cord is large and full of water and of winds, after the end has been wrapped in linen for half an hour it should be unwrapped and ligated afresh. It should be placed with the end upward, as there is thus less danger of bleeding. The infant should be washed in warm wine and water, walnut oil being employed for the face, throat, arms and hands. Bandaging the head is a very bad practice common in Paris and ought not to be employed. The tongue should be examined to see if the child is tongue-tied, but the frenum should not be ruptured with the finger, because the nail is poisonous and may produce a canker or an ulcer." She begs the lady friends of the family not to interfere too much, but to leave the care of the child to the midwife. She deprecates the practice of trying to form the face or head by pressure, "as if the child were made of wax or putty."

Chapter XXVII refers to the choice of a nurse. The following are her rules. (1) See that the woman does not squint, as the infant may catch it; (2) she must not have red hair, because the milk of such a woman is exceedingly hot; (3) let her have good white teeth; (4) let her not have a family history of phthisis; (5) she must have a pure breath, otherwise the lungs of the infant will be irritated; (6) she must have a good digestion; (7) there must be no family history of leprosy, epilepsy, or any other disease. She quotes the case of a child who caught epilepsy from a nurse, a child of very good family. She holds that the moral character and disposition of the infant depend on that of the nurse, and that therefore the disposition of the nurse must be good. "She must not be irritable, and she must have milk in abundance, but not too large mammary glands." She thinks that the nurse will not

be so good if she has her menstrual flow or if she has connection with her husband.

After treating of colic and the minor ills of children she comes to *cancreum oris* and cases of prolapse of the rectum. To remedy the last the child must be put with its head low and the bowel reduced, and she tells us that as the infant grows older the anus becomes smaller and the intestine bigger, so that the condition is finally cured. She orders the application of a bandage to be kept on all the time except at night.

After giving recipes for ointments for making the limbs strong she speaks of falling of the womb, a condition which she attributes to accidents, carrying heavy burdens, working too hard, and bearing large infants. "Sometimes part of it is pulled out by unskilled midwives in their attempts to deliver the placenta." She prescribes rest in bed, but says that it is no use to treat the symptoms without finding out and removing the cause. She recommends astringents with suppositories (or pessaries). "The pessary should have a hole so that the vapors of the womb can come out. It should be taken out occasionally to be cleaned. Such women should not lace themselves tight, for after labor they will have a proportionately bad figure."

She insists that a midwife should be acquainted with the anatomy of the uterus. "If she does not know this she may try to expel the uterus instead of the placenta, as has been done in this city." Therefore she begs of the doctors to allow the midwives to attend their lectures on the subject, the midwives paying for the same.

In speaking of a case of hydrometra she tells of a woman from whom there came half a bucket of water three months before labor. At the end of six months of pregnancy she experienced great pain, extreme tension and hardness of the belly, which seemed as if it were going to burst. The author gave her a carminative enema with some relief, but a month later, having the same pains and while pacing the room, the woman felt a great flow of water come from her, as if she had opened a water-tap. Louyse Bourgeois happened to be in childbed at that time herself and could not go. Two months afterwards the patient was delivered. The bag of waters was intact, "which shows that the water that came from her was not from the bag of membranes, but rather from dropsy of the womb."

Chapter XXXIX is interesting as it gives us the signs by which the death of the fœtus was diagnosed. It treats of a woman who was supposed to have labor pains at seven months, but Louyse Bourgeois diagnosed a colic. After this there were no movements of the child. On examination the cervix was found to be slightly opened. She concluded on account of the colic that the infant had attempted to come from the womb and had died in the attempt. Two physicians and Madame Françoise, who was a midwife, were called in consultation. It was concluded that the infant was dead from the following signs:—(1) the woman's breath was bad; (2) her excrement was very strong-smelling; (3) her eyes were dim; (4) her belly was cold; (5) when she turned on her side the belly all went to that side in one mass. Cæsarian section was suggested, but the physicians decided "to leave the affair to God and to nature." The patient was in bed six weeks. "Two

months afterwards she came to me saying that a large quantity of water as cold as ice had come away from her. I found the cervix dilated and she gave birth the same day to a fine female child. Her trouble was caused by drinking cold water, which gave her the colic and chilled the child."

Our author sometimes performed surgical operations herself, for she states that once she extracted a stone as long as a man's finger from the neck of the bladder.

She then narrates several cases. "A lady was delivered of two children, one dead and half rotten, and the other alive and well. The waters of one infant were all black, and the infant was dead and much disfigured and a horrible sight, and had no epidermis. She then bore a live child immediately afterwards."

The second is a case of lithopædion. "A lady was delivered of a dead child from whom she had felt no movements for several months and which was born dead. The woman had felt no movement for a month. Heat was applied to the abdomen and something was felt to move up inside. This was undoubtedly the uterus, which being chilled by the dead child moved towards the heat. The woman had none of the ordinary signs of the death of the child, which is explained by the fact that the waters being cold they hardened the child and there was no putrefactive process."

Third case. "A lady in her first labor bore a dead child and was badly nursed. Five or six days afterwards she became insane, and in spite of her husband, ran about the streets naked. Four years afterwards she recovered a little and bore a child without any accident. Ten years later she bore two children, one dead and one alive. On the fifth day she became insane. On the fifteenth day, as she seemed somewhat better, her guardians relaxed their watchfulness. She escaped and flung herself down a privy, a thing which in her previous attacks she had tried to do. She was caught by the scaffolding and saved. After ten months she got better and again became pregnant. I had her milk drawn, as she had never nursed her children. On the fifth day she showed signs of insanity. I attended her breasts, gave her an enema, and the next day she was better. I have no doubt that the insanity was caused by

the abundance of milk. In these cases there is acute fever. The heat goes to the head, the body gets cold, and the patient has chills. The lady became again pregnant, and following my advice (that is to say, by the use of enemata) she avoided all evil results."

The next case is that of a woman who died from eating ice. "Attempts were made to bleed her, but no blood was obtained. She died within twenty-four hours. At the autopsy all her blood was found to have gone between the epiploon and the intestines, a vein having ruptured. This was brought about by over-distension caused by the ice. Except in the abdomen, not a drop of blood was found in the body."

With respect to premature births at the seventh and eighth month, she thinks that some infants are born too soon from healthy women simply because the uterus is small, and that in other cases the accident is brought about by falls. If the placenta is broken off so that the child cannot breathe, he is drowned in the waters or is suffocated for want of air.

The story of the woman who bore on her nipple a serpent for ten months, as well as the long list of infallible remedies which are scattered all through the work, proves that Louyse Bourgeois, with all her good sense, was not entirely free from credulity. But it is not only in the works of our author, or indeed those of others of the older writers, that chaff is to be found mingled with the wheat. To those who are inclined to criticize too severely, and who would dwell upon the credulity of the woman (a thing by the way which exists even in our times), and on her too ready belief in the infallibility of her own remedies, we would say, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone."

Throughout we can see the sound common sense, the patience and, what is quite as important, the earnest desire to deal with cases not in any routine way, but to look at each by itself and seek to remove the cause rather than attend only to individual symptoms, which gave to Louyse Bourgeois her well deserved pre-eminence in her profession, and make her work not only interesting, but of much practical use to us of the present day; for without these qualities, in spite of our better opportunities, we cannot expect to obtain good results.

**BOURGEOIS (LOUISE dite BOURSIER),** maîtresse sage-femme jurée de la ville de Paris, accoucheuse de Marie de Médicis, seconde femme de Henri IV ; née à Paris en 1580, de parens honnêtes et aisés. Ayant reçu une meilleure éducation que celle que recevaient les jeunes personnes de la bourgeoisie d'alors, Louise Boursier fut recherchée par cela même par un chirurgien (Surgeon) des armées, et l'épousa. Après des révers de fortune causés par les dissensions politiques et les guerres civiles qui précédèrent l'avènement d'Henri IV au trône de France, et déjà avancée en âge, Louise Bourgeois se décida à apprendre l'art de sage-femme, moins par vocation que d'après les conseils d'une matrone qui lui dit : « Que si elle eût su lire et écrire comme elle, elle eût fait » des merveilles. »

Louise Bourgeois vainquit toutes les répugnances que lui avait fait naître l'idée de porter des enfans au baptême, comme elle l'avoue, et se résigna en faveur de sa famille, ainsi qu'elle le dit : « Me treuant embarquée dans vn menage, chargée » d'enfans, accablée de guerre et de perte de biens, la sage Pharote, mère de ce grand philosophe Socrate, prit pitié de » moy, me consola et conseilla d'embrasser les sciences, me » représentant que toutes choses concouroient à bien pour » moy, la croyant ; que à cause d'elle, dont ie serois fille adoptive, tous les disciples de son fils Socrate me seroyent favorables ; que mon mary qui exerçoit les œuvres manuelles » de chirurgie me guideroit. » Son mari lui ayant donné les



premières notions en anatomie, elle se mit à étudier dans Paré, et devint bientôt aussi capable que la plupart des sages-femmes et accoucheurs d'alors. De petites gens à autres, elle parvint en peu de temps à être employée grandement, et pratiqua pendant cinq ans avant d'être reçue jurée. Le mérite porte toujours ombrage, et ce ne fut point sans difficultés qu'elle obtint ses grades. Le jury de réception se composait d'un médecin, de deux chirurgiens et de deux sages-femmes. Pour démontrer que dans tous les temps la jalousie et l'envie furent l'apanage d'une profession qui devrait être toute de charité chrétienne et d'humanité, laissons parler Louise Bourgeois de toutes les tribulations qui lui furent suscitées par les examinatrices. « Les deux sages-femmes étoient la dame Du- » puis et la dame Peronne; elles me donnèrent jour pour aller » les trouver ensemble, elles m'interrogèrent de quelle voca- » tion étoit mon mary, ce que sachant, elles ne vouloient pas » me recevoir, au moins madame Dupuis, qui disoit à l'autre : » Par Dieu, ma compagne, le cœur ne me dit rien de bon pour » nous! Puisqu'elle est femme d'un Surgeon, elle s'entend avec » ces médecins comme coupeurs de bourses en foire; il ne » nous faut recevoir que des femmes d'artisans qui n'entendent » rien à nos affaires. Elle me disoit (la dame Dupuis) que mon » mary me devoit nourrir sans rien faire.

Après sa réception, Louise Bourgeois continua à pratiquer, et successivement passa des classes inférieures à la bourgeoisie, parvint jusqu'aux princesses, et fut choisie par la reine même pour l'assister dans ses premières couches, et l'aida, en moins de neuf ans, à mettre six enfans au monde. Ce ne fut point sans peine qu'elle parvint à l'honneur d'accoucher la reine, puisque déjà la dame Dupuis avait été choisie et agréée

par le roi pour remplir ses hautes fonctions. Ce fut à madame Conchini, depuis l'infortunée maréchale d'Ancre, que Louise Bourgeois dut cette faveur. Tout prouve en effet qu'elle était digne de remplir les nobles fonctions qui lui furent confiées; car elle montra, à la naissance du Dauphin, autant de fermeté, de présence d'esprit et de caractère que d'habileté. Nous regrettons de ne pouvoir rapporter ici toutes les circonstances de cet événement qu'elle fait connaître dans la deuxième partie de son ouvrage, qui a pour titre : *Observations diverses sur la stérilité, perte de fruit, fécondité, accouchement, et maladies des femmes et enfans nouveau-nés.*

L'ouvrage de Louise Bourgeois, dont il y a plusieurs éditions, parle de diverses espèces d'accouchemens terminés de la manière dont l'enfant se présente. Ce qu'elle dit des fausses couches prouve une grande sagacité; les signes de la grossesse y sont exposés avec beaucoup de précision; enfin, cet ouvrage est écrit avec une franchise et une ingénuité qui ne permettent pas de douter que l'auteur n'y ait mis tout ce qu'on pouvait savoir de son temps.

La plus grande obligation qu'ait l'art des accouchemens à Louise Bourgeois, c'est d'avoir enseigné à remédier aux pertes qui arrivent sur la fin de la grossesse et qui sont causées par le décollement de quelques points du placenta; c'est à elle qu'on est redevable de cette découverte. Il est étonnant que la multitude d'écrivains qui ont paru depuis Bourgeois ne lui aient point fait honneur de cette découverte. Il semble pourtant que ce qu'elle a dit à ce sujet valait bien la peine qu'on en parlât. « Quand une femme, dit-elle, chap. V, a » une perte de sang démesurée sur sa grossesse, dont elle

» tombe en défaillance, il faut venir à l'extraction de l'enfant avec les mains. Cela fut fait en la femme d'un conseiller de la cour du parlement, laquelle étoit grosse de six mois. Son enfant vécut deux jours. Elle a porté d'autres enfans depuis; les médecins recongnurent que si on eût différé une heure, la mère et l'enfant étoient morts; moi, congnoissant que le flux de sang n'est entretenu que par la grossesse, l'ayant vu cesser aussitôt que la femme a été accouchée, je mis cette pratique en avant, laquelle j'ai congnie trop tard, à mon gré, pour la conservation de madame d'Aubray, madame la duchesse de Montbazon, etc.»

Louise Bourgeois ne possédait pas seulement toutes les connaissances qu'on avait droit d'exiger des personnes qui exerçaient l'art des accouchemens, mais encore la littérature ne lui étoit pas étrangère. Sans être poète, elle a placé à la tête de son livre quelques pièces de vers dans le genre marotique, qu'on lit avec plaisir, de même que tout son livre. Rien de plus touchant, de plus moral que l'instruction à sa fille, qui se destinait aussi à la profession de sage-femme. Qu'il nous suffise de rapporter quelques-uns des préceptes que renferme cette instruction véritablement curieuse sous le rapport des principes et de la diction. « Je vous dirai donc que toute personne de jugement ne doit ignorer ce qui est bon.... Je vous exhorte de vous rendre soigneuse de tout ce qui est du vostre... Je vous dirai, afin que vous suiviez mes préceptes, que vous êtes enfant de famille..., que le corps entier de la médecine est dans nostre maison.... Apprenez jusqu'au dernier jour de vostre vie, et pour ce faire facilement, il faut une grande humilité, car les personnes orgueilleuses ne gagnent pas le cœur de ceux qui sauent des secrets... Je vous dirai que ce que vous

» avez entrepris est de merveilleuse importance , et qu'en cet  
 » art il y a deux chemins à tenir , l'un pour se sauuer , l'autre  
 » pour se damner. Celles qui ont fait le mal et ceux qui en  
 » cherchent le damnable remède sont cruellement méchants ;  
 » mais c'est toute autre méchanceté à celles qui , n'étant aucu-  
 » nement engagées dans cette affaire , pour de l'argent tuent le  
 » corps et l'ame d'un enfant. Lorsque vous serez appelée en  
 » une maison , fussent les plus pauvres gens du monde , seruez-  
 » les de mesme affection que si vous en deuiez receuoir grande  
 » récompense... Je vous dirai encore , ma fille , qu'il ne faut  
 » point vous estonner de voir mépriser l'état de sage-femme ,  
 » ny que cela vous refroidisse d'en rechercher les perfections ,  
 » lesquelles sont incompréhensibles à celles qui les méprisent ,  
 » ny ne vous estonner si vous voyés en cet estat des personnes  
 » si indignes du nostre ; cela n'amoindrit le savoir ny l'hon-  
 » neur de celles qui le méritent. Cela vient que ceux qui les  
 » reçoquent pour de l'argent , sont comme les hostelliers de  
 » village qui attachent des asnes et des rosses avec de bons  
 » cheuaux... Ne vous estonnez jamais de rien si quelque chose  
 » ne va pas bien , car l'épouvante trouble les sens... Il se trouue  
 » bien peu de femmes qui affectionnent leurs sages-femmes  
 » comme elles faisoient le temps passé , que quand les sages-  
 » femmes mouroient , elles en menoient grand deuil ; mainte-  
 » nant plusieurs s'en seruent comme d'une femme de ven-  
 » dange... Vous irez en des maisons où il se trouue des per-  
 » sonnes qui fournissent à la maitresse de la maison des lunettes  
 » qui font voir ce qui n'est point , prenés-y bien garde , cela  
 » ne vous coûte rien qu'un peu de soin.

Cette instruction de Louise Bourgeois à sa fille est un système de conduite dicté par un esprit bien au-dessus du

vulgaire. C'est un tableau fidèle de sa profession, qui prouve évidemment qu'en fait de morale pratique, au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, le monde était ce qu'il est aujourd'hui. A part quelques formules bizarres et le conte de l'oie et de la chienne, le livre de Louise Bourgeois est instructif, plein d'intérêt, et une œuvre de bonne foi. La dignité avec laquelle cette femme célèbre exerça sa profession, son savoir et son habileté, lui méritèrent tout ce que la société accorde aux personnes supérieures; à la ville comme à la cour elle fut honorée et estimée. En témoignage de reconnaissance, pour lui donner une marque de sa confiance et de son estime, la reine Marie de Médicis la décora du chaperon de velours. C'est la première accoucheuse qui obtint cet insigne honorifique; car les deux sages-femmes de Catherine de Médicis n'avaient porté que le collet de velours et la chaîne d'or. A la naissance de son sixième enfant, Henri IV fit une pension de trois cents écus à Louise Bourgeois et pourvut d'une charge chacun de ses deux fils.

Quelques sages-femmes, après avoir lu la deuxième livraison de ce Recueil, ont trouvé hors de propos que nous ayons parlé si longuement de Louise Bourgeois, de la première accoucheuse de son siècle; il en est même qui, sous le rapport du savoir, la mettent bien au-dessous des sages-femmes les plus vulgaires de notre époque. Ces réflexions de mauvais goût, qui dénotent autant d'ignorance que d'absurdité, ne sauraient appartenir aux personnes qui les ont exprimées; elles ont été insinuées, comme tant d'autres que nous ne relèverons point, par quelques-uns des antagonistes nés des sages-femmes, qui, depuis l'annonce et l'apparition de cette Biographie, n'ont rien épargné pour déprécier un

travail dont le but est de rehausser la seule profession dont les femmes soient en possession. Pour faire justice des réflexions qu'expriment quelques dupes à l'égard du livre de Louise Bourgeois, il suffira de placer ici comme preuve de la haute idée qu'on avait de son mérite, le sonnet qu'à l'intention de l'auteur composa un poète de son temps, S. Hacquin :

Que n'ay-ie maintenant ainsi que je desire,  
 D'un Desportes mignard le langage affecté,  
 Que ne suis-ie un Ronsard, ou bien que n'ay-ie esté  
 Sur le mont d'Helicon où Phœbus se retire;

Afin qu'ayant appris la façon de bien dire,  
 Plein de sainte fureur et de divinité,  
 Je puisse ce jourd'huy à toute éternité  
 Marier tes vertus aux chansons de ma lire.

Muses, modérez-vous, n'aspirez point si haut,  
 N'imitiez point celui dont l'effroyable saut  
 Eternise son nom par une chute étrange.

Vous ne possédez rien digne de son autel;  
 Pour louer cette Dame et son œuvre immortel,  
 Il faut l'esprit d'un Dieu et la plume d'un ange.

Le monde en général ne fut jamais trop généreux envers les sages-femmes; il fallait donc que Louise Bourgeois fût bien supérieure à celles de son temps pour mériter de telles louanges. Ce qui prouve qu'elle n'était point simplement une matrone habile, mais encore une femme lettrée, ce sont les diverses épîtres qui se trouvent en tête de ses livres, adressées à plusieurs grandes dames et à plusieurs médecins de son temps.



LOUISE BOURGEOIS,

Née à Paris en 1580.

( *Biographie des Grandes Femmes célèbres* )

2<sup>e</sup> Livraison.

LOUISE BOURGEOIS.  
AN OLD MIDWIFE'S TALE.

BY  
W. H. ALLPORT, M. D.,  
Chicago, Ill.  
(With illustrations.)

I

SINCE that day when the midwife bound the red cord around the wrist of the first of Tamar's twins and the youngster's brother—still *in utero*—unfairly drew him back and took his first place away from him, the midwife has represented the human side of obstetrics. Whether in natural sympathy, in social and moral interest, as a raconteur or as an historian, in dexterity and kindly common sense and shrewd worldliness, her position is a normal one and, up to the limits of her education, she has filled it in the past with dignity and distinction. Unless we recollect the basic fact that her male competitor has, unfairly, absorbed to himself during the past centuries all else of scientific education and all the position and profit resulting therefrom, it is difficult to understand how he has finally managed so successfully to supplant her also at a ceremony where she is a far more dignified, appropriate, and harmonious figure.



seriously by any woman making claim to respectability. The queen herself referred sneeringly to Guillemeau as "Cet homme de Paris qui accouche les femmes."

Now it so happened that the king, in spite of the sterility of his first wife, Margaret of Valois, had already passed through numerous obstetrical experiences, chiefly at the bedside of la belle Gabrielle. The little Duc de Vendosme, who figures in the subsequent narrative, was the king's child by Gabrielle d'Estrees, and the latter had died in child-bed but the year before (1599), of puerperal convulsions.\* The king, therefore, already had ideas of his own about midwives and proceeded to engage la dame Dupuis, sage-femme juree of the city of Paris, for the function. This woman had confined the king's sister, the Duchess de Bar, but was still better known to him from the fact that she was the very midwife who had delivered his three children by Gabrielle.

Lax as were contemporary morals, and especially those of royalty, it may well be imagined that while Dupuis may have been professionally all that was wanted, she could hardly deodorize herself to a point where the fine nose of the Italian queen would fail to detect about the sage-femme at least a suggestion of the subtle perfume of that beloved French mistress who was but just dead. Besides this most cogent reason, probably kept well in the background, the queen's maids of honor took pains to assure her majesty that, by personal experience, they knew Dupuis to be a superannuated old shrew. Naturally, the wife rebelled, at first secretly, then openly, and took council with her own physician, de Laurens, as to a midwife quite as safe and less redolent of the king's most notorious amour. De Laurens was a shrewd courtier and bowed to the inevitable, for in her fresh imperious will the queen was recognized as more than a match for the amorous but jaded Henry. In addition, she had a villainous temper which the king even thus early in their conjugal life had learned to fear. De Laurens arranged a meeting at the Hostel de Gondy, not far from Paris, between the queen and a certain Louise Bourgeois who had successfully confined many of the ladies of the court. It took the queen "but the space of a pater noster" to form a favorable opinion of the new midwife, and she returned to Paris with her royal mind made up.

\* One of the physicians (d'Alibou) who enjoyed the doubtful honor of acting as consultant in this case committed suicide shortly thereafter, thus antedating Sir Richard Croft by more than 200 years.

One shake of her head and one stamp of her foot brought the wearer of the helmet of Navarre to a proper sense of his conjugal duty, la dame Dupuis went snarling\* into the discard, and the midwife question was settled in that royal family for all subsequent confinements.

Six children were borne to Henry and Marie within nine years; a dauphin, the future Louis XIII; madame Elizabeth, future queen of Spain; Christina of Savoy; the duc d'Anjou;† and Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles II, of England. One child died in early infancy in the year 1611. At the birth of this child, which came into the world feet first, M. Honore, a well-known man-midwife, was held in reserve in an anteroom, but he never passed the door of the queen's chamber, and Louise Bourgeois won the confidence of the court by delivering the child unassisted. This confidence remained unshaken until, more than twenty years later, Louise performed the same office for the wife of another duc d'Orleans, and lost her royal patient from septicemia three days after the birth of a daughter.‡

Without Ambrose Pare—or Ambroise Paraeus—as his contemporaries called him—there would have been no Louise Bourgeois to head the long list of great French midwives. For at his call modern surgery and obstetrics awoke, and with it came not only Guillemeau,§ Honore, Clement, Moriceau, and Deventer, but first of all, in point of time and intimate association with the master, Louise Bourgeois herself. The surgeon is fond of remembering Pare for his work in gunshot wounds, for the new instruments his new art called into existence, and above all because he replaced the terrible *fer ardent* with the ligature. But the obstetrician remembers him because he called back from across the dark ages the ancient practice of podalic version in *cross births* and faulty presentations, and thus saved uncounted mothers and children from the horrible mutilations practised upon them with various extractors up to the end of the seventeenth century.

\* Delacoux.

† "Borne looking toward the heavens." This prince became the duc d'Orleans in 1626 at the time of his marriage to Mdlle. de Montpensier. He lived till 1660.

‡ See Apologia de Louise Bourgeois.—post.

§ Guillemeau was another pupil of Pare—probably the most distinguished, for he was surgeon to the king. If Pare revived podalic version, Guillemeau amplified and developed its uses. Guillemeau and his colleague Honore devised our present method of bringing down the foot in cases of hemorrhage from placenta *prævia*. Between these two and Bourgeois existed a bitter and permanent feud, which culminated in the Apologie and the events immediately preceding it.



FIG. 2.—Loysa Bourgeois. From Gottfried Welsch.

Louise Bourgeois,\* *sage femme juree*, was born in the Faubourg St. Germaine, near Paris, in 1563, about the time much of Pare's work was appearing in print "Les Oeuvres Completes," containing: The Book of Generation; Anatomy; Arquebuss Wounds, etc., appeared in Paris in 1561. The Book on The Plague appeared in 1568, shortly after the great epidemic. She was the daughter of a middle class family and received a better education than most women of that period; this fact will be obvious when we come to study her writings. Near by was the house of the great surgeon, and living under his roof was a certain barber surgeon named Martin Boursier. Boursier lived with Pare for over twenty years and during that time came to know and marry Louise Bourgeois. During the birth of their first child, she became interested in the study of obstetrics and shortly thereafter commenced to practise as an unlicensed midwife among the poor of her neighborhood. She was dexterous and tactful and was instructed by Pare and by her husband, and her education enabled her to assimilate so thoroughly the teachings of Pare that in later years when she became herself a teacher and a writer, she was able to reproduce a good deal of his instruction without giving any too much credit to the source whence it came.† In those days it was necessary in order to

\* The second portrait is from Gottfried Welsch *Hebammenbuch*, 1628 and shows the interesting inscription omitted not only from Delacoux's lithograph but also from the cuts accompanying the articles by Goodell and Hunter Robb. It is probable that all of the engravings were brought down along the same channel from the same source, which Goodell says was a portrait by Hacquin. This engraving was by De Bry, as is shown in the following poem taken from Godfried Welsch.

## AN DEN LESER

Der Künstler, Mahler Kupfersticher höchste Klag  
Ist diese, dass ihr Kunst, und Fleiss Nichts mehr vermag  
Dann nur allein des Leibs Gestalt und Angesicht  
Zurbilden ab, und fürzustellen, doch gar nicht  
Die Tugend, Kunst, Geschicklichkeit, Geist und Verstand,  
Dadurch dess Menschen Seel gespeist wird und erkand.  
*De Bry* aber den Mangel seiner Kunst erstatt  
Dann er mit seinem Thun ein andere Meinung hat:  
Die eusserlich Gestalt zwar für Augen stellt,  
Künstlich, durch Bildnus nach dem Leben wie sichs hält.  
Aber darneben der Person inwendig Gab  
Mag man anso ihren Schriften klärlich nehmen ab:  
Dann was die stumme Bildnus nicht verrichten kan  
Bey dieser Frauen, zeigen dir ihr Bücher an  
Denselben dich gebrauch, verständig, und mit Fleiss,  
Den lieben Gott in seiner Wunderwerken preiss.

† Observations diverses sur la sterilité, perçut de fruite, fecondite, accouchements, et maladies des femmes et des enfans nouveau neez. Ampliant traittees et heureusement pratiquees par Louyse Bourgeois, dite Boursier, sage femme de la Royne, Paris, 1609. This book was translated into several languages. Original editions are rare. The writer has made use of a German version, bearing the date 1628;

become a licensed midwife—a sage-femme juree—to stand an examination before a board of examiners composed of doctors and midwives. In her memoirs she writes entertainingly about her difficulties in securing her certificate from this board; not because she lacked the requisite skill, but because the female members of the board with prophetic vision feared the influence which her husband and Pare would subsequently use to establish her practice. This fear was evidently well grounded, for one of her examiners was madame Dupuis, whom she subsequently deprived of the patronage of the court and royal family.

When madame Bourgeois was thirty-six years old, that is, in 1601, she was called, not only on account of the court influences already referred to, but because of her many personal and professional excellences, to Fontainebleau, to attend Marie de Medici. Behold her then tucked into the boot of the royal carriage journeying with the queen and two court physicians to Fontainebleau for the approaching confinement. How she came to be selected over her competitors for the honor, how the carriage made the three day's journey of forty miles over the rough road of those days, and how a dauphin—the first for eighty years and the future king Louis XIII—was born at Fontainebleau, September 17, 1601, she has told us in her own naive and archaic *Recit veritable de la naissance de messeigneurs et dames les enfans de France, avec la particularitez qui y on este.\**

Let us darken the room, push back the clock 300 years, draw aside the curtain, and hear from the lips of this remarkable woman the "veritable recital" of how a French dauphin was borne in 1601.

## II

### THE BIRTH OF LOUIS XIII; HOW AND IN WHAT TIME THE QUEEN WAS CONFINED.

The night of the twenty-sixth of September, at midnight, the king sent to call me to come to the queen, who was feeling ill.

bound with the German edition of Gottfried Welsch, Habammenbuch, etc., 1651, found in the Surgeon General's Library at Washington. See also Hunter Robb in *Johns Hopkins Bulletin*, 1893, for an analysis of the scientific value of this book.

\* Paris, 1626. The following account is translated from "Nouvelle Collection des Memoirs relatif a l'histoire de France." Michaud et Poujoulat, Paris, 1854, to be found in the Newberry Library, Chicago. Comment et en quel temp la reine accouche de Mons. le dauphin, a present Louis XIII, des ceremonies qui y furent observies, l'orde y tenu, les discours intervenus entre le roy et la royne, et sur plusieurs autres occurrences, par Louise Bourgeois, dite Boursieur, sage femme de la royne.

Also in the same library: Archives curieuses de l'histoire de France Depuis Louis XI jusqua Louis XVIII. Cimber et Danjou. Beauvais, Paris, 1837.

I was sleeping in the queen's dressing-room, where were also the ladies-in-waiting. These ladies often, finding me asleep, had previously played jokes on me by giving false alarms, and in such a manner that I thought this was one of the same, I heard myself called by some one named Pierrot, who did not give me time to fasten my clothes—he hurried me so!

Entering the bed-chamber of the queen, the king asked me—"Is this the midwife? Somebody said to him—"yes"—and he said to me—"Come, come, midwife, my wife is ill—look and see if it is really her confinement—she is in great pain." Having examined, I assured him that such was the case. At the same moment the king said to the queen—"My dear, do you remember what I have said to you a good many times about the necessity of having the princes of the blood at your accouchement\*—I beg of you to permit it—it is for the future greatness of you and your child,"—to which the queen replied that she had always resolved to do whatever would please him. "I know well, my dear, that you wish to do all that I desire, but I know your nature, which is timid and embarrassed, so that I fear if you do not make a great resolution, seeing them may prevent your confinement.† That is why I beg of you not to be shocked, because it is according to the custom which always takes place at the first confinement of queens." The pains pressed the queen, and at each pain the king embraced her, and asked me if it was time to send for the princes, reiterating that I must warn him in time, as it was an affair of the greatest importance that they should be there. I told him I would not fail to do so when it was time.

About an hour after midnight, the king, overcome with impatience, seeing the queen suffer, and thinking that she would give birth to the child and the princes would not have time to get there, sent to seek for them. They were Messieurs the princes de Conti, de Soissons, and de Montpensier. The king said, waiting for them: "If ever any one has never seen three princes in deep trouble, one will soon see them now. These are three princes very full of pity and good nature, who, seeing my wife in labor, would give most of their possessions to be far away from here. My cousin, the prince de Conti, will not easily understand what any one says, seeing my wife tormented; he will believe it is the midwife who is doing it. My cousin, the kind de Soissons, seeing my wife's agony, will have deep solicitude at finding himself com-

\* To prevent substitution.

† Evidently meaning that embarrassment might inhibit the pains.

pelled to stay; and as for my cousin de Montpensier, I fear he will fall down in his weakness, for he is not able to see any one suffer." All three came before the two hours, and were there about half an hour. The king, having learned from me that the delivery was not very near, told them to hold themselves in readiness until he called. M. de la Riviere, first physician of the king; M. de Laurens, first of the queen; M. Herouard, also physician of the king, with M. Guillemeau, surgeon of the king, were called to see the queen, and also retired nearby.

In the meanwhile, the great bedroom of Fontainebleau, which is near the king's bedroom, was prepared for the confinement of the queen. In it there was a great bed of crimson red velvet,

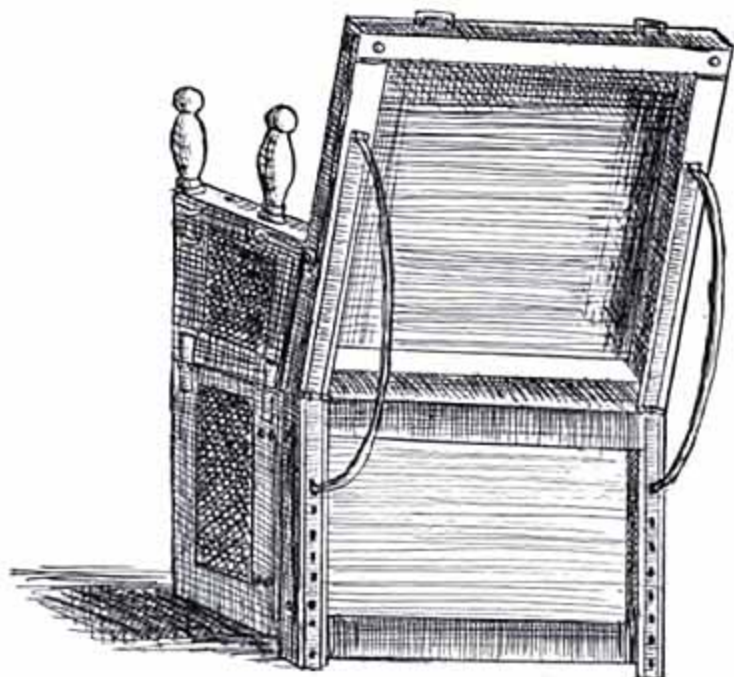


FIG. 3.—Dutch obstetrical chair, 1650. From Cornelius Solingen.

ornamented with gold, near the bed of accouchement. There were also two pavilions, large and small, attached to the floor. The large pavilion was stretched and fastened like a tent by its four corners with cords; it was of beautiful Holland linen, about twenty ells square. In the middle of the large tent there was a little one of the same linen, and under this was put the bed of accouchement. Here the queen was put to bed on coming out of her bedchamber.

The ladies whom the king had desired especially called to the accouchement of the queen were summoned. There was carried under the pavilion a chair, some folding seats, and some stools for the king, madame his sister, and madame de Nemours, to sit in.

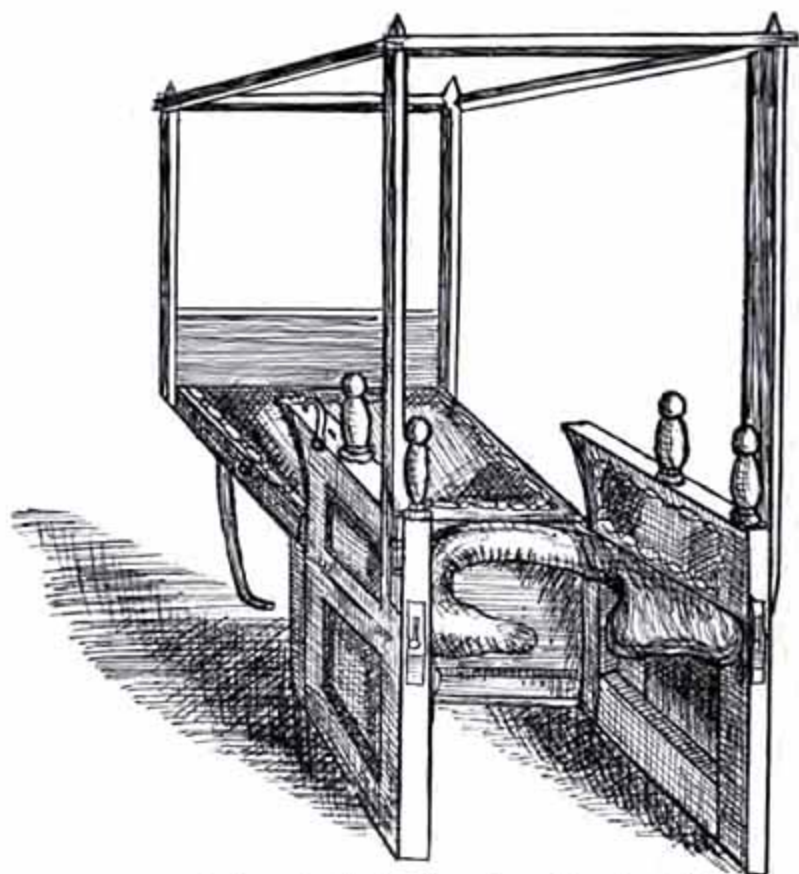


FIG. 4.—Dutch obstetrical chair, 1650. From Cornelius Solingen.

The obstetrical chair\* was also brought in; it was covered with crimson velvet. About 4 o'clock in the morning a great colic,

\* See prints. Many old-fashioned midwives of Ireland and the continent still favor confinements in the sitting posture. An old Kentucky woman once told the writer that in the early days of that state a chair was constantly used, and that it was often customary to have the seated husband hold the wife in his lap during the entire labor. It may be that this has accounted in the past for the smallness of Kentucky families. Jane Sharp in her *Compleat Midwife* (1680) states that she has heard this custom was also prevalent in Holland, but the following quotation from Cornelius Solingen stamps Jane as perpetrating a slander against the Dutchmen. It should be recollected that toward the end of the seventeenth century brave Admiral Van Tromp with his broom had left no pleasant recollection of the Dutch amongst the dwellers about the mouth of the Thames river. Says Cornelius: "Here in Holland in certain towns we have certain women called Shootsters who are used during confinements in place of obstetrical chairs and in whose laps the patients sit during delivery."



mingling itself among the travail of the queen, gave her terrible pain without helping her along. From time to time the king made one of the doctors come to see the queen and speak to me so that I might know what was taking place. The colic made the queen suffer more than the travail, and even kept her from it.

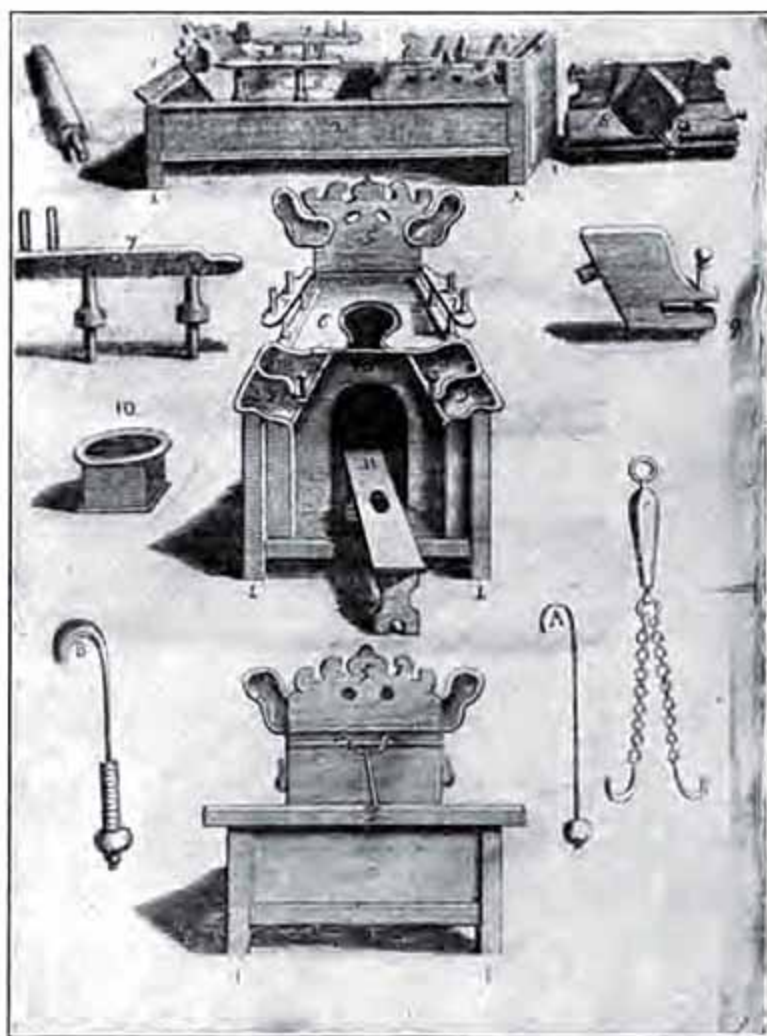


FIG. 5.—Obstetrical chair of 1609. From Justine Sieggemundins' Hof-Weh-Mutter.

The doctors asked me, "If this were a woman and you were alone with the case, what would you do?" I proposed to them some remedies which they ordered at once from the apothecary, who proposed to them others in the Italian style, which he said in

similar cases had done much good. Knowing the great zeal which the apothecary had in the service of her majesty, and knowing that if the remedy did not do all the good he claimed for it, it could not do her any harm, I made no protest, so they gave it to her.

There were also two old and wise Italian maiden ladies with the queen, who had assisted at the birth of many children and had attended many accouchements in their own country. The queen, to show her friendship for them, had wanted them at her confinement to serve her as ladies-maids. The relics of madame

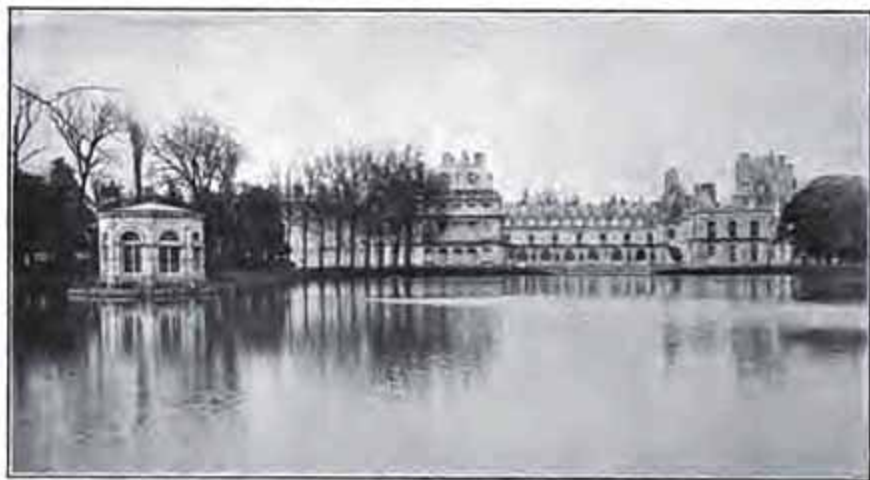


FIG. 6.—Lateral facade of the Chateau of Fontainebleau. From the carp pond. The queen was confined in a room located on the second floor of the pavilion about the center of the picture.

Sainte Marguerite were on the table in the bedroom, and two holy men from Saint-Germain-des-Prez prayed God without ceasing.

The king said he did not wish any one to give any advice excepting the doctors, and that we should agree together, so that I can say I never saw anywhere such tranquillity and peaceful spirit because of the good order which the king brought there, and the assurances which the queen gave him.

To combat the insupportable colic, it was necessary to use a great many remedies. To these the queen made no resistance; for as soon as the king or doctors talked to her, she was content; and took them no matter how disagreeable they were. That is why many women, because of being so obstinate, have been the cause of things going wrong either with themselves or with

their children. The queen's sickness lasted twenty-two and one-fourth hours, and her courage was an admirable thing. She discerned clearly the first pains as well as those last ones when the terrible colic came. During all the time she was in travail the king never left her once, excepting when he went out for something to eat; then he sent constantly for news from her, and madame, his sister, did the same.



FIG. 7.—Courtyard at Fontainebleau. Seen from a window of Marie de Medici's bed chamber.

The queen, before her confinement, did not wish that the little M. de Vendosme\* should come into her room during her illness, because of his youth, but she, on account of the pain, did not take note of his presence. He asked me every little while "if the queen would soon give birth." To quiet him, I said "yes." Then he asked me what the child would be, and I told him it

\* The duc de Vendosme was the illegitimate child of the king and Gabrielle d'Estrees.

would be what I wished it to be. "What," said he, "is it not yet made?" I said "yes" that it was a child, but that I could make it a boy or a girl, whichever pleased me. He said, "midwife, since it depends on you, put the pieces of it into a boy." I said, "If I make a boy, Monsieur, what will you give me?" I will give you everything you wish, or rather; everything that I have." I

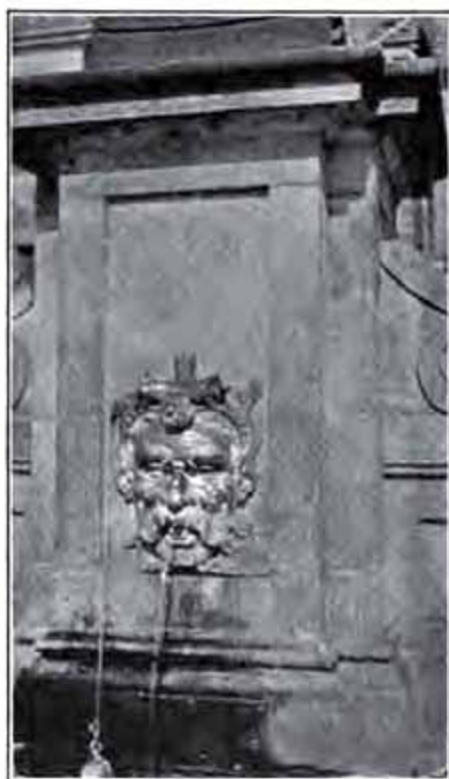


FIG. 8.—Old fountain Fontainebleau.

said, "I will make it a boy and will not ask anything of you but the honor of your kindness and that you will always wish me well." He promised me that, and kept his promise.

When the remedies had driven away the colic and the queen's real labor commenced, I saw that she restrained her cries. I begged of her not to suppress them, for fear her throat would swell.\* The king said to her "My dear, do what your midwife tells you—

\* The belief is still current in many parts of Europe that goitre-bronchocele—may be caused by holding the breath during the expulsive pains of labor. "Unter den Wehen das Haupt aber in etwas vor sich gebogen halten sollen, damit durch starke Athems holen in der Arbeit der Hals nicht kropfficht werde." Nothwendig und Nutzlicher Hebammen Unterricht. Meiningen, 1682.

cry, that your throat may not swell." She desired to be confined in her chair, and being seated, the princes who were beneath the large pavilion sat face to face with her. I was on a little seat before the queen. I placed M. le Dauphin in his linen wrappings, so that no one knew, excepting myself, what sex the child was. I wrapped him up well—this I understood was what I had to do. The king came near to me. I looked closely at the face of the child and saw he looked very feeble because of the great pain which he had endured. I asked for some wine from M. de Lozeray, one of the first valets de chambre of the king. He brought a bottle—I asked him for a teaspoon—the king took the bottle, which he held. I said to him, "Sire, if it was any other child I would put the wine in my mouth and give it to him that way, because of his great feebleness." The king put the bottle against my mouth and said "do to it as you would to another." I filled my mouth with the wine and thus gave it to the child. At that instant he was conscious and tasted the wine which I had given him.\*

I saw the king sad and changed—he had drawn away from me. He did not know what sex the child was—he had only seen its face. He went to one side of the pavilion and told the two femmes de Chambre to get the bed ready. I nodded at Mdlle. de la Renouilliere to give her the signal,† so that she could go and get the king out of his trouble; she was fixing the big bed. Then I saw Gratiennne; I said to her, "My girl, warm a piece of linen for him." Then I saw her go over to the king, who pushed her aside and would not believe what I had just told her. He said that it was a girl—that he knew it by my face. She assured him that it was indeed a boy and that I had told her so. He said to her, "She made a wry face." "Sire, she told you that she would make it," and he said to her "that is true, but it is not possible if it had been a boy she could have made such a face." She replied to him "It is possible, because she did it." Mdlle. de la

\* Good old Dr. Goodell must have been nodding when he prepared his translation of this passage; the French is somewhat archaic, but the meaning is plain. The original reads: *Le Roy vint aupres de Moi; je regarde l'enfant au visage que je vis lu une grande foiblesse, de la peine qu'il avoit enduree; je demande du vin a M. de Lozeray, l'un des premiers valets de la Chambre du Roy. Il apporta une bouteille, je lui demande une cuillere. Le Roy print la bouteille qu'il tenoit. Je luidis: "Sire, si c' estoit un autre enfant, je mettrois du vin dans la bouche et lui en donnerois, depeur que la foiblesse trop dure" Le Roy me mit la bouteille contre la bouche et me dit: "Faites comme a un" un autre. J'emplis ma bouche de vn, et lui en soufflay. A l'heure mesme il revint et savoura le vin que je lulu avois donne.*

† Mdlle. de la Renouilliere and Gratiennne were each anxious—for their own reasons—to have the honor of being the first to notify the king of the sex of the child, and each had arranged for her own exclusive code of signals.

Renouilliere came in. She saw the king was angry with Gratienné. She came to me and I gave her the signal. She questioned me in my ear and I whispered back "yes." She took off her cap and went to make reverence to the king. She told him that I had given her the signal and had also told in her ear that it was a boy. The color came back to the king. He came over to me beside the queen and bent down to put his mouth against my ear and asked me, "midwife, is it a boy?" I said, "yes." He said, "I beg of you, do not give me a short joy—that would kill me." I unwrapped the little Monsieur le dauphin and let him see that it was a boy, but so that the queen did not see anything. He raised his eyes to heaven, joining his hands, and gave thanks to God. The tears rolled down his face as big as large peas. He asked me if I had told the queen, and if there was any danger in telling her. I said "no," but I begged his majesty that this should be done with as little emotion as possible. He went over and kissed the queen and said to her, "My dear, you have had great pain, but God has been very good to us in having given us that which we asked of him—we have a fine son." The queen clasped her hands together and lifted them, with her eyes, toward heaven—bursting into tears, and then became very weak.

I asked the king to whom he wished me to give Monsieur le dauphin, and he said "to madame de Montglas, who will be his governess." Mdlle. de la Renouilliere took the dauphin and carried him to madame de Montglas.

The king then went over to impress the princes with the weakness of the queen, then opened the bedroom door and invited in all the people that were out in the antechamber and the grand cabinet. I believe there were 200 persons, so that one could not move through the room to carry the queen to her bed. I was infinitely angry at seeing this. I said there was no reason for everyone coming in here; that the queen was not yet through her confinement. The king heard me and tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Keep still, keep still, midwife—don't be angry—this child belongs to the whole world, and everyone must rejoice over him." It was half past ten o'clock at night, Thursday, the twenty-seventh of September, 1601, day of Saint Cosme and Saint Damien, nine months and fourteen days after the marriage of the queen.\*

\* The same interesting collection of French historical memoirs from which this account is translated, contains also a description of the last illness and death of Louis XIII.

The valets de la chambre of the king and queen were called. They carried the obstetrical chair near the bed and the queen was then moved. Something was administered to her for her weakness, and having given her the service which was necessary, I took charge of M. le dauphin, whom madame de Montglas gave back to me. M. Herouard commenced then to wait on the child. He bade me wash it entirely in wine and water, and to look it all over before I bandaged it. The king brought up the princes and several noblemen to see it; all those belonging to the household of the king and queen saw the child, and then made places for others. Everyone was so glad they could scarcely express themselves. They all embraced each other without regard to who they were; they were so transported with joy they did not know what they did. I was told that through the entire town all night there were bonfires and the noise of trumpets and drums. Casks of wine were broken open, to be drunk to the health of the king and queen and the dauphin, and the messengers were sent out post-haste to all foreign countries to carry the news, and through all the provinces and towns of France.

As soon as the queen was put to bed the king had his bed made up near to hers, where he laid down to see that all went well with her.

The next day after dinner I found M. de Vendosme alone at the door of the ante chamber, holding aside the curtain of the cabinet through which one passed to go into the room of M. le dauphin. I stopped, very much astonished, and I said to him, "What are you doing there, Monsieur?" He said, "I do not know—scarcely anyone talks to me—no one says anything more to me." "That, Monsieur, is because everyone goes in to see M. le dauphin, who has just arrived. When everyone has greeted him, they will speak to you, as formerly." I told this to the queen, who felt very sorry for him, and said, "Behold, this kills the poor child," and ordered that everyone should caress him, as formerly. "Everyone is taken up with my son, and no one thinks of him, and that seems very strange to this child." The kindness of the queen was always very great.

The twenty-ninth of this same month I went to see M. le dauphin; the page, Biri, opened the door for me. I saw the room full: the king, madame his sister, the princes and the princesses were there, because they were just going to baptize M. le dauphin. I was about to retire, but the king saw me and said, "Come in, come in, you need never stay out." He then

said to madame and the princes: "I have seen many persons, but I never have seen any so resolute, be it man or woman, in war or elsewhere, as is this woman here; she held my son in her lap and looked at the whole world with those eyes as cold as if she held nothing at all—instead of a dauphin, and it has been eighty years since one was born in France!" I replied to this, "I have said to your majesty, Sire, that it was necessary for the health of the queen." "That is true," said the king, "and I did not tell it to my wife until it was all over, so that the joy would not upset her. Never a woman did better than you did; if you had done any different, my wife would have died. Hereafter, I shall always call you *Ma Resolue!*"

The king did me the honor to ask if I wished to be the nurse of M. le dauphin, and that I could have the same wages as the wet nurse. I begged his majesty to allow me to continue my profession, so that I would always be more capable of serving the queen, and so that he would always have near her an honest woman who understood her well. I remained near the queen to serve her in her bed one month, then eight days afterward, awaiting the return of his majesty from Paris, who had asked me to wait for him.

### III

It would take too long to quote the entertaining accounts which this old midwife gives us of five other royal accouchements, but even at the risk of being accused of prolixity, we cannot pass by the interesting picture of contemporary life contained in the following incident occurring in 1602, just previous to the birth of madame Elizabeth, the future queen of Spain. The story carries its lesson even to twentieth century readers:

The queen being large with madame her eldest daughter, the royal family went to Fontainebleau for her accouchement. Immediately on their arrival, one could see numberless wet nurses busy soliciting the king and queen and everybody else with any influence. Since their majesties made the selection at Fontainebleau, it was necessary for each candidate to go there whatever it might cost, and the accouchement of the queen being expected soon, she made haste with her selection. In this connection a certain affair gave me a great deal of trouble. Among other candidates a certain man brought his wife for inspection; they had a little daughter, very delicate and pale. The woman appeared honest and came of such good people that some of the



first gentlemen of the court recommended her warmly to the doctors. She lodged with one of my friends who willingly engaged to speak for her, and she begged me also to do what I could. But I saw that her child was extremely thin, so when anyone spoke to me about her I did not respond very readily. Going one day to examine her, as was my custom, I heard this wet nurse spoken of by her husband's name. Then I remembered that this was the name of a young man whom my husband had treated for la verolle,\* and who insisted upon leaving before he was cured. I had heard it said that no one could keep him from going away. He told my husband that he was cured, that he felt perfectly well, and that he was going to be married. When my husband remonstrated with him and told him what would happen, he only mocked at him. Two or three years afterward I saw some one from his town, and I asked news of him, knowing he was married. They told me that it was a long time since his return from Paris, but that he had trouble in his household, that his wife had had two or three children who were born diseased. I remembered that my husband had said he was not cured, and that if he married something would surely happen to him. Then I was very much troubled and wished I had never seen the woman. She saw that I changed color, and begged me to tell her the cause of it. I did not wish to do so, but she forced me by her prayers, and I told her that I did not take part in the selection of the wet nurses to do anyone harm and that I felt very sorry for her because she did not know what her disease was. Meanwhile, if she should be hired I would speak, but if she should not be hired I would not speak, but would let her go back to her own country. She was engaged, and they were preparing to dismiss all the others. It was time for me to speak. I sought Monsieur de Laurens, who had gone to a dinner party. When I found that he was not there to say when the other nurses were to be sent away, I begged Mdlle. Sauvage, femme de chambre of the queen, to go and tell her for me what the trouble was, which she did. She replied, "go back to the midwife and tell her she has rendered me a great service to-day; if I had been told this by any person but her I would not have believed it." The queen repeated this to the king, who said in a great rage that the wet nurse had come from a long distance to thus deceive him. He sent for Monsieur de Laurens and the other doctors to get at the truth, and to inquire how I could prove what I had said. I

\* "The pox"—syphilis.

told them all, and for proof there was a valet de chambre of Monsieur Beaulieu-Ruze, who, living at the time in our apartments, had assisted in bandaging the man, and another surgeon at Auxerre who was with us at the same time, so my statement was verified. I was very sorry for the disappointment of the woman, but I owed it to my service with their majesties. They then selected another wet nurse.

## IV

For twenty-seven years Louise Bourgeois served the court and royal family faithfully, and without mishap which could justly have been laid at her door. For every royal son, she received 500 crowns\*; for every daughter 300 crowns, and the queen made her rich presents from time to time out of her own pocket. In addition she received 300 crowns for her two month's service during each confinement. Besides the gold cross and chain worn by other royal midwives, she wore, as a mark of special favor, the dignified and picturesque velvet cap worn by the royal nurses and never before worn by a midwife. De Laurens and Jacques de la Cuisse were her friends, but with Guillemeau and Honore she waged a successful but unceasing warfare of wit and sarcasm, not to mention the other less public weapons employed in those days by competitors for royal favor. These two old enemies, however, at last came in for their innings. In 1627 came her débâcle. She was getting on in years and should have retired, unblemished and gloriously, on the pension of 300 crowns, which she had drawn ever since the birth of Henry IV's last child. But ambition and avarice never grow old, and the retiring age, when not arbitrarily fixed, is apt to recede a year or so annually. In the year 1627 either the stars combined against her, or her hand had parted with its cunning, for she lost a royal princess from something which to our modern eyes looks suspiciously like a virulent puerperal peritonitis. It requires no stretch of historical imagination to guess at what followed. Ten medical gentlemen swooped down on the body of that poor little princess scarcely out of her teens and "posted it" with no more mercy or intelligence or regard for the truth than would have been displayed by a present

\* A French crown or ecu was the equivalent of the old English or Scotch crown worth from three to five shillings. The ordinary French crown was worth from three to five francs or livres. There were, however, gold and silver crowns of greater value. Very likely the denomination referred to was the ordinary crown, which would have a purchasing value of about \$1.50 in our present American money.

day Cronor's physician. Here is the protocol; Master Jacques de la Cuisse was present, but refused to sign it, and Brunier and Guillemeau signed it though not present:

PROTOCOL.

Protocol of the dissection of the dead body of her ladyship, the late Duchess. The reader is reminded that the duchess referred



FIG. 9.—Gottfried Welsch. First title page.

to was the Duchesse D'Orleans, wife of the Duc D'Orleans, one of the princes of the blood. She was before marriage Mdlle. de

Montpensier, daughter of the duchess of the same name, and but twenty years of age.

We, the undersigned: Franciscus Vautier, consulting court physician of the late queen; Peter Seguin, court physician of the



FIG. 10.—Gottfried Welsch. Second title page.

queen; Rudolff Maistre, Frantz Tournaire, court physicians of her late highness the Duchess; Abel Brunier, Doctor of Medicine; Carle Guillemeau, Doctor of medicine and surgeon of the king; Johann Menard; Simon Pimpernelle, appointed surgeon of the

dowager queen; Wilhelm Carillon and Frantz Neron, expert surgeons of the late Duke and Duchess, testify,

That we dissected the dead body of her ladyship, the Duchess, by order of her majesty, the king's mother; that we took notice of all inner parts, and found the cavity of the stomach and entire



FIG. 11.—Title page. Second part of Gottfried Welsch. Note that this is a second German edition of Loysa Bourgeois.

contents of the abdomen filled with putrid matter. The intestines were inflated with gas, the stomach small and bloated, the liver shrunk and dry, the small bladder which contains the gall very much enlarged, the spleen larger than it should be, the kidneys small but in good condition, the bladder very small. The

matrix\* was, so to say, floating in a pus-like substance, which filled the lowest part of the abdomen from the umbilicus to the symphysis pubes. The matrix was infected by cancer from the outside into the wall, especially on the left side and at the place where it touches the rectum. Within the matrix on the right



FIG. 12.—Title page. Third part Gottfried Welsch.

inner side and at the bottom or wider part, a small piece of the placenta was found, attached so firmly that we could hardly take it off or separate it with our fingers. The lungs were strong and in good condition and not adherent to the sides. The heart was very small. No water was found in the inner heart or cardinal cavity, and the brain was without any defect.

\* Uterus.

That this is the exact truth, we testify with our own names and signatures.

Given at Paris, on the fifth day of June, 1627.

(Signed)	Vautier	Seguin
	Le Maistre	Tournaire
	Brunier	Guillemeau
	Menard	Pimpernelle
	Carillon	Neron



FIG. 13.—Title page of the Apologia in its German form. From Gottfried Welsch.

Yet one could hardly expect an old fighter like Louise Bourgeois to strike her colors, or to silently accept such a verdict, even though signed by the most distinguished French medical men of her day. And after reading her Apologia we must admit

that even if we cannot clear our minds of the suspicion that the Duchess's infection might have been introduced per vaginam by the midwife's fingers, instead of through a pair of old ruptured pus tubes which the learned faculty called cancer, she has at least cleverly established a *tu quoque* in her charge that her accusers failed not only to describe accurately what they saw but even to know at all what they were talking about. Her pen was dipped in gall, probably also in truth, when she wrote the following vindication, and none of the physicians dared to answer her over their own signatures. But her day was done; she was a dead hen in the pit; the protocol killed her; she confined no more duchesses and spent the rest of her years writing recollections which added nothing to her reputation and might better have been left unreclected.\*

#### APOLOGIA;†

Or justification of madame Loysa Bourgeois, Royal sage-femme, contradicting the report of the Doctors of Medicine.

I, the undersigned, having read the printed protocol of the dissection of the dead body of her late Highness, etc. which the doctors and surgeons who operated upon her ladyship, the Duchess, during her recovery from confinement, have written and published, by which they tried to justify themselves and put the cause of her death entirely upon my shoulders; find it necessary for the saving of my honor to reveal the entire cause, truthfully and thoroughly, of what happened after and during her illness; by which statement it will appear as clear as daylight that the cause of her death did not proceed from the small remains of placenta, as has been wrongfully stated in the protocol.

I wish to state that her Highness, the Duchess was, during the entire period of her pregnancy, in poor health. She was troubled at times with fever, flushes, and nose bleed, and during the last month with coughing, for which reason she had been bled three times. Shortly after her confinement she had fever which did not seem to subside. As far as the birth was concerned everything went well, thank God, not alone in regard to the child,

\* Recueil de Louise Bourgeois. Paris, 1635.

† The Apologia and postmortem protocol are translated from Gottfried Welsch Hebammenbuch and bear the date Franckfurt, 1629. The French original appeared in 1627. The protocol here reproduced is verbatim, but the present writer has thought best, for the sake of space, to eliminate from the Apologia several pages of seventeenth century vituperation.



which was born in the normal way, but also as concerning the afterbirth, which was entirely natural and as it should be. She was later examined by Master Jacob de la Cuisse, an experienced surgeon who had a large practice in such cases. This examination occurred in the presence of the doctors, Vautier, Seguin, Le Maistre, Tournaire, Brunier, and Guillemeau, who all recognized that the above-mentioned afterbirth was normal and in proper condition; as to this I will pledge my life.

Concerning the small piece which the doctors claimed to have been from the placenta, and which grew so close to the matrix that it could hardly be scraped off with the finger, this was not in any way a part of the above-mentioned afterbirth, but the place to which the morsel of flesh commonly called the placenta is normally fastened, which place is more protuberant than the other inner parts in the body of the uterus until the puerperal woman has entirely recovered. This protuberance, or elevation, is really a part of the uterus, and is often taken out of ignorance—I will not say malice—for a part of the afterbirth. This mass could not be removed except with the use of a scalpel. It is well known that the uterus of a pregnant woman is for more than a whole month after her recovery from childbirth made up of many membranes, lying one above the other, like the layers of of an onion. This lasts for more than a month before delivery and for about a week after until gradually the matrix shrinks. Therefore, it is proved that they have torn away this protuberant part of the inner membrane of the uterus, to which the afterbirth had been attached. Whosoever thought out this falsehood and tore this fleshy membrane off the uterus and declared it a piece of afterbirth has a poor knowledge of the art of which I am speaking. You show sufficiently, with your elaborate report, that you have no knowledge whatever of the nature of the placenta, nor of the matrix in women, either before her delivery and puerperal state, or after. You are as ignorant in these things as your Master Galeno, who, though he never had a wife and was hardly ever with pregnant or child-bearing women, yet took the liberty to dictate to midwives how to discharge their duties, and even wrote a book on this subject in which, however, he betrays that he never knew anything about the uterus of a pregnant woman or about the afterbirth. My opponents shall take upon themselves the disgrace and reproach, for having declared this normal uterus to be affected by cancer. The cause of the Duchess's death was an inflammation of all parts of

the abdomen, where, according to their own verdict, pus had collected, against which the uterus could not battle. This infection in such quantity could result from nothing else but from inflamed tissues and bowels, which finally developed cancer and caused the watery substance of the blood to retreat to the cavity of the abdomen, gradually changing into pus. Doctor Riolanus, in presence of the king, of the dowager queen, and of the Lord Cardinal,\* announced the cause of her death (which could not be prevented) as nothing else but cancer in the lower parts of the abdomen. This part was swollen, as firm as a drum, and as if she had not been delivered of her child. Other doctors who were present agreed with him. Remember, also, that the Duchess suffered after her delivery until the hour of her death from continuous diarrhea, expelling often a greenish and blackish matter, denoting great fever and putrefaction in the bowels. This matter passing through the rectum caused the change in the adjacent matrix which you observed. Nor should you have omitted from your protocol the following important facts, had you spoken the truth faithfully: You should have told how much her abdomen was swollen as well before as after her death, which would have been proof enough that the cancer was of the bowels. This necessarily causes an inflammation lasting longer than twenty-four hours. Neither should you have failed to describe the various parts and state their color, as important changes take place in these cases, and certain symptoms may be taken as the forerunner of death. In plain language, you simply will not admit that it was inflammation and cancer of the intestines. Nor have you spoken clearly even of the uterus, the size of which you certainly should have described. All you noticed is that her lungs were sound, not adherent to her sides, that her brain was normal and without any defect.

I am convinced that if honest, expert professionals in this matter had been chosen as judges, they would never have approved of your invention concerning the placenta, which subject you had canvassed already before the postmortem, with the intention of accusing me of her death. These men would not have allowed you to name in your report those persons who were not even present; for instance, Ms. Brunier and Guillemeau, nor was there any mention of the surgeon, Master de la

\* Richelieu: The Cardinal himself was in scarcely less trouble over this Madame Bourgeois; he was accused of having, for reasons of state, poisoned both the Dutchess and her offspring. The infant lived to write her own memoirs.

Cuisse, who assisted me during the confinement of her Highness. He was present during the dissection and declared that the injured part was not the placenta but was the result of using the nails and scalpel on a part of the fleshy membrane which nature had left inside the uterus—all of which should be sufficient to prove your report mistaken and untrue.

I have practised my profession now for fully thirty-four years, faithfully, diligently, and honorably, and acquired not only a good certificate, after various examinations, but have also written books treating on this subject, which have been printed and published in several editions and were translated into foreign languages, for which trouble many noted physicians have rendered me thanks and have gladly confessed that they were of great use to humanity. If I had knowingly left a piece of the placenta inside the matrix, I should have mentioned it in time, in order to have asked advice and help. And should I not have known it easily enough by simply examining the placenta? Such a mistake would have been evident within twenty-four hours, by symptoms which never fail to develop in that time. As none of the conditions referable to retained placenta appeared and the lochia showed neither bad color nor odor, you men of science who are such experts in the diseases of the child-bearing woman, should have warned us to prepare for other dangers.

Besides, let me tell you, that if a small piece of the placenta should have remained inside (which, however, did not happen) it would have decayed and detached itself and passed normally with the lochia, which flowed incessantly until the day of her death. We have this experience daily in our practice. On the fourth day after the birth small and tender fibers were passed normally, as fine as a spider's web, which the specialists call amnion and chorion. You will probably contradict this. However, I wish to reply that Hippocrates, whose experience in female troubles and diseases is very famous, declared that the wife of a tanner who had been confined normally had passed on the fourth day a piece of membrane, without any accident or dangerous consequences. This great and excellent man wished to give posterity to understand that this is as a rule neither harmful, not of great consequence or danger.

No one could claim after reading the treatises of noted scribes that a small piece of placenta which was dried up and attached to the uterus without putrefaction ever caused death. I read myself in Paulo Aegineta's work on surgery, that no doctor need

be surprised to find pieces of the placenta discharged even on the fourth or fifth day after confinement of some women. I am also informed that a famous surgeon and anatomist, called ab Aquapendente, was of the same opinion and asserts that he had seen many women who evacuated the putrid placenta in pieces, yet did not die of it.

So you see, you gentlemen of the Faculty, that you made a great blunder in attributing the cause of death to this invented story of the placenta. Why did you not rather ascribe it to the lasting attack of fever, which affected the patient before as well as after the birth, or to the cough which tormented her before and after confinement, or to diarrhea, which appeared too soon after? Every one of these three diseases are dangerous for a puerperal woman, and you should have considered them with more judgment and insight.

If you wish to learn something about the secret troubles and diseases of women, you should associate often with midwives and assist them in the treatment of child-bearing women, not only once or twice, but often, like your great Master and Law-giver, Hippocrates, who had no aversion to meeting and consulting with midwives or to asking for their help.

These things I have found it necessary to explain to you, for the sake of my honor, and in my defense, against the calumnies which were spread against my good name and reputation. I will gladly submit to the verdict of medical experts in Paris and elsewhere (besides those others who take a great interest in this matter) as well as to that of those persons whom her majesty will be pleased to choose for my justification.

Given in Paris, June 8, A. D. 1627.

LOYSA BOURGEOIS.  
*dite Boursier.*

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