have supplied, will be a support and a consolation. What must be the feelings of those to whom this consolation is denied! who feel a doubt whether the fatal event has merely exemplified the limited efficacy of art, or has been owing to their own ignorance or incompetence!"

CRYING OF THE FŒTUS IN UTERO.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I beg to solicit the publication of the following case, which I presume you will deem of sufficient importance to occupy a place in your valuable periodical.

I was some time since called to the wife of a blacksmith at Preston, about two miles from my residence, who was in labour with her tenth child. I had attended her in several former confinements, and she had always had quick deliveries, as the pelvis was unusually capacious, and her pains were active. After I had been a few minutes in the room, I proposed and made an examination, and found the face presenting, and making its descent into the pelvis, the chin resting on the os pubis.

A few strong pains succeeded, and I again examined to ascertain if the face had made any advance. I found it had done so, and that it was pressing on the perineum; but in making this examination, my finger passed freely into the mouth of the child, and it immediately gave a convulsive sob, and cried aloud to the great terror of the mother and of the by-standers, when they found that it was still in the womb. I had great difficulty in calming the agitation produced by this event upon the woman, whose pains were suspended for nearly an hour, but I eventually succeeded by explaining that the face was presenting, and that from the circumstance of my having passed my finger into the mouth, the air had gained admission and enabled the child to breathe; this, with a little spirit and water, and a dose of the ergot of rye, succeeded in bringing on the uterine action, and, after two pains, the child was expelled alive and well, at least one hour after it had respired and cried in the womb. I am not aware that any instance similar to the above is on record, but I consider it one of consequence as a physiological and medico-legal point, and one which will throw additional difficulties in the way of that clear proof which is so desirable in cases of infanticide. I remain, Sir,

Your faithful and obedient servant,

WILLIAM TOMKINS, Surg.

Yeovil, July 8th, 1834.

RELAXATION OF THE UTERUS, DURING LABOUR,

BY ARTIFICIAL MEANS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Observing, in THE LANCET of the 31st May, a paper by Doctor Shanahan respecting the use of tartar emetic as a relaxant in cases of rigidity of the os uteri during protracted labours, I wish to direct the attention of your readers to a few *extracts* from a work published by Sir James Murray, when I was his pupil, entitled a "Dissertation on the Influence of Temperature, Diluents, &c.,"* In the appendix to that book the same principle is inculcated, and, to my knowledge, had been acted upon eighteen years previous to that time by Dr. Murray,—a fact of which Dr. Macdonnell of Belfast and others of his medical friends are well aware. The agent, however, more lately employed by Dr. Murray, is not tartar emetic, but ipecacuanha, for, on comparative trials, he found the latter much more mild, safe, and manageable. The sedative action of tartar emetic, its operation being sometimes too severe, and continuing after the relaxation was effected, and even after delivery, rendered it a much less desirable remedy. It was also found objectionable from its action on the bowels. It is, however, but just to Dr. Shanahan to state that he disclaims having seen the work above alluded to, prior to the publication of his paper in THE LANCET. I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

CHARLES CLARK.

Great Ship-Street, Dublin,

June 28th, 1834.

Appendix, page 1.—"It is eighteen years since I began to state to my medical friends that most cases of difficult or tedious labour, not depending on malformation or disproportion, were retarded by some want of consent between the muscular fibres, and by the absence of easy dilatability and relaxation; and that the business of the practitioner almost in all the cases is, *to diminish resistance—not to increase power*. Such want of consent in the action of muscular and other fibres is observed to take place between the vesica urinaria, and its neck in retention of urine. In such cases the bougie, if requisite, should be the only instrument used, *which being very slowly withdrawn* is followed by the urine, during the production of the

* Longman and Co., 1829.