

whether certain effects proceed from chemical or mechanical agency. The doctrine attempted to be established by Mr. Dalton is, that gases mixed together are not united by chemical affinity. There are not, however, any phenomena attendant on their union which differ from those presented by solution in liquids generally. Wherever there is a force unopposed by another force, that force must of necessity operate. In the case of solution of a solid of greater specific gravity than the menstruum, there are two forces to be overcome; the force of gravitation and the force of aggregation; two homogeneous particles connected together by attraction can only be separated by a heterogeneous particle, exerting a stronger attraction for one of the homogeneous particles than the homogeneous particles for one another; and in this manner alone can be, as I conceive, produced a new system of aggregation and gravitation. This argument, in as far as relates to gravitation, is equally applicable to the union of gases, and perhaps on examination the difficulties which hitherto have perplexed this inquiry, will be found wholly to turn on the too arbitrary definition which chemists have thought proper to affix to the term chemical affinity.

CORRESPONDENT, *sine nomine*.

VARIED AND COMPLICATED
CASE OF MIDWIFERY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The variety of incidents and fortunate termination which attended the following case of midwifery, must plead as my apology for troubling you with it, and if you consider it of sufficient importance, I shall feel honoured by its insertion. I remain, Sir, your constant reader, and very obedient servant,

G. R. MART, Surgeon, &c.

8, Charlotte Street, Blackfriars Road,
April 2, 1831.

Mrs. Landport, a middle-aged woman, mother of five children, living in Nelson Street, Borough, had requested my attendance at her confinement, which she supposed would take place about the end of last January. However, I had no message until Sunday, March the 6th. She told me some slight pains had disturbed her about three o'clock in the morning, and had gradually increased, so that at two o'clock P.M. she desired I should be sent for. On examination I ascertained it to be a breech case, and advancing with every pain; the clef-

in the nates and the scrotum were readily discovered. She had some suspicion that it was not a natural presentation. Not choosing to increase her fears I said nothing about it, but waited the result. At four o'clock the body and legs had passed through; the external parts were well lubricated, and a considerable quantity of the waters was still confined. The back of the child was to the belly of the mother, and the circulation going on. The pains returned, and in fifteen minutes the arms and shoulders came through, requiring very little assistance. The head now descended, and all my attention was directed in bringing it through as quickly as possible; this duty became more paramount as I felt the circulation between mother and child gradually declining, and in a few minutes entirely cease. The action of the uterus was very powerful, and seemed quite sufficient to deliver the head in a certain time, yet in spite of this favourable circumstance, and all the assistance I could render, it was full twenty minutes from the head first descending, before the child was born. The reason of this was, the size of the head, which I may remark was in proportion to the body; the child was very large and full-grown. A tub of hot water was now procured, and for half an hour every attempt was made to restore animation by inflating the lungs, &c., till I was compelled to turn my attention to the mother, whose pains had returned, and who was in expectation of the placenta coming away. In a few minutes a quantity of coagula and a considerable portion of the placenta were expelled; after taking these away I found the funis adhering. I waited half an hour; the pains were sufficiently strong to have expelled the placenta with ease, but the funis seemed adhering just as firmly as ever. It was now high time to think of extracting the placenta, more especially as the slight hæmorrhage had increased, and reached an alarming height. I hesitated no longer but gradually inserted my left hand, and discovered a contraction of the body of the uterus, forming, in fact, the hour-glass contraction. By pulling gently at the cord with my right hand, I was enabled to follow its direction into the upper chamber, and succeeded in introducing a finger, and soon after the remaining ones through the stricture. In the hollow formed by my fingers I introduced my thumb, and then so overcame the contraction as to get the whole of my hand as high as the fundus, where could be felt the placenta adhering strongly to the uterus, and of a scirrhous hardness; thus for a full quarter of an hour was occupied in dilating. I now proceeded cautiously and gradually to loosen or rather drag away the adhesions; in this I was successful only by pressing with my right hand the parietes of

the abdomen against my left, thus as it were fixing the uterus between them. After half an hour had elapsed from the first attempt to extract, I found the placenta loose, and keeping it and the coagula before my hand I gradually withdrew them, feeling the uterus griping and forcing them out by its permanent contractions. The patient was fatigued, and immediately suffered syncope; fresh air being admitted, ammonia applied to the nostrils, and a table-spoonful of brandy swallowed, she recovered, and in a few minutes the pulse began to rise; the brandy was repeated, and at the end of two hours she was comfortably in bed. I administered twenty-five drops of tinct. opii, and left the house at seven o'clock; at ten the same night she was much improved, no faintings, the pulse weak and easily compressible; left some anodyne medicine, and ordered that the room be kept cool and quiet. I visited her early on Monday morning; the after-pains had been severe through the night, yet at one time she slept for four hours; I gave her twenty drops of tinct. opii. In the evening I found her with a little fever, and her abdomen somewhat painful to the touch, and although her pulse was of a wiry nature, yet I was inclined to ascribe this to loss of blood, and therefore considered it as an hæmorrhagic pulse. I ordered six drachms of castor oil, and the belly to be fomented every four hours. On the Tuesday I found her very much improved, the bowels were relieved, the belly less tender, and in the course of the day the oil purged her again. On Wednesday her tongue was clean, and the belly tender only at certain parts. Her cough had been, and was troublesome; an expectorant in a mixture relieved it. The castor oil has been occasionally given, and at the end of ten days she had porter and a mutton-chop allowed, and has continued to recover with nothing else in the form of medicines.

The breech presentation, the largeness of the child (which weighed nine pounds and a quarter), the hæmorrhage which followed the expulsion of a part of the placenta, the danger attending it, the hour-glass contraction of the uterus, and adhesion of the placenta, all occurring in one patient, make this case one of much interest and practical utility. It is remarkable also that no inflammation of the peritoneum took place, though in all probability the hæmorrhage had the effect of preventing any attack.

There is another observation connected with this case. What would have been the termination had a midwife attended?—In all likelihood death would have been the result. A breech presentation (from their known obstinacy) would not have led her to ask for assistance, nor would she have become alarmed at the placenta adhering, as, a por-

tion having come away, she would expect the remainder to follow; the hæmorrhage would not be thought of, and if by accident it was discovered, the delay necessary in procuring assistance would be a sufficient time for it to prove fatal.

ACADEMIE NATIONALE, PARIS.

OBLITERATION OF THE VAGINA BY THE INJECTION OF SULPHURIC ACID TO PRODUCE ABORTION.—CÆSARIAN OPERATION.—DEATH.

THIS singular case is detailed in a letter addressed to M. Guerin, it occurred in a married woman, the mother of four children, and pregnant of a fifth. At the commencement of her pregnancy, she was induced by a female neighbour to inject sulphuric acid into her vagina, as an extremely easy mode of inducing premature labour; dreadful inflammation set in, the parts swelled, great general disturbance ensued, and finally the vagina was so effectually obliterated that she could no longer endure the embraces of her husband; nevertheless, she kept the circumstance a secret till the full term of her gestation was expired. The medical men on examination found that a kind of irregular band surrounded and obstructed the vagina, beyond which, and on the brim of the pelvis, the head of the infant was distinctly felt, pressed forward by the uterine contractions. It was resolved to make an incision through the dense membrane, but when this was done, it was found it had adhered to the bladder, which the incision had completely divided. The delivery was not at all facilitated, and the attendants felt themselves compelled to perform the Cæsarian section. The infant was extracted, dead, apparently for some time, and the mother immediately expired.

ABSENCE OF THE GALL-BLADDER.

M. AMUSSAT, at the same sitting, communicated the description of a dissection he had recently made of a young female in whom the gall-bladder was altogether deficient.—*Lancette Française*.

POISONING BY THE POWDERED ROOT OF IPECACUAN.

A MAN affected with a slight cough and coryza was employed for three hours in powdering ipecacuan root, and during the operation he inspired and swallowed a considerable quantity of the dust. Soon after, he vomited three times, and was seized with dyspnoea, which quickly increased so as to threaten suffocation. He was bled to ten