

involving a mortality to mothers of one in fourteen; while chloroform, when the patient was already "nearly unconscious," greatly increased the danger without in the least facilitating the indicated operation. The child being dead beyond doubt, prompt ovisceration and delivery with the crotchet would have afforded to the mother the greatest possible chance for life. Reports without *post mortem* examinations are unsatisfactory, it not absolutely valueless. The true cause of death in this case must ever remain a doubt. Was there injury or partial rupture of the uterus, caused by turning, or was the system too enfeebled to be able to rally fully from the anæsthetic state? Certainly the "getting up," however reprehensible, is scarcely sufficient alone to account for "fatal collapse, or the formation of clots in the heart."

In the April No. of the *Lancet* the author of "*Phenomena of Life*" solicited a critical examination; but neither the Editor, himself a respectable author and an eminent teacher of physiology, nor any one of his learned correspondents has, as yet, deigned to notice the subject. Surely the question, though emanating from an obscure source, ought to be considered sufficiently important to the advancement of medical science to merit a careful investigation. So deep and universal has been the impression that a beneficent Creator, who has assigned definite laws for the government of the universe, would not have left man, the only portion on which he has stamped the divine image, to the operations of mere chance, that philosophers, in every age have invented theories designed to explain the "*animating principle*." The hypothetic "*Entity*" of Aristotle, and the "*Materia Vita*" of Hunter, with all intermediate shades of conjectures, aim at explaining vital action by some mysterious agent, which is in a measure, independent of the organism itself. It is evident that an organic system, to be perfect, must contain within itself some principle of action capable of maintaining and regulating its operations, and as every piece of mechanism from the Great Architect bears the impress of perfection, we must consider the *vis vitæ* an inseparable part of the being. What philosophers sought for in vain, physiologists explored the human system to discover, and men of science ardently desired to know, is found, as might have been expected, in the simple arrangement of the two nervous systems, admirably adapted to *preside over organic*