ART. IX.—Observations in Reply to a Paper published by Mr. H. Carmichael in the Dublin Journal for January, 1839, on the Position of the Placenta, &c.; in which also an Attempt is made to point out the Circumstances which determine the Situation of its Attachment, and to account for the Occurrence of Placenta Previa. By Richard Doherty, M.D., and Licentiate in Midwifery, Edinburgh; Clinical Clerk to the Lying-in Hospital, Rutland-square; Secretary to the Obstetrical Society, and lately one of the Physicians to the Parochial Dispensary of St. Thomas, Dublin.

[Read before the Dublin Obstetrical Society.]

In common with many of my professional brethren I lately derived great pleasure from perusing a paper published by Mr. Hugh Carmichael, in the Dublin Journal of Medical Science for January last, "On the Position of the Placenta or After-birth in the Womb during Pregnancy, and on the Manner the latter Organ..."
expands therein; as also of its subsequent Contractions in the Process of Parturition." Struck with the ingenious and novel manner in which the author explains one of Nature's most mysterious operations, I determined to lose no opportunity which the vast field for observation afforded by the Lying-in Hospital, Rutland-square, permitted me to enjoy, of testing the views there put forward; and having already met several cases, whose history I consider incompatible with them, I shall proceed to detail objections founded on those cases, (and I think fairly deducible from them,) which appear to me fatal to his theory.

Mr. Carmichael, having proved it essential to the life of the foetus, that an uninterrupted communication be maintained between the child and the placenta, details the opinions generally entertained on the subject of his investigations; namely, that the placenta, on its formation, is attached to or near to the fundus uteri, and continues in that position throughout pregnancy, with occasional deviations, all of which, except those at the neck and mouth, are compatible with safety, indeed immaterial; that the expansion of the womb is produced by a general increase of its parietes yielding in all directions, the neck and mouth being the last to expand, and that its contractions proceed in a corresponding, but retrograde order, the fundus first contracting, and afterwards the other parts in all directions, the placenta in each of the two latter continuing at the fundus throughout the entire process.*

Admitting the original position of the placenta at its formation to be at the fundus, Mr. Carmichael denies that it continues in that relative situation throughout gestation, and endeavours to prove the result of such an arrangement should be, a partial separation followed by haemorrhage during the growth, or at all events during the contractions of the uterus. And the reasons he assigns for these opinions are two-fold. In the first place, the principal growth of the uterus is, as must be admit-