

transigunt, membra sua positione ea qua plasmanantur (tanquam naturalissima ac maxime indolenti quietique aptissima) componunt*.”

The matrix, as we have already said, takes a very ready growth after conception, and it continues also to increase in proportion with the foetus; but the foetus at length outgrows the matrix, and then, especially when it approaches maturity, it may be too much confined, and agitate the matrix by reiterated motions and violent efforts. The mother sensibly feels the impression of these painful sensations, and which are called periodic pains after the labour commences. The more power the foetus exerts to dilate the matrix the greater it finds the resistance, from the natural compression of the parts. From thence all the effect falls on the orifice, which has been increasing by degrees during the latter months of pregnancy. The head of the foetus, forcibly inclining against the sides of the orifice, dilates it, by a continual pressure, till the moment of delivery, when it opens sufficiently for the child to escape from the womb.

What makes it probable that the labour-pains proceed only from the dilatation of the
orifice

* Harvey on Generation, page 257.