

cation alike in operator and patient. In damp weather, or when fog is present, these discomforts are accentuated, and it is just at such times that more thorough ventilation becomes most difficult. However, temporary inconvenience appears not to be the only risk run in these cases. Dr. Mey, of Berne, has reported a death as resulting from the generation of these fumes. Dr. Mey found himself compelled to undertake a serious operation involving abdominal section, which occupied several hours. It had to be undertaken at night, and, besides the operator and patient, a colleague of the surgeon and two nurses were present in the room. Chloroform was administered, and coming in contact with the illuminating gas caused severe cough. Some hours after the operation Dr. Mey suffered from severe dyspnoea, which persisted for some time. The two nurses had similar seizures, and one of them eventually died from the effects upon her lungs. So serious a result is, we believe, a unique experience, and one which is likely to deter surgeons from an unguarded employment of chloroform when an open flame is the only means of illumination. The dangers referred to are minimised when the chloroform is given from an inhaler, such as Snow's, Clover's or Junker's. With such an apparatus comparatively little chloroform vapour escapes into the air, and, therefore, little, if any, is burnt. A further precaution is a thorough ventilation; a large room with an open fireplace and an efficient ingress for air will do much to obviate such untoward accidents. In hospitals there should be no possibility of either impure chloroform or of such crude arrangements being in use as unguarded gas lamps and chloroform given from a cloth or towel. With the simple means of testing and purifying chloroform, which Professor Ramsay has given, no excuse can reasonably be made for jeopardising the lives alike of the patients and of the officiating staff by using decomposed chloroform. It is to be hoped that to be forewarned will prove to be forearmed, and the occurrence of the death of the nursing sister at Berne will prevent the possibility of another fatality from a cause which seems distinctly preventable.—*The British Medical Journal*.