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As a result of the report made by the Hyderabad Commission, the question of the merits of chloroform are attracting great attention. This Commission, of which Dr. Lauder Brunton was a member, performed a great number of experiments, principally on dogs, with the view of definitely settling the vexed question of how chloroform kills. Ever since the introduction of this agent there have been two rival theories as to the way this lethal effect is brought about. One of these views, mainly held by Edinburgh surgeons and their disciples, was that chloroform induced death by paralyzing the respiration; the other view was that death almost invariably occurred from cardiac failure.

The experiments performed by the Hyderabad Commission were of two kinds—one being conducted to elucidate what influence is exerted by various conditions upon the relation between cardiac and respiratory arrest, and to point out how far methods at resuscitation are useful; the second group of experiments, made with recording apparatus, were performed to ascertain the effect of chloroform on the heart and blood-pressure. In the first series, 430 experiments were performed mainly on dogs, with the uniform result that in every case where chloroform was pushed the respiration stopped before the heart. The chloroform was administered in various ways, alone and with morphine, atropine and strychnine. Animals were experimented on who were healthy and suffering from disease. It was given on a full stomach and on an empty one, but no matter what the condition was, the result was invariably respiratory before cardiac failure.