

In speaking out thus boldly to a professional audience, Dr. Richardson has not spoken a moment too soon. The *ad captandum* method of applying the most potent medicinal agents against the teachings of scientific experiment and the experience of accepted observers, is a phrase in physic which requires to be put down with a strong hand. Administration of nitrous oxide, or laughing-gas as it is commonly called, is becoming a pastime for amateurs. We hope these few and timely words will prevent a catastrophe. If they fail, the fault or neglect will not rest with us.—*Lancet*.

[Only two deaths have occurred in America during the use of nitrous oxide. The lungs of one patient were covered with tubercles, and the other death was caused by swallowing the cork held between the teeth. The tone of Dr. R's address seems unreasonably severe. Ed. C. J. D. S.]

LOCAL ANÆSTHESIA.

The danger attending the inhalation of the vapors of anæsthetic agents led to the introduction of what are known as local anæsthetics. Various means have been tried, among them the application of the electro-galvanic current; one pole of the battery being attached to the forceps, and a connection with the other held in the hand of the patient.

Various local applications upon the tooth and surrounding gum have also been tried for the purpose of obtunding sensibility previous to extraction. For this purpose equal parts of chloroform and tincture of aconite root have been recommended; but as this last is a very dangerous agent it must be used with great care. By some practitioners a solution of camphor in ether is highly spoken of.

The following method of using chloroform or ether to obtain partial insensibility during extraction of teeth, has been tried, it is asserted, with success. The plan is to drop on the vortex from 10 to 30 drops of ether of these agents, covering immediately with a folded napkin or handkerchief; an anæsthetic effect is produced, during which the tooth can be extracted. Should the application cause a painful sense of heat, the cloth can be partially or wholly removed.

More recently, the method invented by Dr. Benj. W. Richardson, of London has come into general use. The process consists in directing on a given surface of the body, such as a tooth and the surrounding gum, a volatile liquid in minute subdivision or spray.

The apparatus consists of a bottle to contain the ether or other fluid to be used; through a perforated cork a double tube is passed, one extremity of the inner part of which goes to the bottom of the bottle; above the