

feared hæmorrhage, to give a large dose of ergot towards the close of the labour; but he did not object to the use of chloroform as well. In operative midwifery anæsthetics were invaluable.

Mr. GERVIS referred to two cases of death from chloroform which had come under his notice in hospital surgical practice, in both of which the patients had previously been the subjects of delirium tremens; and in both the muscular tissue of the heart was found, after death, to be soft and greasy—a condition, indeed, which the result of many examinations showed to be tolerably uniform in most cases of death from delirium tremens. Mr. Gervis considered that these cases, though not obstetric, would tend to corroborate the view of the unadvisability of administering chloroform in labour where the patients had been the subjects of alcoholism.

Dr. BARNES rose to disclaim all responsibility in the case of death after chloroform which Dr. Kidd had cited in connexion with his name. The case had been related by Professor Rye, of Christiana. He (Dr. Barnes) had simply recorded it in an English journal. With respect to the use of chloroform in obstetrics, Dr. Barnes had found, in a large experience of turning, that in many cases chloroform did not facilitate the operation. The influence of the brain removed, the excito-motory system seemed to act more violently, and sometimes spasmodically, the uterus resenting the introduction of the hand. Under ordinary circumstances, turning could not be regarded as a severe or painful operation. Delivery by turning was sometimes less painful than by the head. Again, in ordinary forceps cases, chloroform was certainly not required either to facilitate the operation or to allay pain. In operative midwifery, chloroform was most useful in turning where there was unusual difficulty, and in difficult delivery after craniotomy. It appeared to him incomprehensible how a special immunity from the perils of chloroform should pertain to puerperal women. To say that 40,000 women had taken chloroform in labour, without any mishap, was one of those vague statements which were entitled to little weight. He had himself given chloroform to facilitate the extraction of an adherent placenta, and had witnessed such exceeding prostration for three hours afterwards as to make him and another practitioner, who assisted, apprehensive of the instant death of the patient. He should be sorry to have it supposed that he entertained any prejudice against chloroform. He knew its value in certain cases, and gave it with care, and yet without timidity, and should not be deterred either by the bad effects he had witnessed or by those he had heard of from giving it on proper occasions. He had been especially gratified with the beneficial effects of chloroform in cases of great nervous excitement, where the patients laboured under a sense of dread of impending danger, and where even convulsions seemed to impend. He believed he had thus averted convulsions, and had certainly accelerated labour. He thought it worthy of inquiry why anæsthesia had made so little progress in Germany, where interference in labour was so much more general. It was also worthy of remark that English midwifery maintained its greatly superior success, notwithstanding the introduction of chloroform.

Dr. GREAM said that, from some observations which had been made, it might be inferred that chloroform was but little used in midwifery in London; but he was sure that in no place was it more extensively employed, and he could positively state that amongst the upper classes it was almost universally employed, but with a general feeling of abhorrence of anything like intense insensibility. Surprise had been expressed by Dr. Barnes at the statement that so large a number of cases had occurred in which chloroform had been used in midwifery without accident; but there appeared to be no difficulty in understanding this, for it should be remembered that it was never right, nor was it required, to carry insensibility so far as in surgery; and he (Dr. Gream) was sure that all the fatality which had attended the exhibition of chloroform in midwifery had arisen from some little want of care, or from a want of appreciation of its power. When anæsthesia was first introduced he had opposed, with others, the indiscriminate use of it, for he thought that at that time it was recklessly employed;