

employed for anæsthetic purposes in Great Britain, France, and the European nations, the extent of the employment of the latter over the former may be imagined; but with all this extensive employment of Chloroform, we have not a record of 200 deaths,* but even if we had 300 deaths, which it will be admitted will cover the whole number, these even would bear in our opinion a less ratio to the extent of its employment than what the 52 recorded deaths stated to have occurred from the use of Ether and its preparations bear to that of the latter. The very extensive employment of Chloroform is a point which has not received that attention from the Committee which it deserved, but it is one which we think of great importance. Such, however, is our opinion; but to those who feel disposed to administer the Ether, we append the directions as laid down by the Committee in an abbreviated form.

I. The safe inhalation of ether requires proper attention—1st. to the quality of the article used; 2nd, to the method of administration; 3rd, to the symptoms which present themselves while the patient is under its influence.

1st. *Quality of Ether.*—Ether for inhalation should be of unquestionable purity.

Ether may be made purer by simple agitation in lime-water, allowing the water to settle, and then decanting; and this washing is, practically, and for general application, as good a method of purification as can be adopted without re-distillation.

2nd. *Method of Administration.*—Ether should never be given from any inhaling apparatus. The best medium of its administration is a bell-shaped sponge, large enough to cover in the nose, mouth and chin; but it is difficult to find one of sufficient size and close enough in texture, or without such numerous apertures at the root as to admit too freely of atmospheric air. A stiff towel, properly folded, may be substituted, and has the advantage of being always at hand; as it may be left behind, the surgeon does not carry away with him the annoying odor of an impregnated sponge. It is desirable that the towel should be a new one and of pretty good size. It is to be taken just as it comes from the laundry, and not unfolded further than to display it in the dimensions of about ten inches by five; by folding down two of the corners in such a way that they shall lap over each other a little, and securing them by stout pins, a cone will be made which fits the face admirably. The thick layers of towelling will hold sufficient ether, and its texture prevents a too free dilution of the anæsthetic by the atmospheric air, provided the apex and seam of the cone are carefully and tightly closed, either by pins or the fingers. As the cone becomes collapsed by saturation, it should from time to time be opened, and kept in shape by distending it with the hand. Unless these details are attended to, and especially the closure of the apex of the cone, the induction of anæsthesia will be uncertain and protracted. In anything so porous as a towel or sponge, the difficulty is to exclude enough air; for while its adequate admission to the lungs during etherization is essential to the life of the patient, its too free entrance not only delays anæsthesia, but induces a condition of excitement, both mental and physical. The importance of excluding the air, as above stated, is a point not generally appreciated, but the necessity of it has long been known to those most accustomed to the use of ether, as shown by the "chemise" with which, in hospital practice, a too porous sponge is often covered to expedite the etherization of a rebellious patient.

Ether should be poured lavishly on the towel or sponge, an ounce or two at a time, especially at the commencement of inhalation. Although it may be wasted, too much so far as safety is concerned, cannot be used. A small quantity poured on hesitatingly and timidly, as is sometimes done, has the same effect as a too free dilution of the vapor with air, producing simply intoxication and its accompanying excitement without anæ-

* The Dublin *Medical Press*, 5th June, 1861, says "over 150 deaths."