

symptoms until 12 hours after the operation, when she began to sink, apparently from heart failure, dying in 36 hours. Dr. McCallum, of London, made a post-mortem, and these are the notes: The wound and abdominal contents normal to the eye, peritoneum smooth and glistening, right side of heart contained an ante-mortem clot of one ounce, while the left side was empty, valves normal, all the chambers dilated, myocardium was pale and easily torn. The coronary arteries presented well marked nodular arteritis and the left was almost obliterated an inch from its origin. On throwing a section of the ventricular wall into water a coat of oil immediately floated on the surface. The microscope showed well marked fatty degeneration of the heart muscle. Is not this a case of a weak heart receiving the fatal strain from chloroform?

One very important quality of the heart is its elasticity, by means of which it is enabled to dilate when occasion requires and again resume its normal size when the emergency is passed. Now, a constant result of the administration of chloroform is dilatation of the heart, and it is clear that if its elasticity be impaired by any cause whatever, as by fatty degeneration, it may not be able to recover itself after the dilatation caused by the chloroform, and is consequently unable to sustain life long, although the patient may live through the operation.

If this be true, it follows therefore that a fatty heart or a weak dilated one is a contra-indication to the use of chloroform; the Hyderabad Commission to the contrary. But here a great clinical difficulty meets us, that is the almost impossibility of recognizing this condition of the heart beforehand.

I now come to the second heading, "Administration of Chloroform."

*Preparation of the Patient.*—It is a well-known fact that chloroform is best administered on an empty stomach. No solid food should therefore be allowed for five or six hours before the operation, but a cup of soup or broth may be given with advantage two or three hours before. If a weak heart be suspected, strychnia and digitalis should be given for a couple of days before the operation. This treatment was first suggested by Pro-