

ness, and the mischief is done. And ought such a drug as this to suffer discredit because the ignorant and the careless do not know how to avoid its manifold dangers? Ought such a drug to be taken by sleepy women, or stupid men? No surgeon, who was not grossly incompetent, would dare to place a handkerchief sprinkled with chloroform in a patient's mouth while he walked once or twice up and down the room, and yet cases are not infrequent of persons applying a handkerchief to their own mouths and nostrils, and quietly going off to sleep. The extreme peril of such a course can hardly be exaggerated. Why, as the muscles come under the influence of this powerful drug, they are completely relaxed, and the tongue falls back in the mouth, closing the opening to the larynx, and making death by suffocation not improbable. The wonder is that many more deaths do not occur under such circumstances.

We should not omit to say that probably many of the deaths attributed to the careless use of chloroform have really been instances of suicide. We are not reflecting on any case in particular, nor do we wish to call in question the verdicts of coroners' juries. But is anything more likely than that a nervous woman, depressed with fancied pains, and the prey of worry, should, in some fit of despondency, intentionally saturate a handkerchief with chloroform, and thus quietly and painlessly pass away. Several cases, the particulars of which we have read, certainly suggest the possibility of such an explanation being the correct one. In that case some of the distrust of chloroform now felt, both in professional and non-professional circles, might be quite unfounded.

When chloroform is administered it should be by a competent and cautious medical practitioner, who has time to attend to his responsible duty, and when it becomes necessary to resort to less experienced hands, it should be some member of the sufferer's family, or a sensible and clear-headed friend, who should be called upon for the purpose, though even then the administrator should be duly warned how to proceed. No patient should ever practise on himself with such a drug as chloroform, and then there would be a speedy diminution of the deaths from what is and long has been a priceless blessing.—*Sanitary Review.*