

frequently does it happen in these cases, and more especially in those that prove fatal, that the jaw remains locked and the power of deglutition gone, preventing on the one hand the use of the scarifying lancet, and on the other the administration of suitable remedies, thus leaving us almost powerless for relief to our patient.

Besides which we must bear in mind the impossibility of prognosticating the result in any case of convulsions; for once these spasms have begun, who can tell where they will stop? In many cases the nerves once put to their utmost tension seem to keep up their irritability, and are ready to start the muscular contractions from the slightest source of irritation either external or internal. In such cases the usual remedies or appliances are really of very little service, and after repeated attacks the patient dies exhausted, unless speedily relieved.

But what will be said of those cases in which little or no interval to the spasms ever takes place, and the patient dies utterly exhausted without the slightest remission in the distressing symptoms?

In such cases the attempt to administer remedies by the mouth is utterly futile and from observation of a number of such cases it has appeared to me that any movement of the patient has acted as an additional source of irritation, and that counter-irritation, and even leeching, have produced the same effect. And indeed when we take into account the intensely susceptible state of the nervous system which, in such cases, may be compared to a cord stretched to its utmost capacity and ready to snap by the slightest touch, we cannot wonder that any irritation, even the very slightest, is injurious.

In such instances, almost the only avenue of communication, so to speak, with the interior of the system is through the action of respiration.

If, then, we have a remedy which is a powerful sedative of the excitatory nerves, and which can be safely introduced into the system by means of inhalation, and if such a remedy is had recourse to, before the body is completely exhausted, we at once control the nervous twitching or more severe convulsions and thus give time for throwing off the source of irritation, or we allay the induced over-excitability of the nervous system, and give time for the calming down of the tumult produced.

Such a remedy, I believe, exists ready to our hands in the shape of chloroform, administered by inhalation.

But, without any further preface, let me relate five cases in support of this view: J. R., a boy aged seven months, with a large and very irregular head, child of a very scrofulous mother but of a healthy father, had several slight attacks, marked by fixing of the eyes producing the appearance of a continued stare, was seen by me in July, 1859, for convulsions