

DISCOVERY OF CHLOROFORM.

"The merit of discovering chloroform belonged to Sir James Simpson, the late distinguished Professor of Midwifery in the University of Edinburgh. It is related how Simpson, experimenting as was his wont on November 4th 1847, with unknown agents in the search after a reliable pain-abolisher, took down a bottle containing a heavy, clear sweet smelling liquid, which had been long known as a chemical curiosity, and which had, if I mistake not, been first made by the distinguished chemist Scheele. There were present in Simpson's house with him the late Dr. Mathews Duncan and Dr. G. Keith. They all three sniffed at the vapor exhaled from the bottle, and then all three successively fell under the table. Professor Simpson was the first to recover, and saw Dr. Keith's legs making violent demonstrations, while Dr. Duncan was snoring heavily. The new vapor was chloroform, and Simpson's paper was read on November 10th 1847, before the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Edinburgh, its title bearing that it was a description of a new anesthetic which could be used as a substitute for ether."

"Some ultra-orthodox Scotsmen, who, as is their little way, delight to "nail w' Scriptur'" their arguments and contentions, told Professor Simpson that his discovery was in its essence contrary to the declaration of Holy Writ. In pain and in sorrow woman has to bring forth children. This was Heaven's decree, and if Simpson proposed to use chloroform to lighten the pains of labor, he would be invalidating the spirit of Genesis. But Simpson was equal to the subtleties of the "unco' guid." He adopted the most excellent rule of plying them back with another text. God, he said, caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep when the first surgical operation mentioned in the Bible was performed—that of removing a rib for the creation of Eve. This silenced the Biblical cavillers, and for the rest Simpson fought a hard battle with the scientific critics and won.

The relative merits of ether and chloroform have, of course been much discussed. Some surgeons use a mixture of the two, others a mixture of chloroform, ether, and alcohol. There is a controversy still pursuing its course as to whether chloroform is dangerous to the heart or to the lungs. All I know is, that in the old Edinburgh days, when giving chloroform, our instructions were

summed up in the words "watch the breathing." In the South doctors are taught to watch the pulse. I think the balance of opinion is swinging to the old Edinburgh view of things. But considering the thousands and thousands of cases in which chloroform is annually administered to patients with every condition of heart and lungs represented, and having regard to the relatively few fatalities which occur under skilful hands, we may all, in this jubilee of anesthetics, drink a bumper to the pious memories of the men who toiled to give to their race the great and priceless boon of freedom from pain."—*Science Gleanings*, by Dr. Andrew Wilson, —*The Illustrated London News*, Nov, 1896.

HINTS.

"Babies need water, water, water, and plenty of it."—Dr. C. E. Fisher.

"There is great danger in feeding children too often. More children die from over-feeding than from lack of food."—Dr. C. E. Fisher.

A teaspoonful of cream preceding its regular meal is said to be a good remedy for constipation in infants. A little olive oil is also a fine remedy for constipation and one more easily obtained than cream.

"There is one point to which I desire to call particular attention, and I have seen it mentioned but once, i.e., the baby should always be fed when in the semi-erect position, never when lying down."—Dr. W. S. Mills.

"In cases of diphtheria where there no longer seems to be any hope I have found *Zincum* to act as by enchantment."—Dr. Woodward.

Placing the hand over the spot where pain is felt and letting it get warm there will often give relief.

Difficult urination in old men, necessitating at times the use of a catheter, is often relieved by five-drop doses of the tincture *Sabal serrulata* twice a day.

A few drops of *Mullin oil* in the ear, or a pledget of cotton saturated with that remedy stuffed in the ear on going to bed, will often relieve deafness not resulting from incurable defects in the ear. It is also a grand remedy for ear-ache in children.—*Ex.*

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