

interference, except with the knife, would be out of the question, or extremely dangerous. Add to this the number of lives formerly sacrificed in consequence of the agony of an operation either killing the sufferer outright or terminating his existence a few days or hours later; add, moreover, the indescribable relief the administration of chloroform after an operation often brings the exhausted sufferer; add, also, the gain chloroform has been to army surgeons in extracting and finding bullets deeply embedded in the tissues of the victims of war, and the relief to surgeons who have operations to perform, to be spared the distracting cries and agonising writhings of the hapless sufferer, and our statement that the use of anæsthetics is an unspeakable boon to operator and patient, must pass unchallenged.

But it may be objected that the mortality after operations actually appears to be greater now than formerly, while many persons have an uncomfortable notion that many deaths occur from chloroform; how, then, can it be pleaded that life is saved? When, however, it is remembered that very many more operations are performed than formerly, that every year in London alone hundreds of sufferers, who would have been left to die unaided, are now given the chance of an operation, our statement is seen to be literally true. The cases which, before the discovery of chloroform, were submitted to operation were picked; but now such prudence is no longer necessary. As for the deaths from chloroform when properly administered being proportionately numerous, that is absurd; perhaps one death in four thousand administrations would be an excessive estimate. But, after all, the diminution of suffering is the great thing; and were chloroform far more dangerous than it is, its use could not be dispensed with.

Once more we repeat that our remarks only apply to chloroform, and indeed to all anæsthetics, when *administered by competent hands*. No drug is more dangerous than chloroform when used by the sufferer himself, or when in the hands of ignorant persons. General rules are of little service, while as for the appliances and graduated measures sold they are a delusion and a snare. The value and the danger of chloroform can only be learnt in the sick room, or in the operating theatre. The young medical man, by seeing this drug administered by more experienced seniors, is trained to give it; thus, and thus only, he learns when to give more and when to cease giving, and a hundred signs, useless to an inexperienced spectator, tell him that the patient, though on the very brink of the grave, remains safe. Momen's occur when the slightest carelessness for a single second means death to the patient; one glance aside, one instant of forgetful-