

7. Chloroform given during the period of expulsion has a less decided effect upon the contractions of the abdominal muscles and the resistance of the perineum than is generally supposed. The sensation of pain at that period is not entirely abolished, the contractions are frequent.

Chloroform is especially indicated :

1. In primiparæ who are nervous and excitable, and in whom the pain may even cause delirium ; also in those with whom the labor is greatly prolonged, thus becoming a source of danger.

2. In all cases in which there is spasm, contraction, or rigidity of the neck or body of the uterus. Contra-indications are the absence of severe suffering, the existence of placenta prævia, general prostration, disease of the circulatory or respiratory organs, cerebral disease, alcoholism, etc.

During the period of dilatation chloroform is most required, but only to the extent of obstetric anæsthesia, as a rule. It sometimes gives rise to nausea, vomiting, headache, and various nervous troubles. Hemorrhage is not likely to result unless the anæsthesia is profound. Chloroform cannot cause convulsions ; on the contrary, it is one of the best means for relieving them. It may also be useful in warding off puerperal mania from those patients in whom the intense pain of parturition might lead to such a result. Dutertre has found reports of forty cases of sudden death during labor attributable to chloroform, but of that number thirteen should be eliminated as irrelevant. Of the others, some had cardiac or pulmonary disease, some suffered from alcoholism, and in others the narcosis was too profound. A first condition in the use of chloroform is that it be chemically pure ; death from respiratory syncope may follow the use of an impure article. Small quantities should be given, the patient being in the horizontal position, and there should be an interval between successive inhalations.

Subcutaneous injections of antipyrine, 25 centigrammes at a dose, have been used in a number of cases to produce obstetric anæsthesia. Other mixtures have been suggested, in most of which ether, chloroform, or chloral is an element. The author expresses his views upon the subject as follows :