

## PRECAUTIONS IN THE USE OF CHLORAL.

Dr. Donovan calls attention in the *Dublin Medical Press and Circular*, to some dangers from chloral. He refers especially to "its dangerous effect when administered to patients laboring under acute pulmonary diseases, such as pneumonia, bronchitis, and all diseases whose tendency is to retard respiration. I have, I regret to say, seen not necessarily fatal cases of pneumonia, become hopeless after an ordinary dose of this death-producing hobby-horse of modern medicine.

"The first case in which I used it was that of a stout, well-nourished man, of about 25, who was suffering from extreme asthma and insomnia of pneumonia. Its effect on him was quite enough to warn me of its dangers; his wife and himself made me promise on my next visit not to give him any more of that *stuff*, as it was near killing him. He said that a very short time after taking it he lost all consciousness, and suffered from a kind of frightful nightmare, his wife stating that he was raving and muttering all night; when I saw him next morning he was in a state of complete prostration, his powerful constitution alone bringing him through.

"The second and last time it was administered to a patient of mine by a medical man of long standing and large practice, whom I met in consultation, and whose antiquity carried the day against my comparatively juvenile ideas. It was about eight or ten days after her confinement, which had been a dangerous one, when she was attacked with pneumonia; and, against my wish, received a twenty-five grain dose of chloral; the consequence was, what I had expected, in a short time after taking it she sank into a state of low muttering delirium, from which she woke with the death rattles in her throat."

## DEATH-RATE OF VARIOUS CITIES.

Dr. Charles P. Russell, at the meeting of the New York Academy of Medicine, held May 15, 1873, read a valuable paper on "Mortality in the various States of the Union." The following selections are given by the *Medical Record* from his very comprehensive tables.

"The highest death-rate in the United States, according to the table, was given by Memphis, viz.: 46.6 in each 1000 inhabitants; in Savannah, the mortality was equal to 39.2 in each 1000 inhabitants; in Vicksburg 36.5; in Troy, 34; in Hoboken, 32.9; in New York, 32.6; in Newark, 31.6; in New Orleans, 30.6; and in Boston, 30.5. These were the highest figures of mortality. The other principal cities furnished the following death-rates: Philadelphia, 26.1; Brooklyn, 28.1; St. Louis, 20.1; Chicago, 27.6; Baltimore, 25.1; Cincinnati, 20.5; San Francisco, 17.2.

Of the larger British cities, Dublin yielded the greatest death-rate, viz., 29.9 in each 1000 inhabitants; that of Manchester being 28.6; of Glasgow, 28.4; of Leeds, 27.9; and of Liverpool, 27.1. The death-rate of London was as low as 21.4—less than that of any other important British city.

On the continent of Europe, the highest death-rate was noticed in Prague, Bohemia, viz.: the enormous one of 48.9 in each 1000 people. It was excessive in Cadiz, Spain, where it was equal to 44.7; in Munich it was 41.8; in Rome, 36.7; in Naples, 35.7; in Florence, 35.1; in Athens, 33; in Berlin, a city with less population than New York, it was 32.3, or nearly equal to our own; in Bologna, Italy, it was 32.2; and in Vienna, Genoa, Stockholm and Nice, 31.8. The large mortality of the last-mentioned city is owing to the many deaths of invalid strangers sojourning there. High death-rates prevailed also in Havre, Rotterdam, Leghorn, Venice, and Milan, ranging between 31 and 30. In Paris it was stated at only 21.1—but all deaths of strangers and travellers are there excluded.

The lowest mortality was given by the Swiss cities in Zurich, Geneva, and Basle—13.9, 19.4, and 20.9 respectively—and Christiania, Norway, 20.7. Algiers, Africa, gave a death-rate of 33.6. That of the Indian cities of Bombay and Calcutta was by no means high, being 29.2 and 25. In Madras, however, it was 35. In Montreal it was 37.3 and in Havana 35.1. The highest known death-rate prevailed in Valparaiso, Chili, viz.: 66.9 in each 1000 inhabitants. This was the only South American city heard from.

## BEEF TEA.

The question as to the nutritive value of extract of meat has again been discussed by Baron Liebig, in which he carefully reviews the leading objections which have been urged against it. The veteran chemist's vindication of his opinions is of considerable interest, as he there sets forth his views on this subject shortly and precisely, and endeavors to correct the misrepresentations of the doctrine which he really teaches, and which he asserts that he taught from the beginning. He wishes it to be well understood that "he never asserted that beef tea and extract of meat contained substances necessary for the formation of albumen in the blood or muscular tissue;" and "that by the addition of extract of meat to our food, we neither economize carbon for the maintenance of the temperature nor nitrogen for the sustenance of the organs of our body; and that, therefore, it cannot be called 'food in the ordinary sense,' but we thereby increase the working capabilities of the body and its capacity to resist exterior injurious influences, *i. e.*, to maintain health under unfavorable circumstances." Those constituents of the meat which are soluble in boiling water take no part in the formation and renovation of the muscular tissues, but by their effect on the nerves they exercise a most decided influence on the muscular work, wherein meat differs from all other animal or vegetable food. He therefore places extract of meat, and with it tea and coffee, under the head of "nervous food," in contradistinction to articles of "common food," which serve for the preservation of the temperature and restoration of the machine. Beef tea and extract of meat are of themselves incapable of supporting nutrition or maintaining life. Liebig, how-