

## Medical News.

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DR. N. G. ORDWAY, of Portland, Maine, who was sued for malpractice in the matter of an operation performed upon a patient's hand, has received a verdict in his favor on the singular defence, as reported by a local paper, "that the ether used in the operation affected the physician so that he was unconscious of what he did."

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### DEATH FROM CHLORAL HYDRATE.

DR. GEORGE G. NEEDHAM reports in the *Journal of Psychological Medicine* a case of fatal cerebral congestion following the administration of Hydrate of Chloral to a married woman, aged 50 of hysterical diathesis, who had suffered for some ten years with symptoms of mental derangement, consisting of distressing "nervousness," fear of impending death, hesitation, suspiciousness, etc. Ophthalmoscopic examination showed an enlarged and tortuous condition of the retinal vessels. In October, 1870, the loss of a relative threw her into a state of much excitement, for which she took, on October 19th, 115 grains of bromide of potassium. On the 21st, chloral hydrate was prescribed in thirty-grain doses, of which she took six, as follows:—On the 21st, at 5.30 p.m. and 11 p.m.; on the 22d at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.; on the 23d, at 1 a.m., 8 a.m., 8.10 a.m., and 1.30 p.m. On the afternoon of the 22d she was sleeping quietly, with a somewhat rapid pulse, and was found in the same condition at two visits (morning and evening) on the 23d. On the morning of the 24th her continued sleep created alarm, and ineffectual attempts were made to rouse her, which were maintained during the day and night. Sulphate of strychnia was thrice injected in doses of one thirtieth of a grain at intervals of four hours during the night. Coma progressed to a fatal termination on the afternoon of the 25th. The autopsy revealed extreme hyperæmia of the pia mater and brain substance. A year before the patient had taken nearly the same quantity of chloral within the same period of time without ill effects. The writer suggests that the previous administration of a long course of bromide of potassium may increase the danger of full doses of chloral.