

inhale if an attack came on. Ho (Mr. Greenhalgh) had employed chloroform in a great number of cases, and had himself frequently inhaled it. It had the advantage over other of being more easily applied, producing no excitement, being more rapid in its action, and leaving none of the unpleasant sensations behind it which other did.—*Lancet*, Dec. 4th, 1847.

73. *Ether in Surgical Operations*.—Prof. SYME in an article on this subject in the *Monthly Journ. Med. Sci.* of August last, remarks:—

“Whilst discharging what I conceive to be my duty in offering this testimony as to the safety and efficiency with which ether may be administered, I am very far from desiring to sanction its indiscriminate employment, or attaching to it the importance that has been so much insisted upon by some popular writers. In an inflated article of the *North British Review*, obviously written more with a view to make an impression upon the non-medical part of the public, than to convey useful information—the author, with greater credit to his plausibility than sincerity, if, indeed, he really possessed any surgical knowledge or experience, has not scrupled to magnify the value of an influence causing insensibility, or forgetfulness of suffering, by greatly exaggerating the pain of operations, and misrepresenting the effect of its suspension upon their performance. Physical pain is undoubtedly an evil, but certainly one of very secondary importance when compared with any want of perfection in attaining the object for which an operation is performed. It may be added, that the pain of trivial operations, such as the extraction of a tooth, or the evulsion of a nail, would form a very erroneous standard for estimating the amount of what is felt on the occasion of more extensive mutilations. I have frequently, in operating at the hospital, called attention to the perfect quiet and composure of patients under the greatest liberties ever taken with the human frame, such as the removal of large tumours, amputations, and lithotomy. On many of these occasions not one cry or groan, or even any alteration of the breathing, not a movement of the body, or contortion of the countenance could be noticed; and the patients, when asked to describe their sensations, have represented them as nowise unbearable.

“But however severe the pain really were, it would still be of little consequence when compared with the effects of the operation; and the patient, upon awakening from his ethereal trance, would be sorry to learn that immunity from suffering had been obtained at the expense of unnecessary injury to his body. It has been said, indeed, by the reviewer, that the ether, so far from impeding the proper performance of operations, will greatly promote it, by freeing the surgeon from a powerful inducement to hurry through their steps, instead of taking them with care and deliberation. But surely, though this argument might suffice for “*vulgus captandum*” purposes, it could not for an instant impose upon any member of the surgical profession. Operations performed quickly are in general performed well, not because of the short time they occupy, but in consequence of nothing more being done by them than what is actually required; while slow operations are in general ill-performed, not by reason of their slowness, but from the unnecessary groping, squeezing, cutting, and tearing required for their completion. If a surgeon can perform an operation properly, he will not render his work more perfect by protracting its execution; and if he cannot duly discharge his duty on a patient who retains sensibility, he will find himself no less unable to do so in operating upon one stupified by ether.

In many operations it is of the utmost importance that the patient should retain a voluntary control over his movements, not only for assisting the operator by executing those that he may desire, but by abstaining from those which would be obstructive of the object in view. Thus I have known the little operation for fistula in ano not only impeded but prevented by the convulsive efforts induced through the use of ether. In all careful dissections, as those for hernia, and the removal of tumours from intricate connections of importance, I would therefore advise against the inhalation. I lately disarticulated a clavicle from the sternum, for osteo-sarcoma, and dissected out some large deep-seated tumours of the neck, with results which, I believe, might not have proved so satisfactory if ether had been used. In operations affecting the nose and mouth, also, I should think it inexpedient to render the patient insensible; lest from the want of voluntary

effort, suffocation, or an approach to it, might arise from the entrance of blood into the air passages. Finally, I beg to warn against administering the ether to persons in a state of great weakness or exhaustion. About a week ago I performed amputation of the thigh on a young man brought into the hospital from the neighbourhood of Kirkcaldy, where, seven hours before the time of his admission, his leg had been completely shattered by a railway carriage. There was no sign of reaction, or promise of any from delay, and I therefore proceeded to remove the limb. Upon the incisions being made, relaxation of the sphincters took place, the contents of the rectum and bladder were voided, and an effort at vomiting seemed the prelude of immediate dissolution. Before tying the arteries, I wanted to ascertain whether the condition of the patient depended upon syncope or death. My colleague, Dr. Duncan, by causing alternate pressure and relaxation of the chest, effected artificial respiration for some time without any sign of returning life. But by and by the actions of the system were gradually restored, and maintained through the use of stimulants. The wound has healed by the first intention, and the patient now seems to be in a fair way of recovery, which he most certainly would not have been if the vital powers had been in the slightest degree lowered or impeded in their operations by the use of ether.)

74. *Remarks on the Inhalation of Ether in One Hundred and Six Cases.*—Mr. WELLS of the English Navy, gives the following as the result of one hundred and six cases in which he used ether vapour:—

The operations were—amputation of arm, 1; amputation of parts of hand, 4; lithotomy, 1; excision of tumours, 1; removal of polypi, 2; of inveterate nails, 3; of necrosed bone, 1; opening and emptying ovarian cyst, 1; strabismus, 15; incisions for various purposes, as dividing fistulae, opening sinuses, &c., 13; extraction of teeth, 59. I also applied the vapour in a case of hydrophobia, and in one of suspected malingering.

*Effects.*—No serious ill effects followed in any case. In only one was unconsciousness excited; this was a little girl, who although not more than a minute under the influence, suffered from vomiting and faintness for nearly an hour, and remained for eight hours in a state of complete intoxication. The operation being only that for the cure of strabismus, could not have induced any such condition. In three delicate women, hysterical laughing and crying followed, but never lasted more than a few minutes. One young lady appeared to be in a profound sleep for four hours, but on recovery said, she had been quite sensible of everything that had occurred during all this time, although she was quite incapable of either speaking or moving. In no male was any ill effect observed. The wounds in every case presented a healthy appearance, and the processes of granulation and cicatrization were apparently in no way affected by the etherization of the patient. In nine cases, the inhalation was discontinued on account of suffocative feelings or convulsive motions of the patient; in fifty-two, the persons either cried, started, or moaned during the operation, but, on recovery, said they had felt no pain, although, in fourteen instances, they were conscious of what was being done; in forty-five, the success was complete, the patients giving no sign of sensibility during the operation, and on recovery, appearing quite ignorant that anything had been done. The sensations described by different persons were extremely various; generally there was some heat in the mouth and difficulty of breathing, followed by vertigo and conscious loss of muscular power preceding insensibility. By some, pleasant dreams, indescribable but delightful sensations, rapid flights through the air, gorgeous visions, and unearthly music, were described in glowing language; by a few others, a sense of great oppression, resembling nightmare, was complained of; in many others as total a temporary suspension of all the mental faculties and cerebral functions had taken place, as in the most profound sleep, nothing being remembered after the few first inhalations, until the period of returning consciousness. In those cases, where flushing of the face, turgescence of the neck, or convulsive motions, led to a discontinuance of the inhalation, nothing more than difficulty of breathing was complained of.—*London Med. Gaz.*, Sept. 1847.

75. *Ether in Dislocation*—Mr. DEHANE records (*Prov. Med. and Surg. Journ.*,