

On Friday, Jan. 28, Mr. Lloyd, my assistant, and myself, having determined upon the necessity of removing the nail and matrix in a case of onychia, proceeded to do so, putting the patient (who was a well-developed girl of 15) under the influence of chloroform. About two months previous, she had, under the influence of ether, undergone a similar operation on the other toe in the Newcastle Infirmary. She described the ether as having full effect, but leaving a headache, which lasted for a day or two, and produced coughing, from the irritation of the windpipe.

She was recommended by her father to undergo the operation without taking any of the "stuff," and bear a little pain. She, however, refused to submit unless something was administered to deprive her of feeling. We recommended chloroform as preferable to ether, not having left any ill effects where I had administered it. She appeared to dread the operation, and fretted a good deal: in fact, she commenced sobbing on our entering the house, and continued so until seated in the operating chair, and commencing the inhalation, which was done from a handkerchief on which a teaspoonful of chloroform had been poured. After drawing her breath twice, she pulled my hand from her mouth. I told her to put her hands on her knees, and breathe quietly, which she did. In about half a minute, seeing no change in breathing, or alteration of pulse, I lifted her arm, which I found rigid. I looked at the pupil and pinched her cheek, and, finding her insensible, requested Mr. Lloyd to begin the operation. At the termination of the semilunar incision she gave a kick or twitch, which caused me to think the chloroform had not sufficient effect. I was proceeding to apply more to the handkerchief, when her lips, which had been previously of good colour, became suddenly blanched, and she spluttered at the mouth, as if in epilepsy. I threw down the handkerchief, dashed cold water in her face, and gave her some internally, followed by brandy, without, however, the least effect, not the slightest attempt at a rally being made. We laid her on the floor, opened a vein in the arm, and the jugular vein, but no blood flowed. The whole process of inhalation, operation, venesection, and death, could not, I should say, have occupied more than two minutes.

Since the occurrence of this case, I have heard of several where temporary inconvenience was produced by chloroform, but not of any decided character, nor of long duration. In one case, after a third administration, temporary but furious delirium was produced: several complained of headache and oppression of respiration; and I have no doubt, now that the ice is unfor-

tunately broken, we shall find that chloroform is not the infallible agent which it was vaunted to be by its talented though sanguine discoverer, and we shall hear much less of the non-professional and drawing-room exhibitions of the vapour.

I am, sir,  
Your obedient servant,  
T. N. MEGGISON, M.D.

Whickham, near Gateshead,  
Feb. 3, 1848.

\* \* We have great pleasure in inserting Dr. Meggison's account of the circumstances attending the operation. It corroborates the statements contained in the full report elsewhere inserted, which was in type before the *Gateshead Observer* reached us. His remarks on the absurdity, and even danger, of the drawing-room exhibitions of this narcotic vapour, are well-timed and appropriate. The manner in which he has made known to the profession all the particulars of the unfortunate case which has led to his letter, reflects the greatest credit on his candour and honesty of purpose. We heard of a case some weeks since, in which chloroform was used, and there was great reason to believe that it proved fatal. On application, the parties declined to publish the particulars!—ED. GAZ.

#### THE EFFECTS PRODUCED BY ETHER IN THE CASE OF HANNAH GREENER.

SIR,—Supposing that the late fatal administration of chloroform in this locality will occupy some portion of your pages, perhaps it may not be uninteresting to your readers to state some particulars relative to the administration of ether in the same case, and to which allusion is made in the evidence adduced before the coroner.

Hannah Greener was admitted into the Newcastle Infirmary, under my care, on the 22d of October, 1847. She was then suffering from onychia maligna of her left great toe, which had commenced about twelve months before: the right great toe was also affected, but to a much less extent. Her general health was good, although her appetite was less than natural. This was the only symptom which indicated that the system was suffering from any irritation.

On the 26th of the same month, I removed the nail of the left great toe; and as the operation was necessarily very painful, I gave her a full dose of ether. She afterwards said that she felt no pain during the operation, and that she "was asleep the whole time."

It is stated in the report of the coroner's inquest that ether of three different strengths was administered. This is incorrect: three instruments were used, and the last one (Hooper's) produced complete insensibility.

I saw the patient about thirty minutes after the operation, and found her drowsy : I directed the attention of the pupils to the case, and delivered a clinical lecture upon onychia.

My reason for stating this is, that the attention of the pupils was directed to the case, and yet no pain in side, chest, or head, was ever mentioned to one of them ; nor, until the inquest took place, had I ever heard of any such affection.

My report states, that " she screamed during the operation, but did not feel any pain." Her pulse never varied much ; her countenance was *flushed* (in chloroform I have always seen it more or less blanched, which agrees with the evidence). She had no hysterical symptoms ; no laughing, no crying : the pulse became weaker while under the immediate influence of ether, but soon recovered its usual state. When I visited her half an hour after the operation, there were no untoward symptoms present, nor did any such symptoms exist during her residence in the Infirmary : indeed, if she had suffered from any ill effects of ether, why should she have so earnestly requested to have " the stuff" administered before she submitted to a second operation ?

I remain, sir,

Your obedient servant,

H. G. POTTER, F.L. and G.S. Lond.  
Surgeon to the Newcastle Infirmary.

## Medical Intelligence.

### CONFERENCE OF POOR-LAW MEDICAL OFFICERS WITH THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS.

THE College authorities having fixed Tuesday, Jan. 25, for receiving a Deputation from the Committee appointed by the Convention of Poor-Law Medical Officers, the following gentlemen—Dr. Hodgkin, Mr. Vallance, Mr. Peter Martin, Dr. Barnett, Mr. Lord, and Mr. Healey, the Honorary Secretary,—attended at the College of Physicians at 3 o'clock, and were received by Dr. Paris, the President, Drs. Clendinning, Todd, Sutherland, and Hawkins (the Registrar).

Dr. Hodgkin, in introducing the Deputation, remarked generally on the objects sought by the Convention, and the manner, temperate but firm, in which the Committee desired to carry out their objects. He dwelt on the claims which the profession had, when aggrieved, to the assistance of its seniors, and especially of a corporation exercising privately by its members, as well as publicly by its legal position, so much influence as the College of Physicians. The

Deputation, in seeking that conference, had it in view to secure the advantage of the College's assistance ; and he expressed his hope and confidence, as one of its licentiates, that that assistance would be cheerfully accorded.

The President here remarked that the College did feel a warm interest in the subject which the Committee was submitting to it, and that in the Parliamentary Committee, under Lord Ashley, he had himself given evidence in favour of a great improvement.

The Deputation then submitted in detail to the President and Censors the different grievances under which Poor-Law Medical Officers suffered throughout the country, particularly adverting to the inequality of payment, its inadequacy, the short tenure of many Poor-Law medical appointments, the system adopted in giving orders, and the mischief which from all these causes constantly arose to the pauper sick. They referred to instances in illustration, and adverted to the influence the position of the College necessarily gave it with the Government, urged on it that, by representations to the Government, on the one hand, and by joining, on the other (through their President), a deputation to Sir George Grey and Mr. Buller, to be sent from the Committee, that they would exercise all their power to mitigate an evil alike mischievous and dishonouring to the whole profession.

The President and Censors promised to give their best consideration to the statements of the Deputation, expressed the warm interest they felt in removing the grievances complained of, and added an assurance that the College would be glad on every occasion to communicate with the Committee, and to second, as far as possible, their exertions.

The Deputation, having expressed their acknowledgments for the marked courtesy and cordiality with which they had been received and their representations heard, then retired.

### DEPUTATION TO THE SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES.

A VERY full Deputation, consisting of Mr. Martin (of Reigate), Mr. Bottomley (of Croydon), Mr. Vallance, Dr. Barnett, Mr. Liddle, Mr. Lord, Mr. Lobb, Mr. Boulger (of Blechingley), Mr. Mitchell, and the Honorary Secretary, had the honour of waiting on the Society of Apothecaries on Friday, the 28th ult.

In answer to representations similar to those made to the College of Physicians, the Society, through the master, Mr. Bean, and several of the wardens, emphatically declared their warm interests in the exertions of the Committee, and stated that the grievances