A HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS AGO

Extracted from an early issue of *The Practitioner*

NOTES AND QUERIES: DEPARTMENT OF ANALYSIS AND INVENTIONS

DR CROMBIE'S CHLOROFORM APPARATUS

DR CROMBIE'S CHLOROFORM APPARATUS is manufactured by S. Maw, Son, and Thompson.

This instrument, of which we append a woodcut, is a very ingenious and useful invention. The object of the inventor has been to make it possible for persons suffering from intense pain or insomnia to avail themselves of the benefits of those smaller doses ("stimulant" doses, we should call them) of chloroform which will produce sleep without producing coma.

It is notorious that an immense number of sick persons are in the habit of using chloroform with this intention, but that they usually take it by means of a simple handkerchief or lint, which, at any rate for self-administration, is a most dangerous method, and is already known to have caused several deaths, and suspected to have caused many others. In Dr Crombie's instrument there is no danger of any untoward accident. The patient, lying comfortably on a sofa, or in bed, places the vessel containing the chloroform (the cap well screwed on) beside him, and puts the conical face-piece over his nose and mouth. He then proceeds to work the hand-ball with regular rhythm: this projects an exceedingly small quantity of chloroform, at each jet, on the blotting-paper in the case.

"This inhaler has been largely used for cancer patients, and other sufferers from painful incurable disease, with great benefit. It certainly affords the only means we know of by which chloroform can safely be administered to themselves by patients"

Very soon a feeling of drowsiness comes over the patient, which renders it impossible for him to keep up the pumping movement, and he quickly drops off to sleep without the possibility of giving himself an overdose.

We understand that this inhaler has been largely used for cancer patients, and other sufferers from painful incurable disease, with great benefit. It certainly affords the only means we know of by which chloroform can safely be administered to themselves by patients.

