

ness, unless the narcotic be taken in very large doses ; great mental irritability and muscular prostration ; uncertainty of movement, with tendency to fall forward ; caprice of appetite and frequent nausea. In some cases there is injection of the conjunctivæ, and in other cases yellowness. The urine, in extreme cases, contains albumen, and the bowels are commonly constipated, the evacuations being white and hard. Chloral hydrate does not produce the ecstatic dream or delirium caused by opium or haschish ; on the contrary, it causes, through all the stages of its action, a sense rather of depression than of elevation of mental faculty.

These researches tend to prove the necessity of care in the administration of this drug. It certainly is not because a patient is quieted by it that he is necessarily benefited by it.

Modern Scepticism.

The papers of Feb. 3rd last contained two rather remarkable documents. The "Times" had a long review of a sceptical book by the Duke of Somerset ; the "Lancet" contained a report of Sir Wm. Gull's address at the Clinical Society. Both had this in common—that they were attacks on the old and established faith of the majority ; but, happily, there the resemblance ends. The odd coincidence of their appearing together suggests, however, some reflections on the altered position of "free thinking" within the last few years. Not long ago medical men were credited as a class with a tendency to unbelief, but the progress of events has left them far behind in the competition for such a distinction.

Now it is a Duke who feels a call to attack Christianity, to speak of the "educated Protestant no longer believing what the Evangelists believed and affirmed," and to assume that society is too advanced now to dream of attaching any importance to old beliefs.

Without entering into the theological questions involved, we may doubt whether the cause of truth or the interests of society are to be benefited by such an outburst. All that learning and research can do has been given to the world by men who are respected even by those who are unconvinced ; but to what purpose is an assertion that all sensible men have ceased to believe in revealed religion, and that it is only fit for "imaginative" minds ? &c., &c.

A certain number of persons, incapable of reasoning and undesirous of the labour of thinking, accept such books as truth, simply because they are heretical; but that is just the tone of mind which is so mischievous, and which is almost as fatal to the true advance of knowledge as any amount of superstitious belief.

It may not be inappropriate to call to mind the remarks of one of the greatest thinkers on the orthodox side with reference to the use of reason, viz., J. H. Newman, who in the 13th of his "University Sermons," says:—

"Where the exercise of reason much outstrips our knowledge, where knowledge is limited and reason active, where ascertained truths are scanty and courses of thought abound, there indulgence of system is unsafe and may be dangerous. *In such cases there is much need of wariness, jealousy of self, and habitual dread of presumption, paradox, and unreality, to preserve our deductions within the bounds of sobriety, and our guesses from assuming the character of discoveries.*"

The real power and greatness of mind of the writer are evidenced by the modesty of his tone and his sense of the dangers awaiting the over confident. These are qualities but little respected by the many, who much prefer positive opinions to the ridicule and criticism so easily let loose by less careful teachers.

One turns with relief to "modern scepticism" in medical matters, as to a field where the honest exercise of doubts has earned a rich harvest. It is no question of idle speculation or display of individual vanity, but the free use of experience demolishing errors which have long had an evil influence in practice. Medical men have for centuries been the slaves of habit and conventionality, and the progress of medicine as a science has been retarded in consequence. It is the soaring free from such trammels that makes Dr. Gull's speculations of such interest, opening a new field for the energies of the profession. "Scepticism" in physic may produce positive results, and is but another name for inquiry and free exercise of reason on matters within range of our knowledge.

The Census.

The returns of the census, though incomplete, are so far public as to be available for some statistical purposes. They are of some use as showing the rates of lunacy to the popu-