

THE CANADA MEDICAL RECORD.

VOL. IX.

MONTREAL, MAY, 1881.

No. 8.

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Original Communications.

DANGEROUS INHALATION OF NITROUS OXIDE GAS.

By DR. C. E. NELSON, New York.

As chloroform accidents are reported, I can see no valid reason for not reporting a similar event, in the case of inhalation of nitrous oxide gas. As far as I am aware, no accident in the case of inhalation of nitrous oxide has as yet been reported, Dr. Colton alone having caused it to be administered to more than 122,000 without accident.

The facts of the case, in this paper, are as follows: On April 21, my six-year old boy required the extraction of two carious molars in the lower jaw; he was accompanied to the dentist's (not Dr. Colton's) by myself, wife and a female domestic; not wishing to see anything done, in the case of my own child, I left the child in the dental apartment in charge of the servant, letting the child suppose I was right behind him, and joined my wife in the waiting room; the child is courageous, and was not in the least flurried in the presence of the dentist; on the contrary, he obeyed all the instructions with alacrity; I mention these points to show he was not frightened in any way. The following account was afterwards told me by the

servant; the readers of this journal may say I did not see the symptoms myself, but I have every reason to believe the girl's statements at all times, which were as follows:—The child took a few deep inhalations, when the face turned pale, the child then cried out, and all of a sudden the face, neck (back and front), arms and hands became covered with purple blotches, lips very dark, face swollen, eyes protruding, and the physiognomy of the child perfectly unrecognizable; arms and legs moving rapidly; the teeth were extracted with marvellous rapidity; the dentist then rubbed the ecchymosed patches, with the effect of almost instantaneously restoring the skin to its normal colour; all this happened perhaps within the space of three quarters of a minute. I then returned to the dental apartment, and saw nothing wrong with the child, although my wife, on entering before me, noticed the dark blue marks on the back of the neck, leading her to suppose he had been forcibly held, which was not the case. As Shakspeare says, "all's well that ends well," but the child was certainly as near death as could possibly be.

Thinking that this was an unusual condition of persons during the inhalation of nitrous oxide, I to-day (April 22) visited Dr. Colton, who very politely told me that in his large experience he had never noticed it; that when a couple of teeth are extracted, person becomes slightly pale; that when up to fifteen teeth are extracted, some people may have their ears a little bluish, and the face a