

## MODERN METHODS OF ANAESTHESIA.\*

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Sir Frederick Treves has said, "There is a widespread impression that to give chloroform is a minor act—that the power comes with the granting of the diploma—and the significance of the procedure is sometimes emphasized by the remark, "Well, if a man cannot give chloroform, what can he do?" "

Men are sent out every year from the medical schools, quite ignorant, or at the most with a very imperfect knowledge, of one anæsthetic—usually chloroform. It need not surprise one that the mortality under anæsthetics at the present time is a very heavy one. If the best results are to be obtained, no one anæsthetic can possibly be universally adopted, and although it is difficult for busy general practitioners, long past their student days, to make themselves familiar with the use of inhalers of the different anæsthetics, "one cannot help feeling that chloroform could frequently be replaced by one of these safer agents, with advantage to both doctor and patient, and that the greatly increasing mortality from anæsthetics is largely due to the indiscriminate, not to say reckless, use of this agent." (Luke). Numerous and not very profitable discussions have taken place as to the relative merits of ether and chloroform, and each in its turn has taken first place in the surgeon's favor at different times. We have now fairly arrived at the conclusion that each has its place, that the man who is familiar with the use of both is in a better position to obtain good results than he who is only acquainted with one, and that in regard to all anæsthetics much more depends on the skill and experience of the administrator than on the nature of the anæsthetic or inhaler used.

The position of the general practitioner with regard to the administration of anæsthetics has been admirably summed up by Mr. Marmaduke Shield in "Practitioner" (published in England), October, '96.

"If medical men were well educated in the theory and practice of anaesthesia, they would recognize for themselves that for nose and throat operations, associated with severe hemorrhages, for cases when the breathing is embarrassed by aneurism or tumour, or for prolonged abdominal operations, the administration of the anæsthetic should be intrusted to those who have given more than ordinary time and attention to the subject. The satisfactory administration of anæsthetics in many cases of

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