

THE ADMINISTRATION OF HYOSCINE HYDROBROMATE BEFORE ETHER ANESTHESIA.*

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Speaking at a meeting of the Society of Anesthetists of London, the celebrated surgeon, Edmund Owen, said that if he should be so unfortunate as to meet with an accident and require an anesthetic, he would ask for chloroform, because he considered ether "beastly stuff."

Now, no doubt, many of you are of the same opinion, and though ether is doubtless a safer anesthetic than chloroform, yet on account of its disagreeable smell and the unpleasant symptoms during and after its administration, many persons object to take it, and many medical men dislike to give it. With the Clover inhaler it is true the giving of ether is made more easy, but even with that excellent contrivance (which I have used during the last five and a half years), the untoward effects of ether are but too often seen.

Believing that most of the dangers which arise from ether anesthesia and most of the disagreeable effects after it are caused by the power which ether has of increasing the activity of the mucous glands in the air passages, I selected a drug, hyoscine hydrobromate, which has a contrary action, and at the same time possesses very mild, if any, toxic properties: and gave it half an hour before the administration of the anesthetic.

The results have been so encouraging that I thought it right to bring to your notice what I believe to be an important advance in the production of anesthesia. Hyoscine hydrobromate is the hydrobromate of one of the alkaloids obtained from the plant *hyoscyamus niger*. It has the same chemical formula as atropine, but differs from it in molecular structure and widely in its physiological action.

In man it causes, according to Wood: (1) Dryness of the mouth; (2) flushing of the face; (3) drowsiness deepening into sleep; (4) diminished frequency of respiration; (5) diminished frequency of pulse; (6) as a rule dilatation of the pupil. It has little power over the secretion of sweat. It has a very feeble effect on the circulation, if any.

It is a powerful depressor, motor, but has no action on sen-

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