

condition known as acidosis ; when this is present the dangers of a general anæsthetic are greatly increased—when the breath of a patient smells of acetone or when there is the acetone reaction in the urine, ether, and especially chloroform, are contra-indicated, and it is in such cases that intra-spinal anæsthesia is specially useful.

“ For some years in America, and more recently in this country, a mixture of nitrous oxide and oxygen in definite percentages has been used for prolonged operations. In severe abdominal conditions it may be used with advantage, either with or without nerve blocking by means of novocaine subcutaneously. This without doubt diminishes shock, but the method is difficult and has its limitations.

“ At St. Thomas's Hospital, London, and elsewhere ether, has been used intravenously.

“ The most dangerous perhaps of cases met with under the heading of the Acute Abdomen are those of acute intestinal obstruction with consequent severe vomiting. When an anæsthetic is given in such cases, great care must be taken of the position in which the patient is placed : the head must be on a level or little below that of the body and turned to one side with a gag in the mouth, the danger being that of inhaling the vomit into the air passages. Here again intra-spinal anæsthesia is indicated, and more recently we have been using intratracheal ether : with this method, as soon as the catheter has been passed into the trachea, all danger of inhalation of vomit ceases.”