

chloroform believe that, in expert hands, it is safe, and has fewer drawbacks than ether. Conceding much on this point, we must not forget that, while narcotisation is everywhere a daily, an almost hourly need, its induction does not always fall into experienced hands. If, then, anæsthetics must be frequently administered and administered with variable degrees of judgment and experience, a growing amount of evidence points to ether as the safer anæsthetic.

Recently, I was about to place a ligature on the femoral artery for popliteal aneurism. The patient having been etherised by my colleague Mr. Priestley Smith, who is very familiar with the use of ether, I made the usual incision in the integuments. The patient showed no sign of pain; but I had scarcely completed the incision, when the limb was seized with a marked tremor of the muscles. To clean a large artery with a sharp knife (and I believe, with the late Mr. Syme, that to dissect an artery with a sharp knife is less mischievous than to contuse it with blunt instruments) in a violently trembling limb is not a desirable proceeding. At my desire, more ether was given, but the tremor continued unabated. I again desired that more ether should be given. Mr. Priestley Smith's immediate and significant reply was this: "The man is as much under the influence of ether as it is possible to put him." With the assistance of firm pressure on the muscles of the thigh, I completed the operation; and I may add, that the man has (fourteenth day) done perfectly well.

From the incident just related, a few useful conclusions may be drawn. The most important is this: the profoundest anæsthesia of ether is not so deep as to prevent reflex muscular tremor from following an incision in the skin. It is probably much less profound than even ordinary degrees of chloroform narcotism. In short, it would seem that, with common care, a patient cannot be put dangerously under the influence of ether. Nevertheless, the anæsthesia of ether is sufficient for the vast majority of operations. Ether, then, notwithstanding certain drawbacks, should claim our first attention.