

Death from Apoplexy during Inhalation of Nitrous Oxide Gas.

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Referring to the case of death from apoplexy after inhalation of nitrous oxide gas, which occurred in this city about a year ago, I will state the circumstances of that sad occurrence.

The gentleman had repeatedly taken the gas in the past, and was a pleasant subject for its effects. On the occasion referred to he called to have two teeth extracted. He was given the gas for that purpose, and after his recovery, the operator went to his desk, and the gentleman proceeded to rinse his mouth, carrying on conversation in the meantime. He used one glass of water while sitting in the chair, after which he got up and walked to the washstand, a distance of eight feet, re-filled the glass, and back to the cuspidor beside the chair, and stood rinsing his mouth. This he repeated until he had used four glasses of water, while standing, and occupied at least twenty minutes. During this time conversation continued uninterruptedly, the operator and patient being friends of long standing, and there was not the slightest indication that he was not perfect! well. At this time he lay down his napkin, with a remark upon the relief obtained by the extraction, and placing himself before the mirror, endeavored to look at the cavities where the teeth came from. He used his right hand to press back the cheek (the teeth were the first and second sup. molars), and the first symptom was when he removed his hand from his face he drew the fingers together, and said, "There is a numbness about that hand." He presented a pale appearance, and it was thought that faintness had been produced by looking at the sockets, as is sometimes the case, and he was told to lie down on the couch near by and brandy offered him; by that time he was powerless and unable to articulate. Consciousness remained to some extent for about ten minutes, and he died four hours and a half after. At the coroner's inquest the physicians were unanimous (Dr. Girvin, Dr. Drysdale and Dr. Hare) in their testimony, that the cause of death was apoplexy, and not from the effects of the gas. A brother of the deceased testified to the family feeling satisfied that death was independent of the effects of the gas, and the jury's verdict exonerated the operator from all responsibility for the result.