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THE ADMINISTRATION OF A GENERAL ANÆSTHETIC FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE OPERATOR.*

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THE administration of a general anæsthetic is of supreme importance, not only to the patient and the anæsthetist, but also to the operator.

To the patient, the thought of having to take a general anæsthetic is still frequently the source of as great or even greater fear than the operation which necessitates its administration.

To the patient, the thought of having to take a general anæsthetic knowledge of the attendant dangers, immediate and remote, have deprived the administration of a general anæsthetic of much of its anxiety—given of course, ordinary skill in his art, and familiarity with the particular anæsthetic employed.

To the operator, the proper administration of the anæsthetic counts very much towards the success or failure of his efforts.

Even with the advance which has attended the expert administration of general anæsthetics during recent years, one who has had the opportunity of seeing major surgery in our own and in English and European hospitals can not but feel that often too little regard is paid to the manner in which the anæsthetic is administered, and to some features related to its administration, and that in the clinical instruction furnished students and hospital internes, there is still a lack of proper appreciation of many points in regard to ether and chloroform anæsthesia.

It is in a spirit of modest criticism and with the intention of humbly endeavouring to indicate some features of the subject that apparently need emphasis, that this paper has been written.

In the first place it is yet the custom in many hospitals to have the patient taken directly from the ward into the theatre and placed on the operating table before the anæsthetic is administered.

In some hospitals, where this custom prevails, the clatter of instruments being dropped into their trays of solution, and other steps in the preparation for the operation, accompanied by hurried movements of assistants and nurses, go on while the patient takes a rapid survey of the room and the people in it, and finally drops into unconsciousness with a vivid and perhaps fearsome mental picture of the scene.

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