

possible to exclude so much atmosphere as to cause danger from asphyxia.

In my experience the entire quantity of ethyl consumed in effecting and continuing anæsthesia in any single case has varied from one fluidrachm used in a very brief period, to eleven drachms required in maintaining anæsthesia through an operative procedure of forty minutes' duration.

After having tranquillized the patient's mind by assurances of freedom from suffering and danger, I direct him to inspire and expire, for a time, as deeply as possible. The expirations should be so complete that the residuary air is expelled from the lungs. While continuing to thus breathe deeply, the inhalation is commenced.

This preliminary drill I regard as important, and it will always facilitate the proper production of anæsthesia. Until complete anæsthesia is effected, there should not be allowed a moment during which the patient does not inhale the vapour, and as the anæsthetic becomes exhausted it should be quickly replenished.

It is proper that the administrator of any anæsthetic should be able to recognize and be satisfied with the simple production of the anæsthetic state—insensibility to pain—without pushing the inhalation, as is often through ignorance or carelessness done, to a dangerously toxic condition. The best indication of complete anæsthesia is the change in the breathing of the patient to that of ordinary deep sleep. When anæsthesia becomes profound, there may be a more or less snoring or puffing sound, due to relaxation of the palatine and buccal muscles. With such manifestations the administration should cease, or be very moderately continued. It should be borne in mind that all anæsthetics become eventually, by continuance, depressing agents, and their administration should not be viewed as a matter of trifling responsibility, and entrusted to careless or inexperienced persons. The administrator should exclusively direct his attention to what he is entrusted with, regarding only the condition of the patient, and not observing the operative proceeding. I have witnessed an ignorant and heedless assistant resting his elbows on the chest of a patient, whose laboured respiration and livid, turgid face showed threatening asphyxia, while the administrator gazed abstractedly at a surgical procedure taking place at the groin.

I cannot too much impress the greater importance of observation and reliance on the state of the respiration, rather than of the circulation, as an index of the condition of the ethylized patient.

The patient's position should, if possible, be that of dorsal recumbency, with the head slightly elevated and flexed. It is well to remember that in the sitting or erect positions there may be more danger to very feeble patients from syncope. During muscular excitement the neck should not be allowed to be forcibly curved backward, as is the tendency, producing tension on the ante-tracheal muscles and impeding venous return. The chest and abdomen should be free from the mechanical restraint of tight clothing, so that full and deep inspiration may not be impeded. If it should be necessary to have the patient in the prone position, the administration requires watchfulness lest respiration should, by pressure, become embarrassed.

When practicable, the taking of solid food should be avoided by a patient for four hours, and liquid food for three hours, before the administration of any anæsthetic. If the patient's condition should be feeble, alcoholic stimulants or ammonia may in advance be given. When, in an emergency, anæsthesia must be induced very soon after a meal, the act of vomiting should be carefully watched, and the patient's trunk so held that ejected substances may not gravitate into the larynx.

No fatal case referrible to the action of the bromide of ethyl has occurred, nor even in the now large number of administrations, as far as I am aware, have there been any dangerous or threatening symptoms; yet, just as in what ought to be the almost invariably safe administration of sulphuric ether, death may occur, but it will, most probably, be in cases in which, if proper care had been observed, the fatal result would have been avoided. Its action does not seem insidious or uncertain; but, judging from the careless and bungling manner in which other anæsthetics are sometimes administered by incompetent persons, I think that so agreeable and unirritating an agent as the bromide of ethyl is liable to be ignorantly, heedlessly, and inordinately used, and its usual harmless and beneficent anæsthesia pushed to toxic conditions and even death.