

**THE DANGERS OF CHLOROFORM
AND THE SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY
OF ETHER AS AN AGENT IN
SECURING THE AVOIDANCE OF
PAIN IN SURGICAL OPERATIONS**

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The dangers of chloroform and the safety and efficiency of ether as an agent in securing the avoidance of pain in surgical operations by J. Morgan

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AND THE
SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY
OF
ETHER,
AS AN AGENT IN
SECURING THE AVOIDANCE OF PAIN
IN
SURGICAL OPERATIONS.

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WITH
A DESCRIPTION OF AN ETHER INHALER,
AND THE MODE OF ADMINISTRATION.

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P R E F A C E .

IN drawing attention to the subject of the DANGERS OF THE USE OF CHLOROFORM, when compared with the ADVANTAGES AND SAFETY OF THE USE OF ETHER, in producing insensibility to pain, I am influenced by having practically observed the difficulties, and witnessed the anxieties inseparable from its use, which oppress the Surgeon when undertaking an operation.

In addition, on impartially and calmly reviewing the subject, and analysing the experience of years, I find that Ether has infinitely superior claims as to *Safety* and *Efficiency*.

Great Britain and America have each produced their national anæsthetics, Chloroform being the child of the former, and Ether of the latter. We find that Chloroform, which since 1848 has been largely used in this country, is still looked on with a certain amount of suspicion and distrust by the majority of practitioners; and that the most scrupulous directions and abundant warnings are given by writers, to prevent any accidental complication which might increase an already fully recognised danger.

Ether, on the other hand, which has stood the test since 1846, has been the American favourite, and so far from any timidity or hesitation accompanying its use, such is the confidence reposed in it, that it is stated by the very most recent authority on Surgical Practice (a), that "a patient cannot be too rapidly etherized, and there is no danger, as in the case of Chloroform, from the vapour being too concentrated."

Yet, notwithstanding the extra care engendered by timidity on the one hand, and the boldness engendered by confidence on the other, the result of statistical information is remarkable, and is well calculated to call into question the tendency to conservatism which we incline to, professionally, as well as nationally, in so persisting in the use of Chloroform, notwithstanding its obvious danger.

It is a startling fact to find that by the latest statistics of both Great Britain and America,—taking only the deaths directly accredited to the use of anæsthetics—it is proved that

Chloroform is eight times more dangerous than Ether, and is the most dangerous of all the anæsthetics in use (b).

Such being the ascertained ratio from published

(a) Asshurat, November, 1871.

(b) One death a week, is said to be the average in this country.

accidents, let any Surgeon ask himself how many escapes he has witnessed,—how often he has seen stimulants and the means of resuscitation applied even to the extreme measures of the use of galvanism and of restoring suspended animation,—how often he has seen operations completed without the full influence of Chloroform,—how often his attention has been diverted from the immediate concern of his operation to the condition of the patient, due to the influence of Chloroform,—and how often he feared to administer it at all ; he will no doubt subscribe to the verdict of the London Chloroform Committee, that an “agent is desired which is not so dangerous in its operation as Chloroform.”

As Ether represents such an agent, more so than any as yet discovered, I am desirous of drawing attention to its advantages and superiority ; and when I find that but 1 death in 23,204 Ether inhalations can be ascertained as at all attributable to its use, I believe that a ratio representing merely an infinitesimal risk, has been thus attained ; and that by using Ether as a pain-destroyer, instead of the patient entering upon an operation with the sword of Damocles suspended over him, as with Chloroform ; he will sink more calmly, and infinitely more safely, into insensibility, relying with confidence on the mystic power of the Anæsthetic, the skill of the Surgeon, and the goodness of his Maker, in obtaining relief from his sufferings.

I have arranged an Anæsthetic Inhaler, which

I find most convenient, safe, and effectual ; it is so constructed that by means of a mouth-piece with a flexible tube, operations about the face can be performed with ease, while the lulling influence of the Etherization is perfectly secured, and the abundant and rapid evaporation of the ethereal vapour is attained and directly applied

23 ST. STEPHEN'S GREEN, NORTH,
DUBLIN.

"Deaths from Chloroform are now so frequent (it has been said one in a week), and we are told that many deaths from this cause are never reported at all, that the time is not far distant when the public safety will demand some inquiry into the use of this deadly agent, more comprehensive than anything hitherto done in that way" (a).

(a) Mr. Greene, in *British Medical Journal*.

THE
DANGERS OF CHLOROFORM.

THE SAFETY OF ETHER AS A PAIN-DESTROYER.

SINCE the all-important era of the introduction of anaesthetics into surgical practice, and the invaluable boon of the avoidance of pain, whether in small or large operations; claims have at times been set forth in favour of various means of attaining this desirable end—chloroform, ether, a mixture of both, nitrous oxide gas, &c., have had their advocates; and the great object of producing a temporary state of insensibility has been achieved by any one of these agents. Chloroform, undoubtedly, in these countries, has as yet carried the palm, and has had the most ample use. No one who has either witnessed or experienced its value in the extinction of pain, can possibly doubt its efficacy, or can question the honours and laudations which have been bestowed upon the late Sir J. Simpson as the introducer of this agent into practice; but in order to attain the state of "suspended sensation," even in small operations, and, in addition, to retain this condition for a length of time, as is necessary in some of the larger and more tedious proceedings of surgery; the gauntlet of certain dangers, unfortunately, has to be run, which every practical surgeon will candidly admit, cause him much