

M0009624: Pages 2 and 4 of letter from Henry Hill Hickman to Thomas Andrew Knight, 1824

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Carbonic Acid Gas, if proper means were taken to restore the animal powers and have no hesitation in saying that suspended animation may be continued for a sufficient time for any surgical operation provided the Surgeon acts with skill and promptitude; and I think it would be found particularly advisable in Cases where hemorrhage would be dangerous on the Surgeon is apprehensive of Gangrene taking place after the operation as it is well known that carbon has a most powerful antiputrescent quality - It will be found, if the means for suspending animation are slow and gradual, the return of the powers of life will be in the same proportion; if the means of suspension are sudden, it generally happens by the application of certain agents that the return of life is equally so, and I think it very probable, ~~that~~ if the galvanic fluid could have been applied in Cases that have proved fatal ~~that~~ the persons may have been saved - From a number of others I have selected the experiments now sent, each is correctly noted in as few words as possible, which I think will prove a most object, with great respect.

Yours Sir John W. H. H.

W. H. Hickman

Ludlow Feb 21 - 1824
J. A. Knight Esq.

Experiment 1st
March 20th Took a puppy a month old and placed it on a piece of wood surrounded by water over which I put a glass cover so as to prevent the access of atmospheric air, in ten minutes he showed great marks of uneasiness in 12 respiration became difficult, and in 17 minutes ceased altogether, at 18 minutes I took off one of the Ears, which was not followed by hemorrhage, respiration soon returned and the animal did not appear to be the least sensible of pain, in three days the ear was perfectly healed.

7th
Four days after the same puppy was exposed to a decomposition of the carbonate of lime by sulphuric Acid, in 1 minute respiration ceased I cut off the other Ear which was followed by very trifling hemorrhage, and as before did not appear to suffer any pain, in four days the wound healed. The day after the operation he seemed to require an additional quantity of food, which induced me to weigh him, and found he gained 98.1 Gr. & 2 1/2 grains in 7 days.

3rd April 6th
Took the same puppy and proceeded as in Exp. 1st and respiration was acted on in much the same manner I cut off the tail and made an incision over the muscles of the loins through which I passed a ligature and made it tight. No appearance of uneasiness until the day following, when inflammation came on and subsequent suppuration. The ligature came away on the 7th day, and the dog is remarkably increased in size and now perfectly well.