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Dr. John Snow (1813-1858) was the first specialist anaesthetist and the first British physician to investigate anaesthesia from the scientific standpoint. He designed the earliest form of ether inhalers to give consistently satisfactory results.

The two inhalers illustrated differ in detail only. The main features are:—

1. The spiral ether chamber, which was kept at a constant temperature by the water-bath. This ensured that the air passing over the ether was saturated with vapour so that a known dose could be administered. (Snow derived the idea of the spiral chamber from the aqueous vapour inhaler described by Julius Jeffreys in 1842).
2. The two-way stop-cock, which allowed for the flow of pure air when required.
3. The use of tubes approximating in diameter to that of the trachea.

In the later inhaler a face-piece takes the place of the tube for insertion in the mouth.

