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ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS

The Blundell Gravitator



In 1829, "Observations on Transfusion of Blood" was published by British obstetrician James Blundell (1790–1878). Disturbed by the hemorrhagic deaths in childbirth that he had witnessed, Blundell designed his elevated funnel (clamped above to the overturned chair) or "Gravitator" for transfusing the "blood in a regulated stream from one individual to another." The invention worked using "ordinary venesection" on the donor and, on the recipient, "the insertion of a small tube into the vein usually laid open in bleeding. . . ." A lifelong bachelor, the eccentric Blundell slept in most mornings, saw patients at his home most afternoons, and made housecalls most evenings. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc. This image appears in the *Anesthesiology Reflections* online collection available at www.anesthesiology.org.)

George S. Bause, M.D., M.P.H., Honorary Curator, ASA's Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology, Park Ridge, Illinois, and Clinical Associate Professor, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. UJYC@aol.com.