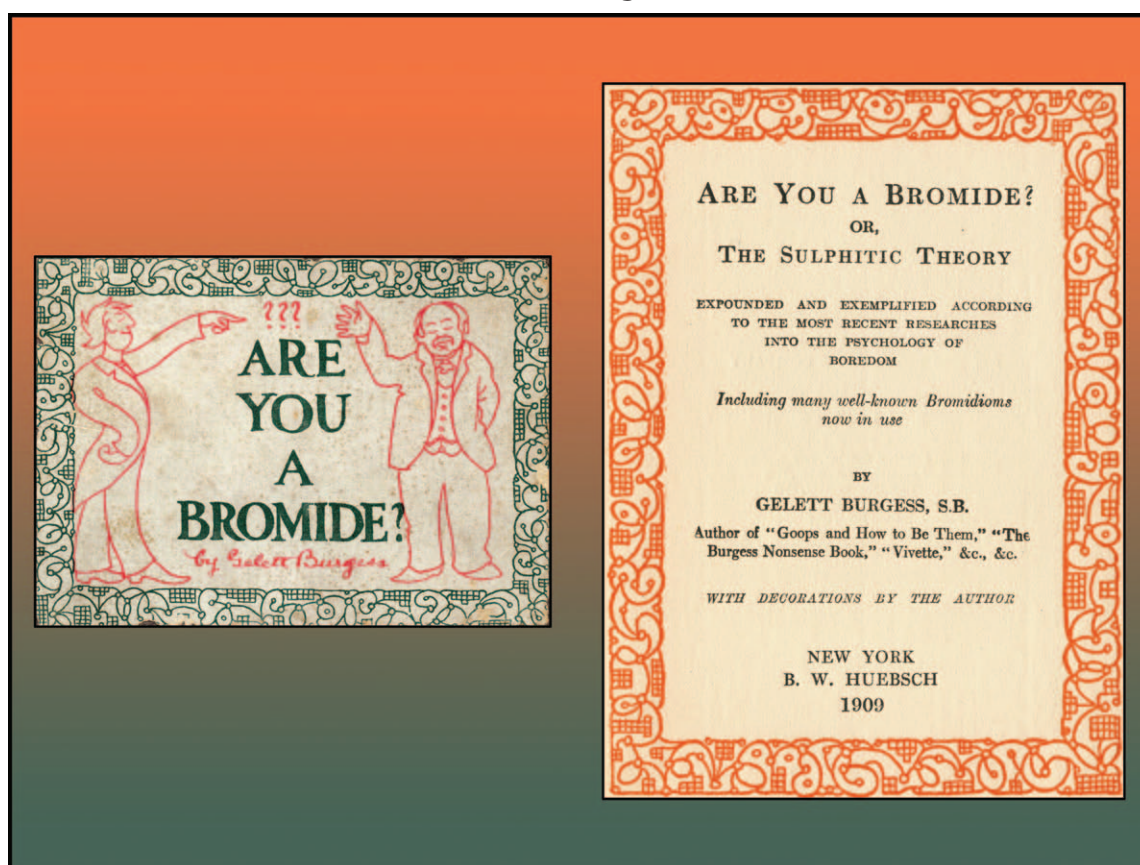


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## ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

### Of Blurbs and Bromides—Gelett Burgess Asks, “Are You a Bromide?”



From 1906 to 1913, American humorist Gelett Burgess (1866–1951) published annual editions of his book *Are You a Bromide?* The cover (left) and title page (right) were frequently dust-jacketed with “Blinda Blurb,” a buxom cartoon drawn by Burgess to illustrate a “blurb,” the word he coined to mean an excessive laudatory testimonial that a publisher added to dustjackets to sell more books. In the book’s title, from the original association with a class of calming drugs, the word “bromide” had evolved to refer to an unoriginal, ineffective, or trite expression designed to placate a situation. Whether unoriginal or original, the pharmaceutical industry has supplied a bonanza of bromides for anesthesiologists’ clinical use: bromides of ethyl, glycopyrronium, pancuronium, pipecuronium, rapacuronium, rocuronium, succinylcholine, vecuronium, *etc.* And investigations into possible “bromism” (sluggishness, disinhibition, irritability, depression, *etc.*) have been prompted by exposure to bromides as diverse as pyridostigmine and dextromethorphan. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc.)

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