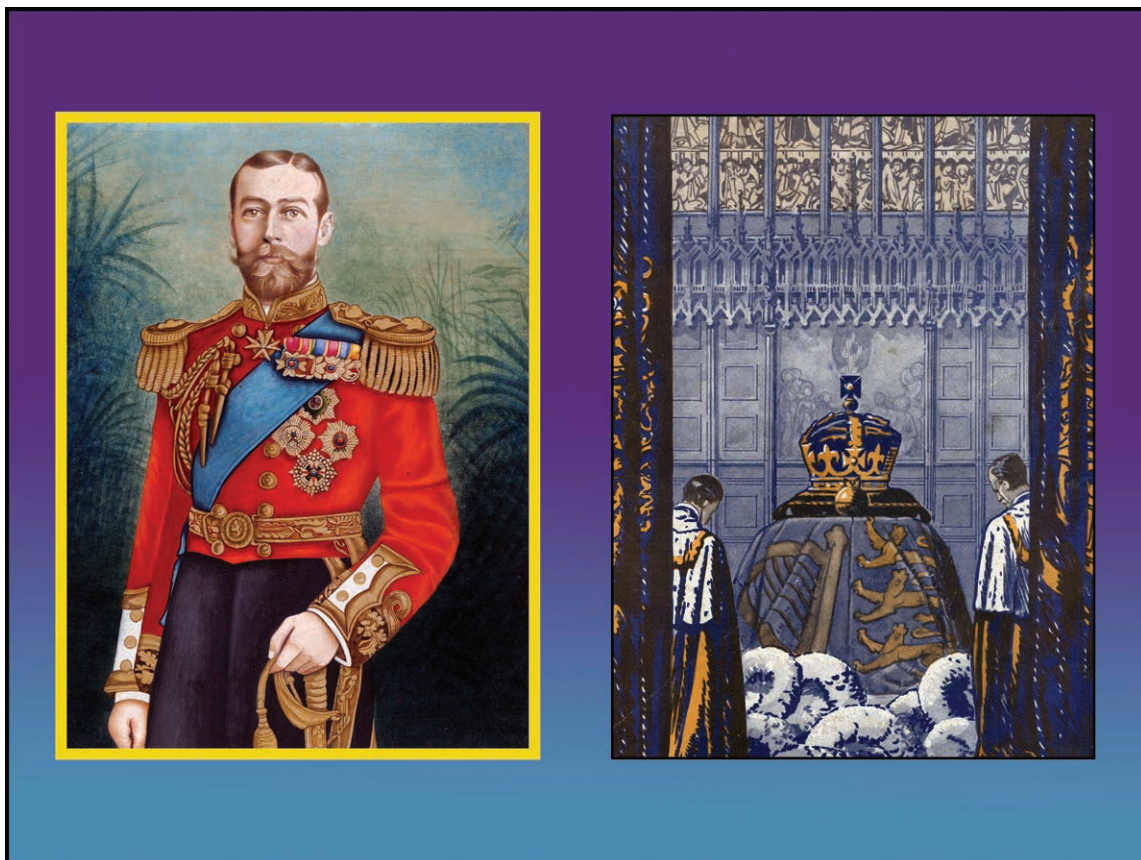


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ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

Morphine, Cocaine, and the Euthanasia of King George V



In a 1924 contribution to *Lancet*, Dr. F. G. Chandler extolled the value of “Cocaine in Euthanasia,” particularly for patients who were terminal with pulmonary tuberculosis. A dozen years later, British King George V (1865 to 1936, *left*) was terminally bronchitic, bedridden, and passing repeatedly in and out of consciousness. Shortly after 11 PM on January 20, 1936, the Physician-in-Ordinary to the King administered a pair of lethal doses intravenously, to hasten the struggling monarch’s demise. This regicide was only revealed a half century later in the diary of the euthanizer, Lord Dawson of Penn (1864 to 1945), who penned: “I therefore decided to determine the end and injected (myself) morphia gr. 3/4 and shortly afterwards cocaine gr. 1 into the [King’s] distended jugular vein...” (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists’ Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

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