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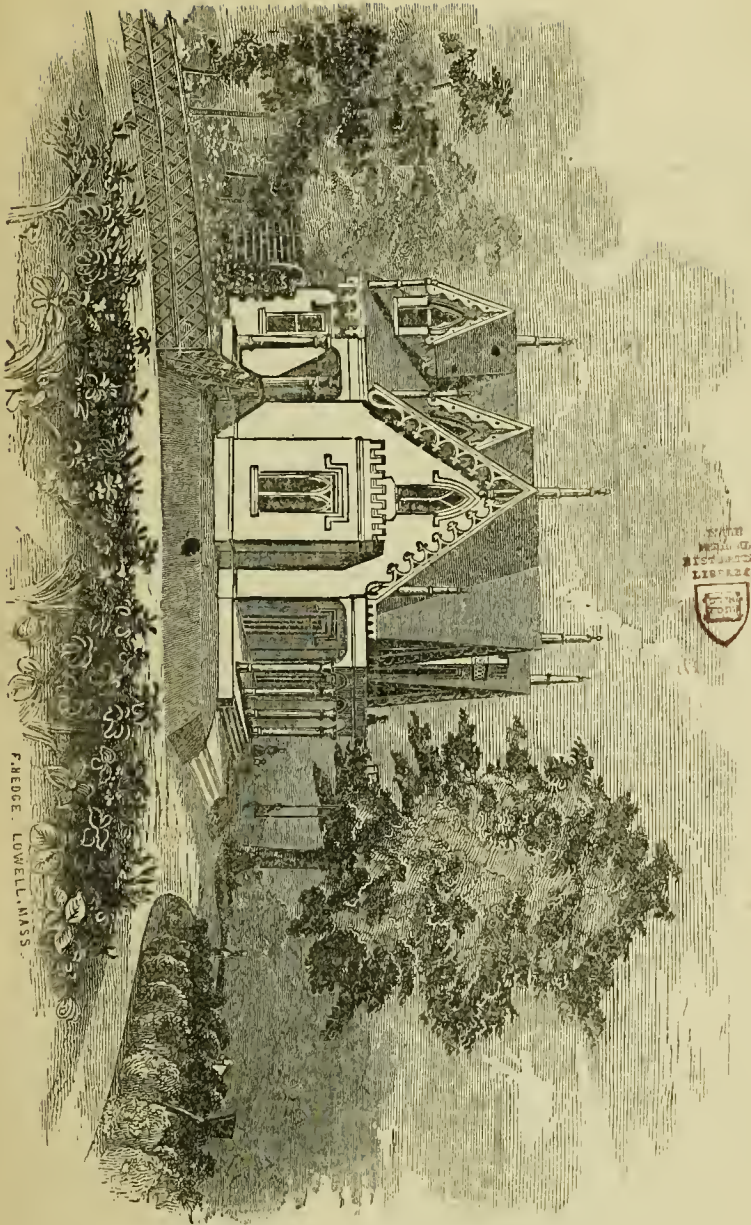
HALE, Sarah J.

Etherton cottage, and the discoverer of etherization.

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ETHERTON COTTAGE, AND THE DISCOVERER OF ETHERIZATION.

BY MRS. SARAH JOSEPHA HALE.

THAT the American Republic is both prosperous and progressive in a very remarkable degree, even European writers do not now venture to deny.

Our vast territory, affording room, scope, and opportunity for every one; our just and liberal institutions, giving encouragement and securing the rewards of enterprise and industry, cause the wildness to blossom, and cities to arise as if by the wave of an enchanter's wand.

These things are evident to Old-World critics who come here prepared to cavil or misrepresent. Yet they, after acknowledging our progress, would insinuate that the advancement is altogether material, and such as the conditions of the country afford to physical strength and mechanical labor; while in the more elevated and intellectual fields of science we are mere tyros or imitators.

True, certain classes in Europe do enjoy opportunities of study and means of research never yet accorded to Americans. But how well we can spare those royal stepping-stones over the slough of scientific difficulties, those scholastic ladders to the high places of thought, let the *thousand proofs of Yankee invention and ingenuity*, now manifest throughout the world, answer. Something more we may justly claim: that the genius of Americans has enlarged the boundaries of science, and given impulse and power to the progress of humanity.

Without going back to Franklin and Fulton, or showing how the one taught lightning to stoop its wing at man's command, and the other first proved that steam had power to defy the winds and walk the waves, let us just glance at those recent and wonderful discoveries, "The Magnetic Telegraph," and "Etherization or the Pain Neutralizer." By means of the first, to "waft a sigh from Indus to the pole," is scarcely a poetic figure. Its utility is manifest by daily experience—we may say, by the experience of every moment. The nerves of the human system seem hardly more important to the full life of man than do the iron nerves of the Telegraph to the full life of the nation; and the name of Professor Morse is as indestructible as the Magnetic power.

Does not the other discovery—that which has for its object to relieve pain of its horror and steep the senses in forgetfulness till the crisis of suffering and danger is over—does not this remarkable discovery merit high honor? Is not its utility, acting as it does directly on humanity, of greater moment even than that which merely communicates thought? To be freed from pain—is not this of more importance

than to be able to say we are at ease? Let the sufferer answer.

As the discoverer of the "Anæsthetic and Pain-subduing Properties of Sulphuric Ether" has had to pay, to the full, the tax of gaining eminence in any pursuit—namely, distrust from slow apprehension, and detraction from jealous rivalry—we would fain present to our readers an accurate sketch of one whose name will, unquestionably, go down to posterity among the benefactors of mankind. We do this for our own sex. Women, more even than men, should feel and express gratitude to the discoverer of the "Pain Neutralizer," for on us falls the heaviest amount of physical suffering, and from our warm hearts is drawn nearly all the sympathy for the sufferings of others. What an invaluable blessing it is to have these removed or mitigated! Then we have had some personal knowledge of the claimant of this great discovery, when, as a mere youth, he was struggling to educate and support himself, and we are glad of this opportunity to make his merits known through the medium of our "Book."

William Thomas Groon Morton was born in Charlton, Mass., in 1819. His ancestors were among the early settlers of New England, where the name is respectable and well known. His position in childhood precluded the opportunities for much school instruction: but some are born to carve out their own way to fortune, and knowledge may be acquired out of the school-room by those who really seek it.

At the age of fifteen, young Morton was obliged to enter the world and work his passage on the ocean of life. His father, having been unfortunate in business—that of a country storekeeper—was unable to assist his son. With some boys, thus situated, to make a living would have been a great, an only aim. It was, to the subject of our notice, not a mere living, but a living to some purpose of improvement and essential advancement for the future, that he divided his time between the counter and the school, going from one to the other, and saving from his earnings as clerk to pay the expenses of tuition as pupil.

It is unnecessary to detail minutely his career for several years. Enterprising and intelligent, he sought in various places to establish himself in business, but never, at any time, omitted an opportunity of improvement, and supplied, so far as he could by diligent and extensive reading, the defects of his early education. On several occasions he seems to have been duped by the designing, and more than

once made unfortunate associations in business. A silly flirtation at the West, that, in a youth under age, was not certainly an uncommon or unpardonable folly, created ill feeling in the brother of the young lady, and in subsequent years lent a shaft to the enemies who have sought to wound Dr. Morton, the successful discoverer of etherization.

Shortly after this circumstance, and at the age of twenty-one, a small legacy was left him. This enabled him to abandon commercial life, in which he had not, on the whole, succeeded, and he entered on studies more congenial to his mind. He went to Baltimore, attended medical lectures, &c., and received the degree of "Doctor of Medicine" from Washington University. From Baltimore young Morton returned north, and devoted himself to the study of "Dental Surgery." Dr. Wells, of Hartford, Conn., proposed a partnership—Dr. Morton to go to Boston and take charge of an establishment there, while Dr. Wells remained in Hartford. The arrangement was made, and Dr. Morton, proceeding to Boston, took rooms in Tremont Row, where his office now remains. This was in 1842, when Morton was about twenty-three years of age. The next year, 1843, Dr. Morton married Miss Elizabeth Whitman, daughter of Edward Whitman, Esq., of Farmington, Conn. Previously, he had joined a Congregational Church, and, thus early settled in his religious sentiments and in life, after a series of struggles and changes which show his indomitable energy and perseverance, it seemed as if he might pursue a career of comfort and usefulness, without any great changes or exertions. But *rest* was not on his motto. He continued his studies amid the duties of his profession, and then he matriculated at the Massachusetts Medical College, attending regularly the lectures of its eminent professors, Drs. Warren, Bigelow, Channing, Ware, Hayward, and others.

Of his devotion to his studies, one of his friends, B. P. Poore, Esq., says: "A skeleton was kept in his (Dr. Morton's) chamber, and, rising long before the sun, he opened his books to prepare himself for the anatomical studies of the coming day."

Such a student must succeed.

Soon after his settlement in Boston, he became acquainted with Dr. Charles T. Jackson, a man of scientific reputation, whose talents and public services were held in high estimation. Dr. Jackson treated Dr. Morton with great friendliness, was his instructor, and received him as an inmate of his family. Dr. Jackson was so well satisfied with his student that he gave him a certificate of high commendation, addressed to the "American Society of Dental Surgeons." Dr. Morton soon gained a very large practice as a dentist; but this did not abate his desire of scientific improvement, or his zeal in prosecuting his researches.

The circumstances that gave rise to his great discovery of the effect of sulphuric ether in neutraliz-

ing pain we will give in his own words, from an account presented by M. Arago to the Paris Academy, in 1847:—

"In the summer of 1844, being in the practice of dentistry, and desirous of improving myself in chemical and medical knowledge, I studied in the office of Dr. Charles T. Jackson, of Boston; and, in order to employ my time to the utmost advantage, I resided in his family. One day, in casual conversation upon my profession of dentistry, I spoke of the operation of destroying the nerve of a tooth, and remarked that there was always doubt whether the tooth could be restored to usefulness, inasmuch as the arsenic produced an irritation, and left a soreness often permanent. Dr. Jackson said, in a humorous manner, that I must try some of his toothache drops, and proceeded to tell me that, at a time when he practised medicine, he occasionally extracted teeth for particular patients, and that, in one instance, a patient who could not summon courage for the operation asked him to apply something to alleviate the pain. He applied ether, and with success, for a few days afterwards a friend of this patient called to obtain some of the 'toothache drops,' as he called them; but Dr. Jackson, not wishing to be troubled with dental business, told him he had none. Dr. Jackson then added that, as this ether might be applied with advantage to sensitive teeth, he would send me some. The conversation then turned upon the effect of ether upon the system, and he told me how the students at Cambridge used to inhale sulphuric ether from their handkerchiefs, and that it intoxicated them, making them reel and stagger. He gave no further intimation of the effect of ether, or of the manner of applying it. I may add that Dr. Jackson has confirmed my account of this conversation in his own statement to Dr. Gould.

"In a few days after this conversation, Dr. Jackson sent me a bottle of chloric ether, highly rectified, as he had offered. At the same time, he sent a bottle to two other dentists of high respectability in Boston. I made an experiment with this ether in destroying the sensibility of a valuable tooth of a patient, Miss —, by direct application, telling her that the operation would be slow. I was obliged to apply it several times; but, in the end, the sensibility seemed to be removed, and the tooth is now, to my knowledge, in a useful condition.

"About this time, the wife and aunt of Dr. Jackson were under my treatment for dental purposes, and it was necessary to extract teeth in each case, the operation being painful, and the ladies showing an unusual degree of sensitiveness. The last-named lady, in particular, before the extracting of each tooth, remained several hours in the operating-chair, unable to summon courage to endure the operation, and begging to be mesmerized, or that I would give her something to make her insensible. Dr. Jackson was present, and made efforts to encourage the lady; but did not suggest any mode of producing insensibility. *His suggestions had not gone beyond the direct application of ether, in the same manner that laudanum and other narcotics have always been applied to sensitive teeth.*

"The successful application I had made of the ether in destroying the sensibility of a tooth, together with what Dr. Jackson told me of its effects when inhaled by the students at college, awakened my attention; and, having free access to Dr. Jackson's books, I began to read on the subject of its effects upon the animal system. I became satisfied that there was nothing new or particularly dangerous in the inhaling of ether, that it had long been the toy of professors and students, known as a powerful anti-spasmodic, anodyne, and narcotic, capable of intoxicating and stupefying, when taken in sufficient quantity. I found

that even the apparatus for inhaling it was described in some treatises; but, in most cases, it was described as inhaled from a saturated sponge or handkerchief. Having some of the ether left which Dr. Jackson had sent me, I inhaled it from a handkerchief; but there was not enough to produce a greater effect than exhilaration, followed by headache.

"While investigating this subject, I was taken quite ill, and, it being the middle of summer, I was advised by my physician to go into the country. I took with me from Dr. Jackson's library, and obtained in other ways, several books treating on this and other subjects. I spent two months at the residence of my father-in-law, in Connecticut. While there, I procured ether from the druggist's, and made experiments upon birds and other animals, endeavoring to get them under the effect of inhalation from it. These experiments produced no satisfactory result, and they being known among my friends, I was mortified and vexed, and bottled up the subjects, where they remain to this day.

"In the autumn I returned to Boston, and finding that my business, owing to its interruption, required my constant attention, I was not able to pursue the investigation at that time.

"In the course of the winter (1844-5), Dr. Hersey Wells, of Hartford, Conn., a dentist, and formerly my partner, came to Boston, and desired me to aid him in procuring an opportunity to administer the nitrous oxide gas, which he said he believed would destroy or greatly alleviate pain under surgical operations. I readily consented, and introduced him to Dr. George Hayward, an eminent surgeon, who offered to permit the experiment; but, as the earliest operation was not to be performed under two or three days, we did not wait for it, but went to Dr. Warren, whom we found engaged with his class. He told us that his students were preparing to inhale it that evening for sport, and offered to announce the proposal to them, and ask them to meet us at the college. In the evening, Dr. Wells and myself went to the hall, and I took my instruments. Dr. Wells administered the gas, and extracted a tooth; but the patient screamed from pain, and the spectators laughed and hissed. The meeting broke up, and we were looked upon as having made ourselves very ridiculous. I saw nothing more of Dr. Wells; but he left my instruments at my office very early the next morning, and went directly home. In July, being again in Connecticut, I called on Dr. Wells, and we spent some time in adjusting our former partnership accounts. He had then given up dentistry, and was engaged in conducting an exhibition of birds, which he said insured him better health. I went with him to the office of Dr. Riggs, where I spoke of the gas, and asked them to give some to me; but Dr. Wells gave me to understand that he had abandoned the experiment, thinking it could have no practical value."

Not thus did Dr. Morton abandon the pursuit. Once impressed with the idea, his active mind could not rest till he had fully investigated the matter. Putting his business into the hands of a salaried assistant, he gave up his own time to studying and experimenting on the great subject of annihilating pain under surgical operations. How his labors were crowned with success, we will again quote from the Paris Academy:—

"In the spring of 1846, Thomas R. Spear came to study with me, and hearing me converse upon the subject, he said he had inhaled ether at the Lexington Academy, where he was educated, and described to me its effects.

This increased my interest in the subject, and I determined, as soon as the pressure of the spring business was over, to devote myself to it. In the mean time, I tried an experiment upon a water spaniel, inserting his head in a jar having sulphuric ether at the bottom. This was done in the presence of two persons at my house in West Needham, where I reside during the summer months. After breathing the vapor for some time, the dog completely willed down in my hands. I then removed the jar. In about three minutes he aroused, yelled loudly, and sprang some ten feet into a pond of water.

"Immediately after this experiment, I waited on Dr. Granville G. Hayden, a young dentist, told him my purpose, and made an agreement with him to come to my office and take charge of my business, that I might devote myself more exclusively to this subject. The agreement was drawn by R. H. Dana, Jr. Esq., to whose letter in the appendix I take the liberty to refer the Academy in this connection. As soon as Dr. Hayden became acquainted with my business, I began to devote myself to my experiments. I inhaled some chloric ether and morphine, the effect of which was drowsiness, followed by lassitude and headache.

"Early in August, I asked Dr. Hayden to procure me a four-ounce phial of sulphuric ether from Mr. Burnett, a druggist much relied upon by chemists. He did so, and I tried to induce him to take it. As he declined, I took half of it into the country to try again upon my dog. Just as I had got it ready, the dog sprang and threw over the jar. I felt vexed, and resolved to take it myself, and did so, the next day, at my office. I inhaled from my handkerchief all the ether that was left, but was not completely lost, yet thought myself so far insensible that I believed that a tooth could have been drawn with but little pain or consciousness. I was unwilling to send to Burnett's again for the same article, he being a near neighbor, and his young men well acquainted with mine, lest the knowledge of my experiments should get abroad. I accordingly sent a student, William P. Leavitt, to druggists in a different part of the city, Brewster, Stevens, & Co., a firm in excellent standing, with directions to get sulphuric ether. After some persuasion, I induced Spear, who had taken it at school, to inhale it. He did so, and became so far insensible as to drop the handkerchief, and seemed very drowsy and torpid. As this passed off, he became excited and furious, so that he had to be held down in the chair; but this subsided, and, on coming to, he expressed himself delighted with his sensations. Leavitt then took it, with much the same effect. I was much discouraged by these attempts. The effects produced were not such as I sought for, nor were the young men affected in the same manner that I had been, and as I observed the dog to be. They were much more excited and less insensible. Yet I cannot help remarking, in this connection, that, had this sulphuric ether been pure and highly rectified, I should have demonstrated its effects then, instead of at the subsequent period in September. This ether has since been analyzed, as appears by the affidavits in the appendix, and found to contain a large portion of alcohol, sulphur acids, and other impurities.

"This experiment was early in August; and, it being hot weather, and I being somewhat out of health, I went into the country, and abandoned the experiments until the middle of September. With the autumn and the restoration of health, my ambition led me to resume my experiments; and I mentioned to Dr. Hayden that I feared there was so much difference in the qualities of ether that, in so delicate a matter, there would be great difficulty in bringing about any generally useful and reliable results.

"Thinking that a surer effect might be produced by inhaling the ether through some apparatus, I called repeat-

edly on Mr. Wightman, a philosophical instrument-maker, for the purpose of procuring or contriving an apparatus. While examining his bags for inhaling nitrous oxide gas, the thought struck me that I could put the ether into one of these, and, by making an opening to be closed by a valve for the admission of atmospheric air, could convert it into an inhaling apparatus. Upon second thought, I had an impression that ether would dissolve India rubber, and put the question to Mr. Wightman. He thought it would. I then put the same question as to oil silk. He said he did not know, but advised me to consult a chemist, and named Dr. Jackson. I took from Mr. Wightman a glass tunnel, purchased an India rubber bag on my way, and returned to my office. I then sent Leavitt to Dr. Gay, a chemist, to ask the simple question whether ether would dissolve India rubber. He returned, saying that Dr. Gay was not in. In the mean time, I became satisfied that the bottle and glass I had were not large enough for my purposes, and, not wishing to go to unnecessary expense, I said to Dr. Hayden that I would borrow a gas-bag from Dr. Jackson's laboratory. He then suggested to me to ascertain from Dr. Jackson something as to the different qualities and preparations of ether, with which he said chemists were always familiar. I approved of the suggestion, but feared Dr. Jackson might guess what I was experimenting upon, and forestall me. I went to Dr. Jackson's, therefore, to procure a gas-bag, also with the intention of ascertaining something more accurately as to the different preparations of ether, if I should find I could do so without setting him upon the same track of experiment with myself. I am aware that, by this admission, I may show myself not to have been possessed by the most disinterested spirit of philosophic enthusiasm, clear of all regard for personal rights or benefits; but it is enough for me to say that I felt I had made sacrifices and run risks for this object, that I believed myself to be close upon it, yet where another, with better opportunities for experimenting, availing himself of my hints and labors, might take the prize from my grasp.

"I asked Dr. Jackson for his gas-bag. He told me it was in his house. I went for it, and returned through the laboratory. He said, in a laughing manner, 'Well, Doctor, you seem to be all equipped, minus the gas.' I replied, in the same manner, that perhaps there would be no need of having any gas, if the person who took it could only be made to believe there was gas in it, and alluded to the story of the man who died from being made to believe that he was bleeding to death, there being in fact nothing but water trickled upon his leg; but I had no intention whatever of trying such a trick. He smiled and said that was a good story, but added, in a graver manner, that I had better not attempt such an experiment, lest I should be set down as a greater humbug than Wells was with his nitrous oxide gas. Seeing that here was an opportunity to open the subject, I said, in as careless a manner as I could assume, why cannot I give the ether gas? He said that I could do so, and spoke again of the students taking it at Cambridge. He said the patient would be dull and stupefied, that I could do what I pleased with him, that he would not be able to help himself. Finding the subject open, I made the inquiries I wished as to the different kinds and preparations of ether. He told me something about the preparations, and thinking that if he had any it would be of the purest kind, I asked him to let me see his. He did so, but remarked that it had been standing for some time, and told me that I could get some highly rectified at Burnett's. As I was passing out, Dr. Jackson followed me to the door, and told me that he could recommend something better than the gas-bag to administer the ether with, and gave me a flask with a glass tube inserted in it.

"I procured the ether from Burnett's, and taking the

tube and flask, shut myself up in my room, seated in the operating chair, and commenced inhaling. I found the ether so strong that it partially suffocated me, but produced a decided effect. I then saturated my handkerchief, and inhaled it from that. I looked at my watch and soon lost consciousness. As I recovered, I felt a numbness in my limbs, with a sensation like nightmare, and would have given the world for some one to come and arouse me. I thought for a moment I should die in that state, and that the world would only pity or ridicule my folly. At length I felt a slight tingling of the blood in the end of my third finger, and made an effort to touch it with my thumb, but without success. At a second effort, I touched it, but there seemed to be no sensation. I gradually raised my arm and pinched my thigh, but I could see that sensation was imperfect. I attempted to rise from my chair, but fell back. Gradually I regained power over my limbs and full consciousness. I immediately looked at my watch, and found that I had been insensible between seven and eight minutes.

"Delighted with the success of this experiment, I immediately announced the result to the persons employed in my establishment, and waited impatiently for some one upon whom I could make a fuller trial. Towards evening, a man, residing in Boston, whose certificate is in the appendix, came in, suffering great pain, and wishing to have a tooth extracted. He was afraid of the operation, and asked if he could be mesmerized. I told him I had something better, and saturating my handkerchief, gave it to him to inhale. He became unconscious almost immediately. It was dark, and Dr. Hayden held the lamp, while I extracted a firmly rooted bicuspid tooth. There was not much alteration in the pulse, and no relaxation of the muscles. He recovered in a minute, and knew nothing of what had been done to him. He remained for some time talking about the experiment, and I took from him a certificate. This was on the 30th of September, 1846. This I consider to be the first demonstration of this new fact in science. I have heard of no one who can prove an earlier demonstration. If any one can do so, I yield to him the point of priority in time.

"I will make a single remark upon the subject of my interview with Dr. Jackson. It is not necessary to go into the question of the origin of all ideas. I am ready to acknowledge my indebtedness to men and to books for all my information upon this subject. I have got here a little, and there a little. I learned from Dr. Jackson, in 1844, the effect of ether directly applied to a sensitive tooth, and proved, by experiment, that it would gradually render the nerve insensible. I learned from Dr. Jackson, also, in 1844, the effect of ether when inhaled by the students at college, which was corroborated by Spear's account, and by what I read. I knew of Dr. Wells's attempt to apply nitrous oxide gas for destroying pain under surgical operations. I had great motives to destroy or alleviate pain under my operations, and endeavored to produce such a result by means of inhaling ether, inferring that if it would render a nerve insensible, directly applied, it might, when inhaled, destroy or greatly alleviate sensibility to pain generally. Had the ether that I tried on the 6th of August been pure, I should have made the demonstration then. I further acknowledge that I was subsequently indebted to Dr. Jackson for valuable information as to the kinds and preparations of ether, and for the recommendation of the highly rectified from Burnett's as the most safe and efficient. But my obligation to him hath this extent, no further. All that he communicated to me I could have got from other well-informed chemists, or from some books. He did not put me upon the experiments; and when he recommended the highly rectified sulphuric ether, *the effect he anticipated was only*

that stupefaction which was not unknown, and he did not estimate in any degree a suspicion of that insensibility to pain which was demonstrated, and astonished the scientific world.

"As soon as the man whose tooth I extracted left my office, I consulted Dr. Hayden as to the best mode of bringing out the discovery. We agreed it was best to announce it to the surgeons at the hospital; but as some time would elapse before an operation, I thought it best to procure some assurance which would induce my patients to take it. I therefore called upon the man who had taken it, and found him perfectly well. Thence I went to Dr. Jackson, told him what I had done, and asked him to give me a certificate that it was harmless in its effects. This he positively refused to do. I then told him I should go to the principal surgeons, and have the question thoroughly tried. I then called on Dr. Warren, who promised me an early opportunity to try the experiment."

Though Dr. Morton had then this indescribable satisfaction of success in his arduous studies, and confidence in the ultimate issue of his undertaking, yet he had to encounter some very troublesome consequences. He had given up, or allowed to slip from him, his lucrative business of dentistry. He had to meet the sneers of the medical and literary magazines of the country. He had to encounter opposition from Dr. Jackson, and almost everybody else. For nearly all the surgeons in the country, except those in the Massachusetts General Hospital, denounced him and his discovery. Upon this point we extract from the Congressional Report:—

"During all this time, Dr. Morton alone claimed the discovery and conducted the experiments. He had staked everything dear in life, his hopes of fortune and fame, upon the discovery. He gave his labor by day and his thoughts by night to the perfecting of all that was incomplete in its application, and, in the language of the Report of the Trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital: 'It is a mortifying fact that Dr. Morton's pecuniary affairs have become embarrassed in consequence of the interruption of his regular business resulting from his efforts and experiments in establishing this great truth, and that his health has also severely suffered from the same cause, so that he can devote only a small part of each day to his professional labors. He became poor in a cause which has made the world his debtor.'

"The committee have the highest medical authority for saying that from living so much of late in an atmosphere of ether, and from the anxiety attending the various trials and experiments connected with the discovery, and from the excitement caused by the controversies which it has occasioned, the health of Dr. Morton has become such that he is unable to attend to his professional duties to any extent."

And it was not until all was complete and completely verified that any rival appeared to contest or claim any participation in the discovery. Then one came forth, Dr. Charles T. Jackson, to whom allusion has been made, and the part he acted described. That his hints respecting the preparation of ether were useful to Dr. Morton, the latter never denied, and the loan of the gas-bag was kindly done; but will this deed and casual words entitle Dr. Jackson to claim the honor of discovering etherization? With far more reason might the Secretary

of War, who planned the campaigns, and sent forward the supplies for the American army, claim the glory of fighting the battles and gaining the victories in Mexico.

But it is no part of our plan to engage in this controversy. We take the matter as it has been settled by the best judges of testimony. After a very thorough investigation, the Trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital made a report, in which they awarded to Dr. Morton the merit of the ether discovery.

In the following year, 1847, at the request of Dr. Jackson, the Trustees reviewed their opinion, and again awarded the discovery to Dr. Morton. In the succeeding year, the following substantial testimony was offered to Dr. Morton:—

"Boston, May 12, 1848.

"DEAR SIR: At a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital, a few weeks since, it was informally suggested that a limited subscription of one thousand dollars shall be raised for your benefit, in acknowledgment of your services in the late ether discovery; no one to be asked to subscribe more than ten dollars. We consented to act as a committee to receive and apply the proceeds of this subscription. The proposed sum having been obtained, we have now the pleasure of transmitting it to you. We also inclose the subscription-book in a casket which accompanies this note. Among its signatures you will find the names of not a few of those most distinguished among us for worth and intelligence: and it may be remarked that it is signed by every member of the Board of Trustees.

"You will, we are sure, highly value this first testimonial, slight as it is, of the gratitude of your fellow-citizens. That you may hereafter receive an adequate national reward is the sincere wish of your obedient servants,

"SAMUEL FROTHINGHAM,
"THOS. B. CURTIS.

"To Dr. WILLIAM T. G. MORTON."

"The box accompanying this note had upon it the following inscription: In front, 'Testimonial in honor of the Ether Discovery of Sept. 30, 1846.' And on the lid, 'This box, containing one thousand dollars, is presented to William Thomas Green Morton, by the members of the Board of Trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital, and other citizens of Boston, May 8, 1848.'"

While the controversy with Dr. Jackson was thus going on, the administration of ether to subdue pain was coming more and more into popular use; and, as it was evident that no patent could secure to the discoverer a compensation for his invention, the friends of Dr. Morton advised him to apply for his reward to Congress. The following letters, extracted from the Congressional Report, are significant of the estimation in which the doctor and his claim were held by men whose names are a guarantee for his worthiness:—

Letter from Major Bigelow.

"Boston, December 9, 1848.

"Sir: I avail myself of the honor which I had of making your acquaintance last season, during your visit to Boston, to introduce to you my friend, Dr. Morton, the discoverer of the effect of ether in producing insensibility to pain, a discovery which has placed him in the front rank of the

benefactors of the human race. He visits Washington in the hope of obtaining some recognition on the part of Congress of the value of his discovery, and has already secured the favorable consideration of some of the members. Your assistance in the matter would be in keeping with your well known and enlightened philanthropy, and would be gratefully appreciated.

"I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN P. BIGELOW.

"Hon. ISAAC E. HOLMES."

Letter from Governor Briggs.

"COUNCIL CHAMBER, BOSTON, Jan. 12, 1849.

"DEAR CORWIN: Allow me to introduce to your acquaintance Dr. Morton, of this city, whose name the world knows as the discoverer of the application of ether to alleviate pain. An application to Congress for some compensation for the discovery is to be made. May I ask you, for the doctor, who thus far, though he has relieved thousands of others from suffering, has had nothing but suffering himself as his reward, to look at his case, and, if you find it has merits, give it your support?

"Sincerely and truly yours,

"GEO. N. BRIGGS.

"Hon. THOS. CORWIN."

Letter from Governor Morton.

"BOSTON, January 12, 1849.

"DEAR SIR: I am happy to have the opportunity of presenting to your acquaintance Dr. W. T. G. Morton, of this city. Dr. M., who, by reputation, is doubtless known to you, has the distinction to have his name identified with one of the most important discoveries of modern times—the application of ether as an agent for producing insensibility to pain in surgical operations. His object, as I understand, in visiting Washington at this time, is to endeavor to procure from Congress some recognition of the value of his discovery. I beg leave to recommend him to your kind attention.

"I am, very respectfully, your friend and servant,

"MARCUS MORTON.

"To Hon. THOS. H. BENTON."

The subject was accordingly laid before a committee of the Thirtieth Congress, and it was decided that Dr. Morton was the discoverer.

Early in the following year, the subject of our notice received from the "Paris Académie des Sciences" their largest gold medal. A former prize of *two thousand five hundred francs* had been awarded him by this Academy. On one side of the splendid medal, in addition to the name of the institute, is a medallion head of the Goddess of Liberty. On the reverse, surrounded by a wreath of laurel, is engraved, "Académie des Sciences. Prix Montyon—Médecine et Chirurgie—Concours de 1847 et 1848. Wm. T. G. Morton, 1850."

It seems not amiss to insert in this place a letter published by the Committee of Congress, appointed in 1851 to investigate the claim of Dr. Morton. The testimony of such a name to the merits of the cause is of important weight:—

"WASHINGTON, December 20, 1851.

"Dr. W. T. G. MORTON—DEAR SIR: In reply to your letter of the 17th inst., I would say that, having been called on, on a previous occasion, to examine the question of the discovery of the application of ether in surgical operations, I then formed the opinion, which I have since seen no reason

to change, that the merit of that great discovery belonged to you, and I had supposed that the reports of the Trustees of the Hospital, and of the Committee of the House of Representatives of the United States, were conclusive on this point.

"The gentlemen connected with the hospital are well known to me as of the highest character, and they possessed, at the time of the investigation, every facility for ascertaining all the facts in the case.

"The Committee of the House were, I believe, unanimous in awarding to you the merit of having made the first practical application of ether, and a majority by their report awarded to you the entire credit of the discovery.

"Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"DANIEL WEBSTER."

Dr. Morton again petitioned the Thirty-Second Congress. There has subsequently been presented a memorial, urging his claim "as having first proved to the world that ether would produce insensibility to surgical operations," and asking "a recognition by Congress of his services to his country and mankind," signed by about two hundred and twenty names of surgeons and physicians, the most honored and eminent in Massachusetts. In June, 1852, the select committee, to whom the papers were referred, made the following report:—

AN ACT FOR THE RELIEF OF WM. T. G. MORTON.

"Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy be, and they are hereby authorized and instructed to receive from Wm. T. G. Morton his patent right for the use of sulphuric ether in producing insensibility to pain during surgical and other operations, which is at present in use, or may hereafter at any time be introduced into the hospitals of the army and navy, the penitentiary of the United States, and board of the national shipping; and there shall be paid to the said Wm. T. G. Morton, the sum of *one hundred thousand dollars* out of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated, in full compensation for the surrender of all his rights under the said patent: *Provided, however,* That the said Wm. T. G. Morton shall surrender all right, interest, and benefit from the above letters patent to the Commissioner of Patents."

The subject was also laid before the Naval Committee of the House, and Military and Naval Committees of the Senate, all three of which concurred in the above bill. The Surgeon-General of the Army of the United States, and the Chief of the Bureau of Medicine of the Navy, strongly recommended its passage in letters to the above Committees. Senators Borland, Gwinn, Shields, Hale, Douglass, Walker, Badger, and Mallory made elaborate speeches in his behalf.

The bill has not yet passed; but, from the manner in which the report was received by Congress, it seems hardly possible that a just award for his great discovery should be much longer delayed.

The following we clip from the "Washington Globe," under date of 14th of December:—

"Mr. DAVIS presented a petition of Physicians and Surgeons, and of the Trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital, and a petition of the Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary, and members of the Massachusetts

Medical Society, praying that Dr. William T. G. Morton may be liberally rewarded for the discovery of the use of ether to produce insensibility to pain in surgical operations; which were referred to the Committee on Military Affairs."

In the mean time, we take this opportunity of interesting the public in his behalf. To do this, it is only necessary that his character and pursuits as a man should be known. We have alluded to his energy and unwearied industry. These traits are apparent in all his doings. In 1845, he purchased the site where Etherton Cottage, his summer residence, is located. It was then a barren pasture. Now it is the site of Etherton Cottage, as shown in the engraving, a model of architecture in its style and finish.

One who visited Dr. Morton's grounds in 1851 gives the following description. We premise that this cottage home is situated in the town of Needham, about thirty minutes' ride from Boston, on the Great Western Railroad leading from Boston to Worcester.

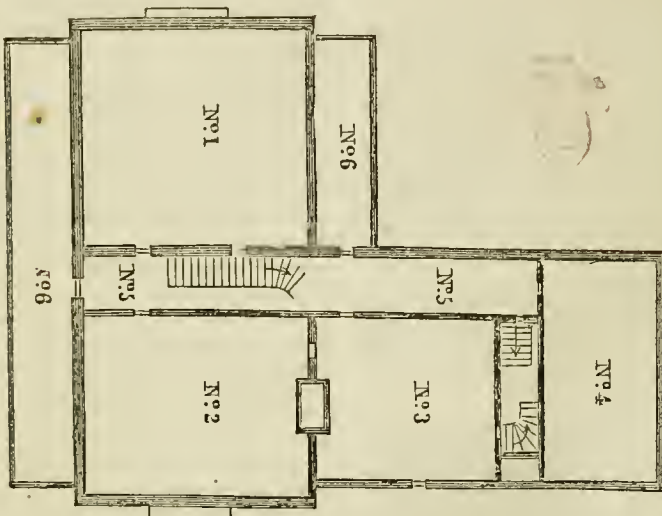
A description of the cottage is unnecessary, as the plate is better than words. "The grounds embrace about six acres, in a natural basin surrounded by an amphitheatre of forest-clad hills, dotted with residences. From the centre of this hollow rises a knoll, and on it stands the cottage—a picturesque building of the English style of rural architecture. The prospect from its every window is, of course, superb. In the foreground are the serpentine walks, rustic summer-houses, flower-beds, young trees, sparkling streams, and other appurtenances of the mansion itself. Beyond, we see the village church, the farm-houses of the industrious yeomanry, and the other quiet beauties of a country landscape, while an occasional train sweeps along the adjacent railway like a fiery dragon, a type of the nervous, go-ahead spirit of this utilitarian age."

Thus the talents and unwearied exertions of Dr. Morton have been crowned with the best blessings of life—a pleasant home, and the power of conforring happiness on those he loves.

He has won his title to renown, also, before reaching middle age—not fortuitously, but by dint of application steadily directed upward as well as onward. This is the point for us women, who give the bias to mental power as well as moral feeling, to consider. His early training must have had a most salutary influence in keeping him from the evil temptations so often destructive of those left early to self-guidance. He must have had a wise and pious mother. Fortunately, we are not left to conjecture on this matter. In a letter to a friend, Dr. Morton thus describes her example and its effect:—

"My mother has been a member of the Baptist Church ever since I can remember. It was her influence that educated me morally. The school-house in the town was two miles from our residence, and through woods and swamps; the church was farther off; but my mother always walked to church every Sabbath, rain or shine, and took me with her. When I was twelve years old, we moved to the little village where the church was; there I had tolerable opportunities of attending school during the winter, and my father was able to send me to Leicester Academy. I was there when the news of the failure of my father—utterly unexpected by his family—reached me, and ended my school education. My father lost all his property, our family were scattered, and for several years had no home together. My great object was to make a home for my parents and sisters, and I have had that satisfaction."

His parents live near Dr. Morton, in Needham, in the enjoyment of every comfort.



GROUND PLAN OF ETHERTON COTTAGE.

Accession no.

7253

Author

Hale, S.J.

Etherton cottage

Call no.

ANESTHESIA

IV.50

