

numerous that it would be tedious to advance them all.

Without dwelling longer upon the fact that, whatever is new in medicine, is often, for that very reason, condemned untried or tried unfairly; and without attempting, at present, to answer the arguments which have been brought against the use of chloroform, I shall now proceed to offer for your candid consideration some testimony in favor of it, confining myself mainly to two authorities—the one a surgical—the other a medical, or rather an obstetric one. They first studied the effects of chloroform as an medicinal agent; they first administered it and staked their high professional reputations upon the decided opinions they advanced in its favor. I allude to James Miller, the Professor of Surgery, and to Dr. Simpson, Professor of Midwifery in the University of Edinburgh. Allow me to remark that I was an eye-witness of their practice; and that, though I was their pupil, it is from no personal veneration which I entertain for my former professors, but solely from a personal acquaintance with the facts and cases which they illustrated in the presence of hundreds besides myself. I quote their authority more as a *witness* to the truth of it, than as a *theoretical* disciple of theirs.

Dr. Simpson was not the discoverer of chloroform, as many suppose; but he it was who first ascertained its effects upon the animal economy when inspired. Two chemical substances had been previously ascertained to possess the therapeutic properties which so remarkably belong to chloroform when inhaled into the lungs. The first was the nitrous oxide of the chemist, familiarly known as the intoxicating or laughing gas. The very singular properties of this gas were first discovered by Sir Humphrey Davy in 1799, but little or no use appears ever to have been made of it in medicine. "When inhaled it causes very agreeable sensations, a rapid and

brilliant flow of ideas, accompanied with an irresistible tendency to laughter, and to very violent muscular exertion." The other anæsthetic agent was sulphuric ether, also long known as a chemical substance, but first used in the way of inhalation by Dr. Morton, an American, who I believe applied it, at least in the first instance, for the purpose of alleviating pain in dental surgery. This compound, which is obtained from alcohol by heating it along with sulphuric acid, is, however, subject to many objections, the principal of which are the quantity required to produce insensibility, its unpleasant odour, which very frequently remains attached to the clothes or exhaled from the lungs of the patient for several hours; the impossibility of some persons being put under its influence from the great irritation which it produces in the throat upon its being inhaled; its inflammable nature, and therefore the danger of using it near a flame; the necessity of an apparatus, and several other objections, from all which chloroform is free, besides possessing advantages of its own, in which the others are wanting. The discovery, however, which Dr. Morton made of its effects upon the human subject when inspired paved the way for the discovery of the more certain and powerful agent—chloroform, which after repeated trials of various agents, such as the chloride of hydrocarbon, nitrate of ethyl, bisulphuret of carbon, and others, Dr. Simpson found to surpass them all, either in its manageableness or in its effects. To Dr. Morton of America, therefore, rather than to Dr. Simpson of Scotland the merit is due of first applying (not "discovering," for the chemists did that,) an *anæsthetic remedy*. But as Dr. Simpson is generally regarded as the discoverer of chloroform, and as he probably was the discoverer of its effects, when inhaled into the lungs, I shall, in submitting the history of *chloroform*, quote his