

was beyond anything but omnipresence to do so. He meant to overtake all he promised. The soul was willing but the flesh was unable. The patients—high and low—would be annoyed at his delay, but when he appeared and smiled upon them, the scolding was forgotten in the joy at having his presence, and seeing his painstaking care exercised in their behalf. I never knew of his making any invidious distinctions between the rich and poor.

* * * Being a person of great sensibility, he often shrank from the infliction of pain necessary for the prosecution of the duties of his profession. He was continually on the alert for drugs that might destroy pain, and suspend feeling during severe operations, or paroxysms of pain. In the end of the last century, Sir Humphrey Davy recommended Nitrous Oxide (laughing gas) as an Anæsthetic, but no practical benefit flowed from this suggestion until 1844, when Dr. Horace Wells, a Dentist, of Hartford, Connecticut, U. S., employed it for extracting teeth without pain. He was led

use it—not as a narcotic merely—but as an excitant, for he had observed that when persons were greatly excited, as in a street fight, in battle, or in a state of intoxication, they were insensible to pain, and, therefore, he inferred that excitement induced by gasses would produce the same effect. He communicated his views to his friends but they were not favourably received. On the 30th September, 1846, Dr. Morton, of Boston, U. S., used Sulphuric Ether in the same way with success. This he did at the suggestion of his friend, Dr. Jackson. Dr. Simpson was not altogether satisfied with Ether. He set his mind to work to find out some more potent compound. Not being a chemist himself, he communicated his desire to Mr. Waldie, an accomplished chemist of Liverpool. This gentleman suggested chloroform, and Dr. Simpson was always careful to give him credit for the recommendation. Dr. Simpson experimented with it upon himself, and his two assistants, Drs. George Keith and Matthew Duncan. He often amused the students by giving his experience of the inhalation of the drug. This was on the 4th of November, 1847, and on the 10th of that month, he introduced it to the notice of the *Medico-Chirurgical Society*, of Edinburgh. Many of the members experimented with it, and the consequence was that a crowded meeting was found in a state of excitement which was very amusing. Some of the most sedate be-

came hilarious and even riotous, and those who usually had most voluble tongues, were in a state of torpidity, like intoxicated men. It was introduced into the Royal Infirmary, and in a few months was used throughout christendom. Chloroform was discovered by a continental chemist, called Soubeiran, in 1831, by Liebig, the next year, and at the same time by Mr. Samuel Guthrie, Sackett's Harbour, New York, but the discovery of its peculiar narcotic properties, was by Dumas and Peligot, three years later. It acts in the same way as opium or alcohol, by suspending consciousness, and therefore sensation and volition. Dr. Simpson has shown, however, that the idea of lulling or destroying pain in this way is not new. He quotes from Dioscorides, Pliny, and Apuleius, authors of antiquity, that during the existence of the Roman Empire, the mandrake root, (*atropa mandragora*) steeped in wine was given to destroy suffering in persons who were to be treated by operations, and complete insensibility was the result. Pliny says that the seeds of *eruca* were given to criminals before being lashed or executed. The gall and vinegar offered to our Saviour was doubtless of the same character. The extract of Indian hemp is used in India for the same purpose, and Dr. Simpson showed that narcotic vapours were, in the 23th century, used during surgical operations. Many persons believe that he was the discoverer of this potent agent, when he was only the means of making it of practical use. It is true that many deaths have taken place from its use, but think of the hundreds of thousands to whom it has been administered safely; and contemplate the fact that it has saved the lives of countless myriads by its anodyne virtues as well as by its destroying the effects—so often fatal formerly—of the so-called "shock," to the human system during a serious surgical operation. Now, though the limb may be severed from the body, or organs of sense extirpated, or the keen surgeon's knife searching for morbid growths in the vital parts, or pangs the most poignant racking the frame, yet, by chloroform, the hallucination is complete. The most beautiful imagery dances before the mental eye. The most seraphic sounds from angels' harps fall upon the ear. A state of ecstatic joy comes with intermittent periods of obliviousness, until consciousness folds up its wings and all existences are a blank. In the meantime a needed work has been done, and untold suffering avoided. * * *