ward-tenders, students and the patient were ready—but not Dr. Morton. Dr. Warren, who was to operate; waited a half-hour; he then remarked, sarcastically, “Dr. Morton has not come, perhaps he has another engagement.” Then followed sneering remarks by the students, and sneering looks by the surgeons, for no one had faith in the experiment, and the students enjoyed the fun of the anticipated failure, myself with the rest.

As Dr. Warren was about to begin the operation, Dr. Morton came in, out of breath, and red in the face from hurry. He immediately commenced to give the ether from the glass inhaler then used. In three or four minutes he turned to Dr. Warren, and said, “Your patient is ready”; whereupon the operation was done without a sign of pain that I could see. Dr. Warren then stood facing the class, and said, “Gentlemen, *this is no humbug.*” We were *thunderstruck*. Dr. Warren was a tall, straight man, dignified and rather solemn in manner, with supreme self-control, laconic in speech, using the fewest words possible and never repeating them (resembling the Duke of Wellington); yet there were tears glistening on his face when he uttered those words.

Now for the explanation of Dr. Morton’s tardiness. On the previous day (October 15th) Dr. Gould, a friend of Dr. Morton, suggested that valves be put in the inhaler to aid the elimination of the expired air. At midnight he (Morton) had thought out the way to do it; he then went to the house of Mr. Drake, philosophical-instrument maker, rang him out of bed, hurried him to his shop, and induced him to make the required alterations. This took him well into the next forenoon; hence Dr. Morton’s delay.

In order to fully satisfy the minds of all that the Lethæon was a *complete* destroyer of pain, it was proposed to make the severest test, namely, that of the actual cautery. It was applied, accordingly, to the back of a man suffering from caries of the spine. The iron, heated to a white heat, was passed up one side of the spine and twice upon the other side, a distance of two feet, and then zigzag between the spinous processes for the same distance. The room was filled with the odor of burning flesh and smoke, but the man did not wince. Dr. Warren said that this was the severest test possible, and proved the complete success of ether as a destroyer of pain.

A young woman named Alice Mohan was brought into a surgical ward suffering from disease of the knee, for which amputation had been advised but declined from dread of the operation, she preferring death. Dr. Hayward told her that he could give her something that would put her to sleep and make the operation painless, when she readily consented to have it done. This was the first amputation under ether. It was done by Dr. Hayward, November 7, 1846.

Dr. Warren substituted chloric ether for sulphuric and seemed to prefer it.

The first recorded case of extraction of teeth under ether was on the 30th of September, 1846, by Dr. Morton. He began his experiments by pouring the ether on cloths; that not being satisfactory, an inhaler of some kind was thought necessary. Many different kinds were tried, but none were without faults. In the early part of April, 1847, Dr. Morton abandoned them all for the cone-shaped sponge. No important knowledge has been gained connected with the administration of ether since that date.

It appears that ether was used, by inhalation, for asthma and phthisis as far back as 1818; and, singularly enough, the greatest care was used not to carry it to unconsciousness for fear of fatal results, several cases of death having been recorded from that cause.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF THE INTRODUCTION OF ANESTHESIA.¹

BY C. V. BEMIS, M.D., MEDFORD, MASS.

IN replying to the request of your committee that as a witness of the first operation under ether, at the Massachusetts General Hospital, I would relate some of the incidents of that occasion, the first thought is that little remains to be said; that the events of that day have long ago become historical.

The picture of the theatre at that time is distinctly before me.

In the old days, the private pupils of the late Dr. John C. Warren, of whom I was one, were accustomed to assist in his operations at the hospital; and after graduation, I continued to make very frequent visits there, especially on the regular days for operations. On one of these days, the famous first operation under ether was performed.

I think nearly all of the Surgical Staff were present. I remember that Dr. Peirson, of the Board of Consultation, was there. The theatre was quite well filled with students and the younger professional men; among whom I remember Dr. George H. Gay, Dr. H. G. Clark, Dr. W. W. Wellington, Dr. Daniel D. Slade.

All waited impatiently for the arrival of Dr. Morton, who had been detained, and was late in keeping his appointment with Dr. Warren.

Immediately on Dr. Morton’s hurried arrival, he began the administration of ether to the patient, already on the operating-table, through a tube connected with a glass globe which contained it; and the operation was completed quietly and without special incident.

AN INCIDENT IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE INTRODUCTION OF SULPHURIC ETHER AS AN ANESTHETIC.¹

BY W. G. WHEELER, M.D., CHULSEA, MASS.

IN the early part of the year 1846, a New England travelling man from Boston, on his way to the West, arrived at Little Falls, N. Y., then a village, now a city in the valley of the Mohawk. He announced himself in a circular as the agent for and interested in a wonderful discovery which he wished to exhibit; also that he would sell to dentists, physicians and surgeons the right to use the new and powerful agent which would render the extraction of teeth and all surgical operations painless. He also, by written notes to the physicians and a few of the leading citizens of the town, invited them to visit his rooms the next afternoon, to witness the effect of this oblivious drug and to see the extraction of a tooth, without pain, while the patient was under its influence.

This was a great announcement; and it required considerable faith on our part to accept the Boston

¹ Read at the Clinical Meeting of the Staff of the Massachusetts General Hospital, December 1, 1896.