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air, will explain the sounds posteriorly. And

4thly. The gastric symptoms are fully and sufficiently accounted for. What, then, would have been the effect of tapping? Unquestionably, relief, but only temporary, for the malignant disease would have very probably been excited to increased action by the withdrawal of the fluid, and speedily terminated life, even supposing his powers had rallied, and his cough had been subdued. I am, however, quite convinced, that though the position of the lung was against the ribs, yet had exploration been performed, (where it was intended, if possible, to have done so—viz., in the posterior lateral region, five or six inches from the spine, and not low down,) that the whole of the fluid might have been removed also, with perfect safety, as regards any injury likely to have been inflicted by the trocar.

Original Papers.

SURGICAL OPERATIONS PERFORMED DURING INSENSIBILITY,

PRODUCED BY THE INHALATION OF SULPHURIC ETHER.

(Communicated by FRANCIS BOOTT, M.D.)

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I beg to call your attention to the report of an anodyne process, by means of which surgical operations have been performed without pain. I think it would be interesting to the profession if published in THE LANCET. I also send a letter from Dr. Bigelow, bearing date more than three weeks after the report drawn up by his son. I wish to add, that Dr. Bigelow is one of the first physicians of Boston, a Professor of the Medical School of Harvard College, and a man of great accomplishment.—Yours sincerely,

Gower-street, Bedford-square, Dec. 1846.*

F. BOOTT.

*Extract from a private letter from Dr. BIGELOW to
Dr. FRANCIS BOOTT.*

“ Boston, Nov. 28, 1846.

“ MY DEAR BOOTT,—I send you an account of a new anodyne process lately introduced here, which promises to be one of the important discoveries of the present age. It has rendered many patients insensible to pain during surgical operations, and other causes of suffering. Limbs and breasts have been amputated, arteries tied, tumours extirpated, and many hun-

dreds of teeth extracted, without any consciousness of the least pain on the part of the patient.

"The inventor is Dr. Morton, a dentist of this city, and the process consists of the inhalation of the vapour of ether to the point of intoxication. I send you the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, which contains an article written by my son Henry, and which is extracted from a medical journal, relating to the discovery.

Let me give you an example. I took my daughter Mary, last week, to Dr. Morton's rooms, to have a tooth extracted. She inhaled the ether about one minute, and fell asleep instantly in the chair. A molar tooth was then extracted, without the slightest movement of a muscle or fibre. In another minute she awoke, smiled, said the tooth was not out, had felt no pain, nor had the slightest knowledge of the extraction. It was an entire illusion.

"The newspaper will give you the details up to its date, since which other operations have been performed with uniform success.

"*Dr. F. Boott.*"

The following paper, by HENRY JACOB BIGELOW, M.D., one of the Surgeons of the Massachusetts General Hospital, was read before the Boston Society of Medical Improvement, Nov. 9th, 1846, an abstract having been previously read before the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Nov. 3rd, 1846.*

It has long been an important problem in medical science, to devise some method of mitigating the pain of surgical operations. An efficient agent for this purpose has at length been discovered. A patient has been rendered completely insensible during an amputation of the thigh, regaining consciousness after a short interval. Other severe operations have been performed without the knowledge of the patients. So remarkable an occurrence will, it is believed, render the following details relating to the history and character of the process, not uninteresting.

On the 16th of October, 1846, an operation was performed at the hospital, upon a patient who had inhaled a preparation administered by Dr. Morton, a dentist of this city, with the alleged intention of producing insensibility to pain. Dr. Morton was understood to have extracted teeth under similar circumstances, without the knowledge of the patient. The present operation was performed by Dr. Warren, and though comparatively slight, involved an incision near the lower jaw, of some inches in extent. During the operation, the patient muttered, as in a semi-conscious state, and afterwards stated

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