



THE APPARATUS FOR RENDERING SURGICAL OPERATIONS PAINLESS.

THE NEW MEANS FOR RENDERING SURGICAL OPERATIONS PAINLESS.

LAST week, the first experiment was made in this country of employing the inhalation of the vapour of sulphur ether as a means of rendering surgical operations painless. The application is of American origin, and was first introduced, a few months since, by Dr. Morton, a dentist, of Boston, U.S., by whom it was communicated to Dr. Boott, of Gower-street. By this gentleman the discovery was described, on the 17th of last month, to Mr. Robinson, the surgeon-dentist, also of Gower-street; who, on the following day, operated upon a young lady thrown into sleep by the inhalation, during which a molar tooth was extracted from her lower jaw.

The inhalation occupied a minute and a half, and the patient's recovery from sleep another minute. Dr. Boott questioned her respecting the tooth, and she expressed her great surprise at finding that it was removed. She said that all she had felt was merely a sensation of cold around the tooth, a sensation which was caused, perhaps, by the coldness of the extracting instrument.

The apparatus employed consists of the lower part of Nooth's apparatus, with a flexible tube, to which are attached a ball and socket valve and mouthpiece, similar to those commonly used for inhalation. The apparatus has been constructed by Mr. Hooper, of 7, Pall Mall East, according to Dr. Boott and Mr. Robinson's instructions: it is very elegant in appearance.

The apparatus has since been successfully used in operations at King's College Hospital, by Mr. Fergusson; and, on Thursday last, by Mr. Aston Key, at Guy's Hospital: among other cases was the removal of an abscess from the great toe of a female: in this case the means was not entirely successful, for the patient screamed at the moment of the first incision of the instrument, but, on recovery from the effects of the inhalation, was totally unconscious of the operation having been performed.

The annexed Engraving will best explain its details:—

1. Pad for mouth, to be held by the operator.
2. Horizontal valve for the escape of expired air
3. Vertical flap valve.
4. Stop-cock.
5. Nasal spring.
6. Elastic tube.
7. Glass vessel, with a smaller one having pieces of sponge saturated with ether, and having a small perforated stopper, to be opened when the apparatus is in use.
8. Sectional view of the pad, showing the mouth-piece.

The full effect of the vapour is produced in from one to two or three minutes generally, and, as soon as it is perceived, the operation is performed. If the stop-cock shuts off the vapour, and it is wished to let the patient breathe air, the nasal spring must be taken off. In prolonged operations this may be found desirable; and the inhalation of the ether may be renewed at the will of the operator, the nasal spring, of course, then being placed on the nose.