

LADIES:

I venture to address you on a subject in which I have been led to take a deep interest, and which can hardly fail, on being properly presented, to arrest your attention. Are you aware that the city of Hartford was a few years since the theatre of one of the most wonderful discoveries of modern times? In the month of December, 1844, the late Horace Wells, of your city, a dentist of great intelligence and respectability, conceived the idea of throwing the human system, by the use of certain means, into a state of insensibility to pain, under the most severe dental or surgical operations. This, by a bold experiment which he caused to be tried on himself, he soon ascertained could be done; and thus originated, on the banks of your beautiful river, the modern art of Anæsthesia, which early attracted the attention of learned men every where, and was ere long introduced into practice throughout the civilized world.

But notwithstanding the facts alluded to were notorious in your city, and a whole cloud of witnesses can be, and, indeed, have been called to establish their truth, a pretender ere long appeared in the person of W. T. G. Morton, who has been, and is, seeking to arrogate the fame of this great discovery, and to appropriate all the rewards which public gratitude should doubtless accord to it. This he attempted both at the first and second sessions of the Thirty-second Congress; and being then a member of the U. S. Senate, and conversant with all the facts, I felt it to be my duty to oppose to his claims an uncompromising, as I did a successful, resistance.

This put an end to the efforts of Morton, so far as Congress is concerned; but within a few weeks, he has made his appearance in this city, and has been addressing appeals to the municipal authorities for grants of public moneys, on the ground that he alone should be recognized as the author of Anæsthesia. Having finished the work here, it is understood he is then to carry his appeal elsewhere, and thus obtain, if possible, universal recognition and a great national reward.

Under the influence of precisely the same motives which prompted my course at Washington, I have felt it my duty to stand up again in opposition to pretensions which I verily believe to be founded on imposture, and the result is a *re-presentation* of the case of Dr. Wells in the accompanying publication, to which I respectfully invite attention.

But up to this date the contest has been an unequal one. Morton has been sustained by the most ample pecuniary resources, obtained from one Tuckerman, now justly incarcerated at Wethersfield for robbing the U. S. mail. The case of Dr. Wells has had little other support than my humble advocacy, much indebted, I admit, for its intelligence to Dr. Ellsworth, of your city, and for publicity to Mr. Joseph Wales, a near relative of Dr. Wells.

But that publicity has been, and must continue to be, very limited without some assistance. Ought not the facts to be known? Should not imposture and fraud be put down, and truth and justice vindicated? It has occurred to me that an appeal could be addressed to you, ladies of Hartford, with propriety and success; to you who can so readily ascertain the facts, and who, indeed, know them already; to you whose hands are ever prompt and ready for every work of beneficence, and whose hearts never fail to beat in unison with the promptings of humanity and the suggestions of rectitude. I venture, therefore, to make to you that appeal, but ask no higher appreciation of the case than is consistent with other obligations and other claims. For wise purposes, God has apportioned to your sex the larger share of the pain and anguish incident to our common humanity. It seems to me, therefore, that you may well feel that something is due to the memory of the man who discovered the means not merely of alleviating but obliterating both the one and the other.

TRUMAN SMITH.

Dated at New-York, Nov. 5, 1858.

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