

SIMPSON'S DISCOVERY.

How the Anesthetic Properties of Chloroform Were Brought to Light.

The name of Doctor (afterwards Sir) James Young Simpson became closely identified with the study of anesthetics. He approached the subject with a due sense of its importance, and applied to it a scientific skill of the first order. Several deaths occurred through the careless and indiscriminate use of ether, causing that agent to be regarded with diminished favor. A less dangerous but equally effective substance was called for, and to the discovery of this Dr. Simpson devoted his best energies. In his researches he was assisted by several able professors, and for a time they gave a large share of their attention to the matter. Any volatile substance in which anesthetic properties were suspected was carefully examined, and it was not long before the experiments brought forth the coveted reward. One night Dr. Simpson and his assistants were sitting up late, bent on their self-imposed task. A number of chemical fluids had been selected for experiment, each man providing himself with a glass, into which a small quantity of the particular substance engaging attention was poured, the glass being placed over warm water to help the evolution of vapor. In this way, with their mouths and nostrils held over the vessels, they tested one vapor after another, but it seemed as if the spirit of unconsciousness was not to be evoked. They tried many gases and liquids which no one had ever thought of testing in this connection before, and at last a small bottle of dark liquid which provoked no great expectations, and was only known as a chemical curiosity in the laboratory, was raked up out of some obscure corner and put to take its turn with the rest. This was a little bottle of chloroform. Presently, after more promising substances had failed them, it was resolved to submit it to the test. A small portion of the liquid was poured into each glass and the experimenters began their inhalations. Prof. Miller, one of the assistants, has described what took place. An unwonted hilarity seized the party; they became bright-eyed and very happy, and conversed with such intelligence as more than usually charmed other listeners who were not taking part in the proceedings. But suddenly there was a talk of sounds being heard like those of a cotton mill, louder and louder; a moment more, then all was quiet, and then—a crash! On awaking, Dr. Simpson's first perception was mental. "This is far stronger and better than ether," he said to himself. He next observed that he was prostrate on the floor, and that his friends were confused and alarmed. Hearing a noise, he turned round and saw his assistant, Dr. Duncan, beneath a chair; his jaw dropped, his eyes staring, and his head half bent under him; quite unconscious, and snoring in a determined and alarming manner. More noise followed and much commotion, and then his eyes overtook Dr. Keith's feet and legs making various efforts to overturn the table, or more probably to annihilate every thing that was upon it. All speedily regained their senses, and from the middle of that night dates the discovery of the anesthetic uses of chloroform.—London Tablet.

HUMOROUS GEESSE.

How They Had a Good Deal of Fun With a Number of Young Pigs.

A goose has perhaps the keenest appreciation of humor of any animal, unless it be her own arch enemy, the fox.

The writer once saw in a little grassy paddock some eight or ten fat and healthy pigs and half a score of geese. From the paddock a narrow open gate gave entrance into the farm-yard, and, as evening drew on, the geese ranged themselves in a row near this Thermopylae. Obviously supper-time was approaching, and the pigs wished to return home to their troughs. Equally clearly the geese had given each other the word not to let them pass through the gate which they guarded, without paying toll.

First there came up a jolly, good-humored little pig, who trotted cheerfully along with a confidence which ought to have disarmed criticism, till he came among the geese. Then, with a cackle and a scream, every neck was stretched to get a bite at him, and, squalling and yelling the poor little porker ran the gauntlet.

The same fate befell six or seven more of his brethren in succession, each betraying increasing trepidation as he approached the fatal pass, and made a bolt through the corps de garde of geese whose chattering and screeches of delight were almost undistinguishable from human laughter.

At last the biggest pig of the party brought up the rear. He was a pink-fleshed, clean young fellow, with fat limbs and sides, and his ears were cocked, and his tail sharply twisted in the intelligent, wide-awake manner which so completely distinguishes the intellectual pig from the more swine multitude. With a loud grunt of de-

nance, this brave beast charged through the flock of geese, and had actually almost gained the gate, when a large gray goose made one grab at his fat ham, caught up the skin in a bunch, and gave it a tremendous pinch with her red beak. Needless to say, the air was rent with the squeals of agony of the injured pig, and the ecstatic peans of the flock of geese in chorus.

From the order in which this transaction took place, I derived the impression that a similar game of prisoner's base probably formed the entertainment of the geese every evening.—Frances Power Cobb.

ORIGIN OF ELEPHANTS.

A Race of Mammals That First Appeared in the Miocene Period.

The origin of the great proboscidean race in general, and of the mammoth and elephant group in particular, like the early history of James de la Pluche, is "wrop in obscurity." All we can say about them with any confidence is that they form a comparatively late order of mammals, whose earliest recognizable representative in geological time is the monstrous dinothorium, an aquatic animal with a long trunk, and with two immense curved tusks, projecting downward paradoxically from his lower instead of his upper jaw. The dinothorium makes his first appearance upon this or any other stage in the Miocene period; but as he couldn't, of course, have appeared there (like Aphrodite and Topsy) without any parents, and as he was then already a fairly specialized and highly-developed animal, we must take it for granted that his earlier ancestry, though ancient and respectable in its own time, had long passed away, leaving not a wreck behind, so far as yet known, in the matter of tangible geological vouchers. These unknown ancestors, in all probability, gave birth during their earlier and more plastic stage—for species, like individuals, are most readily molded in their green youth—to three main family branches. The senior branch produced the dinothorium, a vast brute, who, finding the world too full to hold him about the close of the tertiary period, demised suddenly without issue, leaving the honors of the family in subsequent ages to the junior members. The second branch produced the mastodons, huge creatures of elephantine outline and majestic tread, most of them with tusks in the upper and lower jaws, though the under pair were always the smallest. The third branch produced the true elephants, including both our modern Indian and African species, as well as the mammoth himself, and many other extinct congeners. All the elephants proper have but one solitary pair of tusks, and that pair is quite correctly located in the upper jaw instead of the under one. Thus is Evolution justified of all her children. The true elephants made their first appearance, as far as known, in the Pliocene period—that is, the epoch preceding the Great Ice Age. They blossomed out at once into an alarming number of species.—Cornhill Magazine.

THE AGE OF SPECIALISM.

A Tendency Which is Becoming More Pronounced Every Day.

Here is an old story in point, illustrating conditions: A certain man, a sort of scientist after his fashion, found an insect which in his crude way he could at once determine to be a beetle. But he wished to know just what kind of a beetle that particular one happened to be, or, in other words, to find out its name. So, like a good and patriotic citizen, he referred it to a specialist—just as a sensible miner with a broken leg would call in the service of a surgeon. He went to a friend and said:

"Here is a beetle. Now, you are an entomologist; please tell me what that is."

"Oh, no," said the referee. "I am not an entomologist."

"Not an entomologist? Why, I thought that was your line."

"No; I only wish I were," he said, sadly.

"Well, what are you? What do you call a beetle sharp—a coleopterist?"

"No," said he, modestly, and with a deprecatory air, "no, I'm not a coleopterist. If you insist upon knowing, I might claim (now brightening up) to be a scarabist; that is, you know, altogether different from being a regular coleopterist."

It is not so long ago that a single great mind, like that of Humboldt, could take in at a single comprehensive glance almost the sum of human knowledge. There can be no Humboldt now.—Engineering and Mining Journal.

Mr. Herbert Spencer works three hours a day, dictating all his writings. His favorite recreation is found in playing billiards.

Emily Courtney Baylor, the novelist, will introduce much that is peculiar to Philadelphia in her next novel. She is making a

The elevation of Edwin Arnold, author of "The Light of Asia," to the rank of knight-hood, has made of a somewhat democratic poet a singer who now chants the praise of kings.

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