**DISCOVERY OF ANAESTHESIA- INTRIGUING STORY**

Crawford Williamson Long (1815-1878), was an American physician. After his training in Pennsylvania and New-York, he started his practice in Georgia. During his time it was fashionable among young socialites, to inhale gases such as sulphuric ether and nitrous oxide, to induce disorientation and disinhibition, leading to what were called “Ether Frolics”.

Long himself was Ether Frolicker, but with a significant difference. He was a keen observer, and noticed some large bruises and painful spots on his body during the later sober hours, without recollecting previous trauma. It dawned on him, that anesthesia was produced by inhalation of ether, which may be useful in surgical operations.

On March 30, 1842, he used sulphuric ether to induce insensibility, before removing the tumor from the neck of a patient. This was the first recorded use of an anesthetic agent in surgery, but Long did not bother to patent or publish its account. He performed at least eight other operations, in the next few years, and published his findings as “controlled experiments” in 1849. By then, it was too late, as William Morton, had already received the credit in Boston, and Charles Jackson was claiming it too. The gentle voice of Long could not be heard above the din.

William Morton (1819-1868), a Boston dentist, was searching an agent, for painless extraction of teeth. He approached chemist-physician C. T. Jackson, who was aware, that ether induced unconsciousness and insensibility to pain. In 1846, he extracted a tooth from a patient, under ether anesthesia, and patented the process, in collaboration with Jackson.

The next month, he arranged for a facial tumor to be removed under ether, at the Massachusetts General Hospital. The success and publicity of that operation made anesthesia an essential adjunct to surgery, and once and forever spared the surgeon, from torturing operation chambers.

A large sum of money was raised for Morton in Britain, and a Bill was introduced by US Congress, for the purpose of appropriating $100,000 to him, as a token of national gratitude. But as Jackson raised a fearful fuss, and began a savage, lifelong fight, to claim the credit, the bill failed to pass. Others made similar claims as well. Morton abandoned dental practice and devoted his life only to these controversies, finally dying in poverty. In 1873, Jackson became insane for the rest of his life.

There never seems to be much difficulty about handing out posthumous gratitude, however, Morton was elected to the Hall of Fame for Great Americans in 1920.

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