

837 Washington Street  
Boston  
Massachusetts

23rd October 1846

Dear Josiah,

What a truly capital thing I saw last week! I believe I witnessed a huge medical breakthrough in how operations will be performed in the future. As you know, I have been interested in Dr Morton's work for some time now. So, imagine how pleased I was to be in the viewing gallery of Massachusetts Hospital in Boston, to witness his public administration of sulphuric ether on a surgical patient.

Looking down into the amphitheatre, I saw the patient look this way and that, as he lay on the table surrounded by some of Boston's finest scientific minds. I wasn't sure whether it was relief or fear I saw in his face. I imagine he was wondering if he would feel any pain.

After addressing the audience, Dr Morton placed a tube in the young man's mouth and asked him to breathe in the vapour from the ether. Within four minutes, the patient appeared to be asleep so the surgeon, Dr Warren, made a cut and began to remove the tumour from the left side of the patient's neck. To our great surprise, the patient continued to lie there: no screaming out or crying at all! Hard to believe, isn't it?

Shortly after the operation, the patient began to awaken and Dr Morton asked him if he had suffered any pain, to which he replied, 'No'. He then added, 'Though it does feel as though my neck has been scratched.' The whole amphitheatre gasped and cheered. Dr Warren turned to us all and said, 'Gentlemen, this is no humbug. Today, we have seen a medical breakthrough that will spread across the world.'

With those words ringing in my ears, I write to you, Josiah, and urge you tell everyone you know in England. All surgery was agony before this, and now I believe the most terrible operations could be performed without the patient feeling a thing! What an age we live in!

Your friend,

Charles Jackson MD