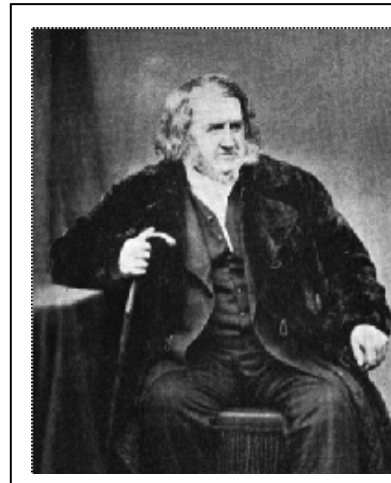


## Sir James Young Simpson (1811 – 1870)

He introduced the use of chloroform. Pioneer of gynecology. Distinct meteorological observations.

He was born on June 7, 1811, at the village of Bathgate, Linlithgow, Scotland. His father James Simpson was a baker. He had spent his early years in the primitive and superstitious atmosphere of the Scottish country side. He observed the slaughter of animals and the burial alive of a cow because it was believed to save from affliction the other village cattle. These early impressions helped him in his determination in later life to conquer pain.



James Simpson was the seventh son of his father. As a boy he was quick at his studies and practical in everything he did. When he came home from school he would mind the bakery when his mother went out. Poor though they were, the Simpson family decided that James should be given a chance of making a name for himself, and they pooled their money to send him to Edinburgh University.

Although the sight of the tortures undergone by patients on the operating table shocked him. Simpson was indescribably moved by the agonies of the women patients he had to deal with, and the memory of an operation in which the knife was used in a case of childbirth never left him.

One night of November 4, 1847, Simpson took a small bottle of chloroform. It was poured out into the glasses, and the three men began inhalation. After a while, they were all of them struck. One after another of the doctors slid to the floor with a crash. Simpson was first to recover, and his first thought was for the success of his experiment.

In 1886 he was honoured with a baronet for the introduction of chloroform. The congratulatory letters for the baronetcy had hardly ceased coming in when they were followed by letters of condolence, for his eldest son, died suddenly a few days after and only a month later he lost his daughter, at the early age of seventeen.

Simpson was utterly shattered by these blows. His health broke down, though he continues to work until it was physically impossible to do so any longer, and on May 6, 1870, this man who had used sleep to conquer pain in others had to surrender, and he sank, not altogether regretfully, into that sleep from which no man could wake him.