

PAINLESS REMOVAL OF A FEMALE BREAST  
IN THE MESMERIC TRANCE.

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A VISIT

TO THE

MESMERIC INSTITUTE,

36, WEYMOUTH STREET,

PORTLAND PLACE.

BY

THEODOSIUS PURLAND,

SURGEON-DENTIST.

"If you would learn, read without prejudice."

LONDON:

WALTON & MITCHELL, PRINTERS, 24, WARDOUR STREET.

1854.

[*Gratis.*]

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## ASTOUNDING OPERATION IN THE MESMERIC TRANCE.

"Truth is stranger than fiction."

At the invitation of Dr. Elliotson, I attended at the Mesmeric Infirmary in Weymouth Street, Portland Place, on Wednesday, April 26th, to witness the removal of the right breast of a female whilst in the mesmeric trance.

I entered the institution at a quarter past one, in company with Mr. Kiste, and we were shortly joined by Dr. Elliotson, Mr. Tubbs the operator, Col. Bagnold, Dr. Symes, Mr. Goff, and Mr. Amor.

At two several other gentlemen arrived, and much anxiety was expressed as to the result of the operation. Mr. Tubbs was, however, quite confident that his patient would not feel it in the least.

Shortly after two o'clock we were ushered up stairs; here we found the patient,—a female of apparently about forty years of age, seated in a reclining chair, and Mr. Tubbs, with Mr. Burman as his assistant, prepared to perform the operation.

The company being seated, Mr. Tubbs proceeded to entrance his patient: this he effected in a few minutes by standing upon a chair *behind* her, taking her hands in his, and looking down steadily into her eyes, which were raised for the purpose.

After the quivering and closing the eyelids, Mr. T. descended, and made passes in front, from the head to the knees, for about two minutes: she was then considered so deeply entranced as to be able to undergo *any operation, however severe, without feeling it*. The result fully justified this confidence.

After the breast had been examined by Dr. Elliotson and Dr. Symes, the knife was handed to Mr. Tubbs by Mr. Burman, and the deepest anxiety was depicted on every face.

The first incision was made amidst the most breathless silence, and all eyes were directed to the face of the patient: *not a muscle moved—not a sigh! there was the same placid smile*

as when she closed her eyes under the mesmeric influence: she breathed freely: her left hand lay listlessly in her lap—the right was held up by Mr. Burman, to be out of the way—there was no restraint.

Mr. Tubbs continued to dissect out the breast leisurely—there was no hurry to get it over; and when the whole was removed, the silent astonishment of the gentlemen assembled was excessive.

But Mr. Tubbs had not done yet: he probed with his finger every part, and finding a portion that had eluded his knife, *seized it, and cut it out as coolly as if trying his weapon upon a dead body.*

Dr. Symes and Mr. Beard, at Mr. Tubbs's request, examined the patient, and on their declaration that all had been removed, the operator, assisted by Mr. Burman, passed five needles through the lips of the wound and inserted the sutures.

*Still the patient slept!—still smiled!* A little wine and water was administered—her dress was arranged—each gentleman resumed his seat—and Mr. Tubbs awakened his patient by a few transverse passes.

On opening her eyes, she was addressed by

Mr. Tubbs.—“How do you feel?”

Patient.—“Have you done it?”

Mr. Tubbs.—“Supposing it is done, how do you feel?”

Patient.—“I am very well.”

Mr. Tubbs.—“Have you felt anything?”

Patient.—“No! I have felt nothing.”

Mr. Tubbs.—“Then it *is done!*”

The patient smiling incredulously, her dress was opened, and upon her being satisfied that it *was done*, her face beamed with thankfulness.

To all questions put she answered *decidedly that she had not, nor did she feel, the slightest pain; on the contrary, she was quite unconscious that the operation had been performed until awakened.*

After a short address by Mr. Tubbs relative to the operation, preparations were made for *carrying* the patient to bed; but she declined all assistance, and *walked up two flights of stairs as if nothing had occurred!*

Mr. Tubbs was now warmly congratulated upon his success by his brother mesmerists and their friends, the accompanying certificate was drawn up and signed, and a general wish expressed, that those *self-styled medical magnates* (?) who scoff at "*the greatest truth in nature,*" for want of a little *common sense to lighten their learning,* would have the *charity* to follow the noble example set by Mr. Tubbs, *and save their patients from the tortures now so needlessly inflicted by them.*

Thus ended one of the most remarkable meetings ever convened, and proud must every member feel at the opportunity afforded him of witnessing one of the most satisfactory operations ever performed in England.

T. PURLAND,  
Surgeon-Dentist.

7, Mortimer Street, Cavendish Square,  
May 1, 1854.

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Mesmeric Institute,  
36, Weymouth Street, Portland Place.  
April 26, 1854.

We, the undersigned members and visitors of the Mesmeric Infirmary, witnessed the amputation of the right breast of Mrs. Flowerday, by Mr. W. J. Tubbs, Surgeon, of Upwell, Cambridgeshire, she being in the mesmeric trance induced by the operator. And we unhesitatingly assert and believe that the patient did not suffer the slightest pain, and upon being awakened, declined every assistance, and *walked* upstairs to bed.

JOHN ELLIOTSON, M.D., F.R.S., Conduit Street.  
EDMUND S. SYMES, M.D., Bowden House, Berkeley Square.  
ADOLPHE KISTE, 37, Maddox Street.  
R. GOFF, 21, Kensington Gore.  
J. AMOR, 135, New Bond Street.  
SMITH BURMAN, Surgeon, Wisbeach.  
F. C. BEARD, Surgeon, 44, Welbeck Street.  
M. E. BAGNOLD, 14, Upper Hamilton Terrace, St. John's Wood.  
T. A. SHAW, Kensington.  
W. UNDERWOOD, 1, Vere Street, Cavendish Square.  
G. F. LUSIGNAN, 2, Little Bush Lane.  
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