

travelled on horseback—the only mode of locomotion in those days—to the home of Dr. McDowell, sixty miles away. So great was the weight of the tumor resting upon the pommel of the saddle, that a large contusion was formed on the skin.

On the day of the operation, McDowell was conscious that an angry and excited mob of men had collected outside of his house, openly threatening to hang him if his experiment of "butchering a woman" did not succeed. There is no doubt that if the woman had died, McDowell would have lost his life at the hands of his infuriated townsmen.

I have often wondered which was the braver—the man or the woman—the woman, to subject herself to an operation which she knew had never been done, an experiment which would cause intense suffering at the time, anesthetics being then unknown, and the result of which must be uncertain; the man, to risk his life for the mere sake of doing good, without hope of reward, except, perhaps, a modest fee, and with certain death confronting him if he failed. It seems to me that the bravery of the man was the greater. He put his life at stake without any necessity impelling him, except his love of humanity and his desire to do good; while the woman had death staring her in the face, and was accepting an opportunity which had never yet been offered to anybody, to escape the terrible, persistent suffering which would certainly come. To quote from Thomas Keith: "She had not much to lose—a few months only, it may be, of ever-increasing suffering—and she might gain much by an operation, having much to gain." Fortunately for the good of mankind, and of womankind in particular, the operation was successful.

The technique of the operation sounds a good deal like an operation done to-day. The incision was made, about nine inches long, a little to the left of the median line. The tumor was then opened, its contents allowed to escape; after which it was removed from the abdomen, the pedicle tied by strong silk ligature, and the tumor cut off. After this the patient was turned upon her side, to allow all the blood and fluid to escape. This having been accomplished, she was turned on her back, the intestines replaced, and the wound closed by an interrupted suture, the ligature hanging out of the lower end of the incision. Dressings were applied, and the patient put to bed. Five days later, McDowell, on visiting her, found her making her bed. In twenty-five days she returned home in good health, and lived for thirty-two years after, she having been forty-seven at the time of the operation.

McDowell afterwards operated on twelve cases, eight of the