

SURGEON IS AIDED BY LIGHT IN SKULL

Tiny Electric Light Turned on in Head of Patient as Operation Goes On

IS TESTED AT CLINIC

Working by the light of a minute electric bulb, which he introduced within the skull of his patient, Dr. Charles Frazier, the brain surgeon, of this city, performed a difficult intracranial operation yesterday before an assembly of the world's greatest surgeons, gathered in a clinic.

The steeply sloping clinical amphitheater of the University Hospital was closely curtained against the bright sunlight. Only the powerful lamps above the central space relieved the gloom, casting a round yellow aura upon the motionless form strapped upright in the operating chair, and the surgeon and his assistants about it. Beyond that circle of light, row upon row of silent spectators were vaguely visible, their faces indistinct blurs in the darkness.

Before donning his gloves and anti-septic mask, the doctor spoke briefly of the case, and pointed out the operative merits of the upright position in which the patient was fixed.

Woman Is Patient
She was of middle age, to judge by the brief glimpse of her face, which was had as the nurse removed the ether cone for an instant. About her head were strapped thick bandages, which covered everything but the small area over her left temple, where the incision was to be made. She was bundled well in blankets, and her head was held fixed by a steel brace projecting from the back of the chair. She already was under the influence of the ether, administered by the nurse seated at her side.

The first stages of the operation were rapidly completed. The shaven temple of the patient was washed with a mercuric acid solution, and the sterile draperies were attached, so that, with the exception of the small exposed bit of skin, she was shrouded like a ghost in long folds. In the space itself, dark drops of blood were forming along the slight cuts, which had been made before the draping of the patient, in order to guide the major incision.

Swiftly the skin was cut and laid back in a flap and the surgeon proceeded with the work of severing the temporal muscle beneath, cautioning his audience against the cutting of the important facial nerve which passes close by. Should that be cut, all power would be gone either to wrinkle the forehead or close the eyes.

The speed, the certainty with which

everything was done, was impressive to a degree. The flying hands of the assistant were everywhere, fixing arteries with a deft turn of the fingers, producing instruments from thin air, ready to the other's hand, applying gauze sponges, wiping, scrubbing, the swift response of the work. Nurses moved silently about at their duties, cleaning instruments as they were discarded, changing water in the white basins or starting a new one in the background. And though it all the surgeon himself worked steadily ahead, clearing away the tissues about the skull, calm and unhurried, and talking always over his shoulder to the audience behind him.

At last the bone of the skull was laid bare and he started to cut through it with a small hammer and chisel. The sound which he made was like that which a heavy sledge makes against a hollow wall. Then the chisel was discarded for a Hudson drill—nothing more or less than a glorified hand bit—with which he worked with extreme caution until its point had penetrated within the skull. He withdrew it carefully and completed the opening with a heavy instrument like a pair of wire pliers, with which he cut away the bone in a small circle about an inch and a half in diameter. In the brilliant white light from above, the black amid the surrounding crimson.

The most delicate part of the operation was now at hand. He took in his left hand a glittering metal band like the handle of a spoon, on the end of which was a tiny electric light bulb. The overhead light was extinguished, leaving only the sparkle of the miniature lamp like a firefly in the darkness. In a moment the doctor had inserted this instrument through the opening in the skull, whence it gave forth a glacial ruby glow. With his right hand he probed within the cavity of the brain.

Moves Flashed on Screen
Coincidentally, a small stereopticon screen was wheeled into the room, and diagrams of the various stages of the operation were flashed upon it. From the darkness the voice of the surgeon came as before, as he followed the work step by step and explained what his skillful fingers were doing within the mysterious recesses of the human brain. Again the lights were switched on, and he stepped back to allow one of the witnessing surgeons to peer within the wound. Then he pointed out, still deep within the skull, the ganglia which he sought and lifted it over so delicately upon the point of his instrument.

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TO-MORROW AT STRAWBRIDGE & CLOTHIER'S

Stepped as the patient was in the depths of anesthesia, a quivering groan broke from beneath the coverings of the head. Then, as the operation proper drew to a close, an odd thing occurred. A long, slender electrode was introduced into the opening, and as it touched the motor nerve center, the patient's jaws snapped together with an audible click, thus proving beyond doubt that it was the motor and not the sensory nerve center which was isolated. This precaution is necessary because of the ease with which the two may be confused within the tangled tissues of the cranial system.

The rest was a matter of repairing the disorder worked by knife and chisel. Stage by stage the wound was closed and dressed, and the occupants of the seats fled out at last, stiff and cramped, into the bright October sunshine and clean air, untroubled with fumes of ether or disinfectant. Two hours and thirty-five minutes had passed since they first entered.

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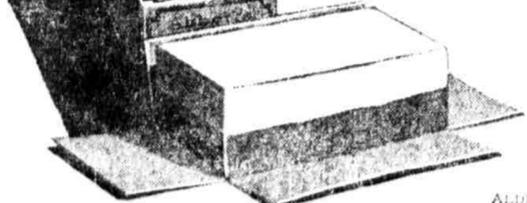
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