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ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

Dr. Brown Doubles Down: A With-and-without Trade Card for Laughing Gas Anesthesia



From the Wood Library-Museum's Ben Z. Swanson Collection, the lone image from the obverse of this c. 1892 trade card for Brown's Dental Rooms featured a happy visage (*left*) in one direction which, by optical illusion, appears to transform into an unhappy face (*right*) from the reverse angle. This "upside-down style of with-and-without card" contrasts patient satisfaction with or without nitrous oxide anesthesia for dental extraction. With his ski-jump nose, bell crown cap, and WITH nitrous oxide, the smiling patient (*left*) rejoices, "I took Laughing Gas...and had my Teeth Extracted without pain!" With his Roman nose and tricorn hat (*right*) but WITHOUT nitrous oxide, the frowning patient laments, "I didn't but wish I had!" According to the reverse of this trade card from Waterbury, Connecticut, anesthesia with laughing gas doubled the baseline 25-cent cost of dental extraction. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists' Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

George S. Bause, M.D., M.P.H., *Honorary Curator and Laureate of the History of Anesthesia*, Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology, Schaumburg, Illinois, and *Clinical Associate Professor*, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. UJYC@aol.com.