

A full exposure and confession of Ann Moore, the fasting woman of Tutbury / [Ann Moore].

Publication/Creation

Leicester : T. Martin, [1813]

Persistent URL

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A FULL
Exposure & Confession of
ANN MOORE,
THE FASTING WOMAN OF TUTBURY.

THIS woman came to reside at Tutbury about 16 years ago, and worked at the cotton mill, and at the beginning of the year 1807, first excited public attention, by declaring that she lived without Food. An assertion so repugnant to reason and nature was, of course, rejected. She offered to prove the truth of her assertion by submitting to be watched, and in order to satisfy the public, she was removed to the house of Mr. Jackson, draper, &c. of the same place, and the inhabitants invited to join in watching her. Mr. Taylor, surgeon, superintended the watching, which continued 16 days, and during the three first days she was allowed a little water. When the watch had ended, Mr. Taylor published an account, declaring, that she had lived for thirteen days without taking any food, liquid or solid. This account was believed by numbers who went to see her, and few visited her without leaving her something; by this means she accumulated in two years about 250*l.* and since that time it is supposed to amount to 4 or 500*l.* but this is only conjecture, all that is known is, that she put in the hands of Mr. Smith, about 8*l.* or 90*l.* and a small sum with Mr. Hitchcock. In order to give additional weight to her case, she professed to be very religious, but this mask was thrown off whenever she was urged too hard by pointed questions. On such occasions she would utter such language as would fully prove the absence of any religious principle. Previous to this time her moral depravity was notorious. She lived in open adultery with another man (her husband being then living) for thirteen or fourteen years, and had two children, the eldest now about eighteen and the other sixteen. In order to make a greater impression on the public mind, she asserted that since she was watched, she had not taken any thing whatever. That her case was a miracle wrought by God, by which she is kept alive without eating or drinking. She further declared that she had lost the power of swallowing; that she had no evacuation by stool or urine; that she never sleeps; that if her veins were pricked there would come out blood and water!!! Evidently assertions void of any truth. Indeed the fullest and most complete contradiction can now be given to her assertions. She was called on a short time back, by those who believed and those who disbelieved her statement, to submit to a second watch. Six years had elapsed from the first; she was still in perfect health and free from pain; looked better than she had done for some years. Conscious of her own deception she would not submit to be watched again, although a large sum of money was offered her. Dr. Henderson, of London, published a pamphlet about two months ago, in which he stated his reasons for withholding his assent; this roused her friends to offer the most effectual answer to his pamphlet. "You must be watched," say they, "or you will be considered the greatest of impostors." After numerous solicitations she consented; but in order to throw every possible difficulty in the way, she refused to be watched by any other persons than ministers of the church of England, Medical Men, and Magistrates. This she did, supposing a sufficient number would not be found to undertake the office. Circular letters were sent to ministers and medical gentlemen in the neighbourhood, and a sufficient number obtained for the purpose. The committee met on Tuesday, 20th April, 1813, and the length of time they fixed she should be watched was one month; this she violently refused to submit to, but as no shorter time would satisfy the committee, she was obliged to assent. In order to discover the imposture, it was judged necessary to have her weighed, and that she should be taken from the bed on which she then was and placed on one which had a machine for weighing attached to it: she received this with signs of the greatest dissatisfaction, and obstinately refused to be weighed. Conscious that her hypocrisy would be discovered by her daily loss of weight she probably would never have consented, but for a person to whose opinion she paid some deference. But in order to prepare the public mind to what she knew must follow, she said, "I may lose two or three pounds, I lost weight before;" this she could not know for she was not weighed before! "I'll not be weighed alone (she said) the bed and bedding shall be weighed all together," supposing there would be room for charging her loss of weight to them. The bed was filled with chaff and the clothes examined by the committee. The watch commenced on Wednesday the 21st April at two o'clock in the afternoon, by Sir Oswald Mosely, the Rev. Legh Richmond, and Dr. Garlike, and followed by several other Gentlemen. At the end of seven days, the public were informed she had taken no food---great confidence was expressed by her advocates that she would endure the ordeal with credit: though it was evident to persons who attended her, that she was suffering severely from want at the close of the week; and when the machine was placed under her, it was found she had lost weight rapidly. On the ninth day she insisted on the watchers quitting the room, declaring she was very ill, and that her daughter must be sent for. She was now much reduced, and the watchers greatly alarmed lest she should die, and they be implicated in the charge of murder, they quitted the room and admitted the daughter; at the time it was thought she could not live two hours longer, but soon after the daughter was admitted, and had administered what she thought proper, the mother began to mend, and no further apprehensions were entertained of her danger.

On Friday the 30th of April, after the watch was over, she desired to take a solemn oath, that she had not during the time she was watched, taken any food whatever; which oath was administered to her. She did this, in hope, notwithstanding all, still to impose on the public. But shortly after her shift, with a deep stain of urine and excrement was discovered in the room, and to her confusion, she was at last brought to make the following Confession:

"I, Ann Moore, of Tutbury, humbly asking pardon of all persons whom I have attempted to deceive and impose upon, and above all, with the most unfeigned sorrow and contrition, imploring the Divine Mercy and Forgiveness of that God whom I have so greatly offended, do most solemnly Declare, that I have occasionally taken sustenance for the last six years. Witness my hand this 4th day of May, 1813. The mark X ANN MOORE."

The above Declaration of Ann Moore, was made before me, one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the county of Stafford.

THOMAS LISTER.

Witness to the above Declaration and Signature of my Mother, Ann Moore,

MARY MOORE: