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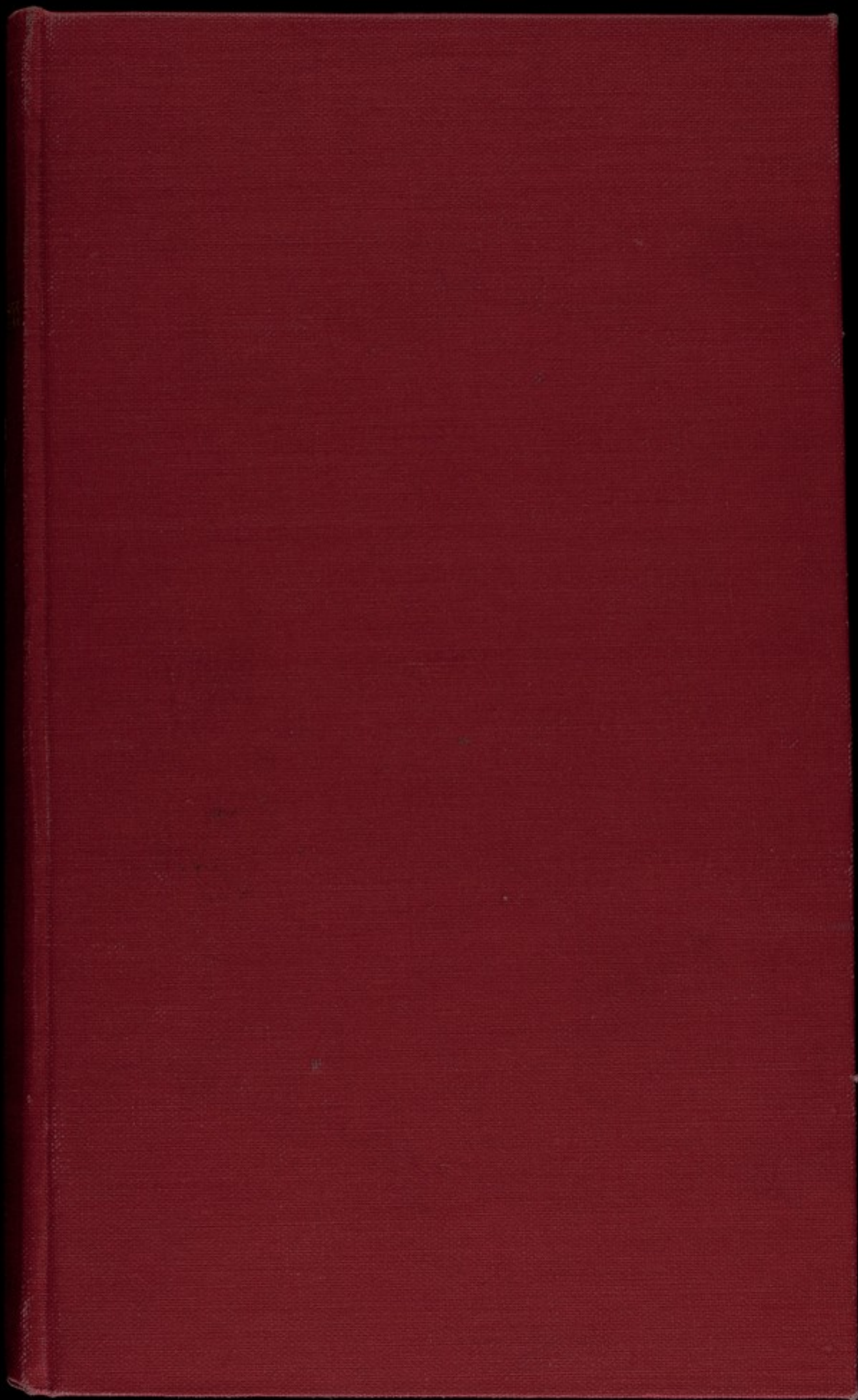
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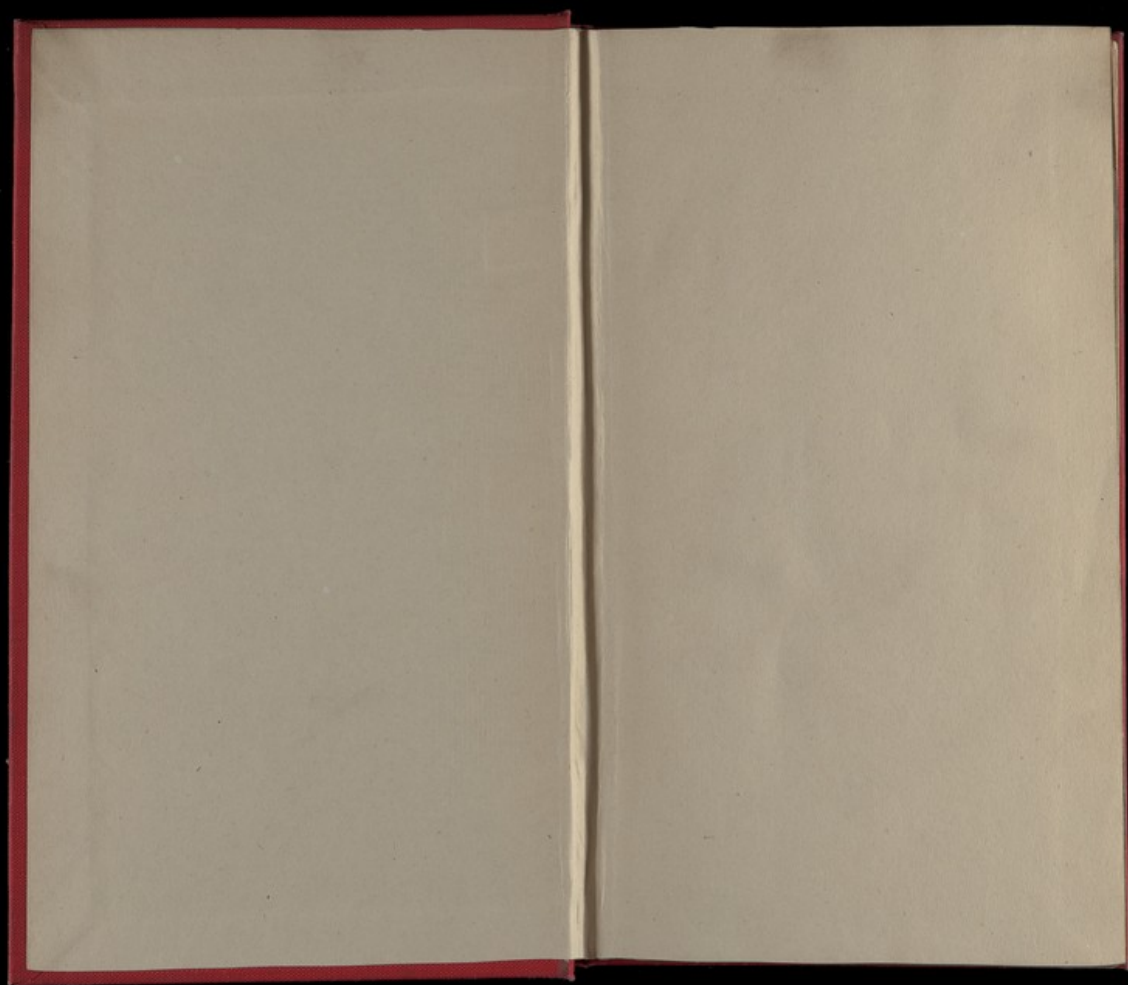
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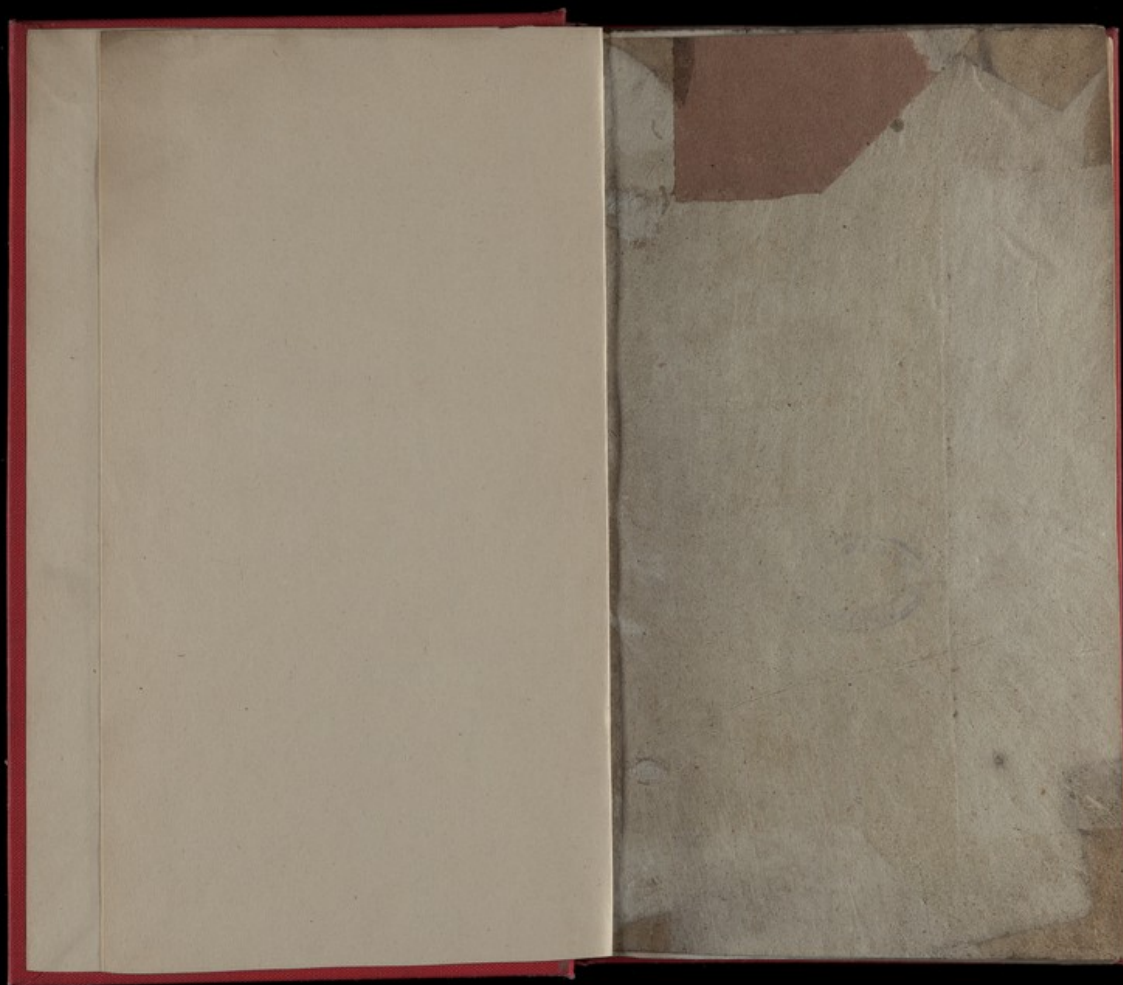


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(G.)  
(c.)

See J. McGregor Book



*Trigloporus cantans*

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Trigloporus letter to the Managers of the  
Edinburgh Infirmary — 1818

Letter to 4 contributors to the Infirmary 1818

Land &c — 1818

Observations by the Managers of the  
New Lane Dispensary Edinburgh — 1817

Velder's observation on the Infirmary 1818

Adams's reply to Velder — 1818

Report London Infirmary on  
Sir W. Adams — 1818

Adams's reply to the above 1818

*To Sir James Fergusson M.D. F.R.S.E.*



LETTER

TO

*Acc. Mr. Fergusson*

THE MANAGERS

OF THE

ROYAL INFIRMARY OF EDINBURGH,

FROM

WILLIAM FERGUSSON, M.D. F.R.S.E.

INSPECTOR OF HOSPITALS, AND FELLOW OF THE ROYAL  
COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF EDINBURGH.

Tempus non habet  
Non tali auxilio.

Hac animo ante tabas prius tecum ipse voluta;  
Calcatum sero duelli paretet.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED BY GEORGE RAMSAY AND COMPANY.

1818.



LETTER, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

Without any previous desire, or even idea, that such an opportunity of being useful might exist for me, upon the suggestion of a friend well qualified to form an opinion how the requisite medical superintendence of patients affected by fever, at the ward obtained within these few days, by the grant of Government, in the barracks of Queensberry House might be provided, I was induced to make this offer.

"To the Managers of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh,

"GENTLEMEN,—Understanding that a grant has been obtained from Government of accommodation in the barracks of Queensberry House for the reception of patients affected by fever in aid of the Royal Infirmary, and under your direction, I beg leave respectfully to submit to your consideration the inclosed statement of my expe-

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fence and services in the Hospital Department of the British army, and the latest testimonies from the public records of my country, of the reputation I have obtained.

"It has been my destiny to go through two several courses of duty in the West Indies, and my reports, as chief of the Medical Staff, relative in particular to the management of hospitals and treatment of fever in each of the sixteen British colonies which were under my care, are now before the Cabinet Council of his Majesty. When at the head of the Medical Staff in Portugal during the last war, a typhus fever had been most destructive in that kingdom, until a plan and regulations proposed by me (which, with your permission, I would likewise submit to your consideration,) was adopted and carried into execution. In all other climates and situations, I have also sought and enjoyed the best opportunities of studying the management of hospitals and the treatment of fever in particular. I have, indeed, but to refer to the history of the eventful years, and of the foreign stations, mentioned in my statement, as proof that I must have had under my superintendence more cases of that distemper than could possibly fall under the observation of any individual whatever in civil life.

"It is upon these public grounds only that I can presume to offer myself to you as a candi-

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date for the appointment of physician to this establishment, and I have the honour to be,  
Gentlemen,

Your most faithful and most obedient humble servant.

WILLIAM FERGUSSON, M. D.  
Inspector of Hospitals.

"Edinburgh, 26th January 1818."

The statement of my services, here referred to, was this:

"Twenty-four years' active service on full pay, with the exception of the year of the peace of Amiens, viz.

As Hospital-mate in the Low Countries during the campaign of 1794.

As Regimental Surgeon in England in 1795.

In the West Indies, at St Domingo, in the years 1796, 1797, and 1798, and in Holland in the year 1799.

As Staff-surgeon on the Home Staff in the year 1800. At Copenhagen with Lord Nelson, and in the Baltic in the year 1801. On the Home Staff in the years 1802 and 1804.

As Deputy Inspector of Hospitals and chief of the Medical Department in the Western District, and in the same capacity in the Kent and Sussex districts of England in the year 1807, with the superintendence of 49 Military Hos-



pitals of different descriptions. On the expeditions to Gottenburgh and Portugal in the year 1808, and in 1809 as Chief of the Medical Staff at Oporto, Talavera, &c.; and as Inspector-General of the Portuguese army during the years 1810, 1811, and 1812.

As Inspector of Hospitals with the British army in the Peninsula in 1813. In 1814 selected to superintend the Medical Department of the armament ordered against New Orleans under the command of Lieutenant-General Lord Hill, which did not proceed on account of the force having been reduced from that of a Lieutenant-General's to a Major-General's command, and therefore not requiring an officer of the Inspector's rank on the Medical Department. In 1815, 1816, and 1817 as Inspector of Hospitals for the Windward and Leeward Colonies of the West Indies.

In whole, 15 years of foreign and 8 years of home service, exclusive of the year of the peace of Amiens, which was spent in travelling with a view to professional improvement, and in which particular opportunities were enjoyed of visiting the hospitals, civil and military, of Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Russia."

The latest testimonies from the records of my country, also produced, were these:

Extract from dispatch of Lieutenant-General Sir James Leith, on the capture of the Island of Guadaloupe, dated August 1815:—

"The Medical Department was conducted by Dr Fergusson, Inspector of Hospitals, in the manner that was to have been expected from his character, his experience, and his abilities."

"Head-quarters, Barbadoes,  
June 12, 1817.

"Extract General Orders.

"The Commander of the Forces (*Lord Combermere*) has granted the following leave of absence:

"STAFF.

"Dr Fergusson, Inspector of Hospitals, six months from the period of embarkation, to return to the United Kingdom, in consequence of a communication from the Director-General, announcing that a successor has been appointed to Dr Fergusson, as senior medical officer in this command.

"The Lieutenant-General desires, upon this occasion, to convey the high sense he entertains of the zeal and ability manifested by Dr Fergusson during his service in this army, which the very able and judicious reports made by him upon all points connected with the Medical Department clearly prove, evincing professional skill,



local knowledge, and most praiseworthy feelings of humanity.

(Signed) H. S. BERKELEY, D. A. G."

Extract from a Letter of the Army Medical Department, dated 27th August 1817.

"On this occasion, and on leaving your active duties in the service for the present, we beg to express our satisfaction with your superintendence of the Medical concerns of the army in the West Indies. We beg you to accept our thanks for the valuable, scientific, and satisfactory reports which you have forwarded to us on the health concerns of the army in that quarter, and more especially for those on the different islands as you inspected them. These reports, which convey much information relative to the hospital concerns of the service in that quarter, are not less creditable to you as a professional man, than to your able, zealous, and indefatigable discharge of the important duty of inspection of the West India colonies, and they shall be preserved as valuable records in this office.

(Signed) J. M'GRIGOR, Director-General.

W. FRANKLIN, Principal Inspector."

A separate letter, from me, written under an impression that a mistake might otherwise prevail, afterwards intimated to you, that the service

I tendered was gratuitous, and merely to aid the present most learned and eminent physicians of the institution, by relieving them of the superintendence of the new and separate establishment while it might subsist.

To these, I had the honour to receive the following unexpected answer:

"Edinburgh, 27th January 1818.

"SIR,—The managers of the Royal Infirmary have directed me to acquaint you, that the present physicians, Dr Hamilton and Dr Spens, have stated to them their willingness to undertake the charge of the additional Fever Hospital at Queensberry House, with the aid only of an additional clerk; and, therefore, the managers have no occasion to avail themselves of the very handsome offer you have made of your gratuitous services. I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

ALEX. BOSWELL, Clerk."

But from the labours and observations of my life, I know too well, that the estimate of the additional burden of duty, in a situation distant from the main hospital, and of the consequent necessity for the aid of an additional physician, which had been originally made by the most competent judge of that matter has not been

beyond, but beneath what must be the result upon actual experiment of the very shortest trial of this new establishment in Queensberry House. It is impossible, too, that eminent physicians, in active practice, and already subject to all the duties of the greatest hospital establishment in the kingdom, can be long required, or even permitted, to make this gratuitous sacrifice; because, the gratitude of their fellow-citizens, so justly due to their meritorious services, would be ill manifested by taking advantage in this manner of their generosity.

With still more certainty, if possible, I know that the best "clerk" who ever recorded a medical case, or engrossed a medical report, cannot supply, by his labour, the smallest portion towards the discharge of the peculiar and exclusive functions of the physician. And to introduce under the name of a clerk a practitioner of medicine for the performance of these functions, is a thought which never could enter into the head of any of the honourable Managers, which the no less honourable Physicians of the Infirmary would stamp with their indignation, as the suggestion of a base and deceitful mind, and which every honourable member of my profession would spurn from him with contempt. Hence, the necessary inference arises, that it must yet become requisite to provide a physician for this new establishment; and hav-

ing myself once entered the field of competition, and received an acknowledgment so flattering to me from that official board, to whose disinterested and unceasing labours of humanity, the far renowned medical school, and the whole inhabitants of Edinburgh, have, for more than half a century, lain under incalculable, and still accumulating obligations, I trust, that, in the face of the evidence I produce, it cannot by any one be deemed officious, to submit, in this form, to more particular consideration, my pretensions in the event, which, on these grounds, I still contemplate as probable.

The apparent egotism of my detail cannot be more irksome to any of you than it is to me. I endure it only because I have not been able to discover a way of stating personal experience without mention of the individual, even when that experience which he reports happens to be his own. The propriety again of printing such narrative, depends entirely upon the nature of the object it is meant to serve, and the value of the inferences drawn as subservient to a good and legitimate object. Now, it seems to me impossible to dispute that every establishment and arrangement relative to a public hospital, supported by voluntary contributions for the relief of the poor when affected by disease, is a fair subject of consideration to the whole community. Every one, I conceive, is likewise

not only at liberty, but called upon to furnish with freedom all suggestions which he deems useful. It farther appears to me, that extensive experience only can supply information that may be really valuable in forming any new establishment of this description, or judging of any measure concerning such institutions. But it is not for me to decide whether my experience is of this quality, or whether it can supply any observations that are of value. I again submit, with very great deference, that matter to the test of your more impartial judgment.

My professional education commenced with a complete course in the University of Edinburgh, in the record of which my name appears matriculated for no fewer than eight several sessions,—I also went through a regular apprenticeship, in the house of Mr Russel, your excellent professor of Clinical surgery;—previous to attending at St Thomas's Hospital of London, I served as an operative-assistant in the Royal Infirmary here, of which, in the phrase of the house, I am "a perpetual pupil," and to which, from grateful recollection of the advantages I then derived, I have, through life, and in my own various hospital practice, retained and avowed a filial and peculiar attachment.

Looking forward to the natural termination of my service in the highest Medical Depart-

ment of the army, I, several years ago, was admitted a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh; and when I lately returned to settle here among my brethren of that College, after 24 years of public duty, I did not choose to enter upon civil practice, by virtue of the legal and most honourable privilege of freedom in the learned professions, as well as in all other callings of civil life, bestowed by the statutes of this Empire upon its veteran servants, but spontaneously paid the full fees of the College, like any ordinary intransigent. I have, therefore, been a stranger to this place, and to this College, only while I was acquiring that experience, which the course of public duty I have gone through, alone could afford to me; and I can never suppose, that, after these facts have been here explained, the nature and proofs of such experience as mine, acquired during fifteen campaigns of constant exposure, and often in the most insalubrious climates of the globe, or to danger in the direst warfare which Britain ever was compelled to wage, shall be held by any one as grounds, not of preference but of exclusion from any part of the duty or practice of my own medical faculty in the metropolis of Scotland.

Upon the present occasion, there can be no other question but the single point,—what is most expedient for the prevention and cure of



Typhus Fever, or dissipation of any alarm which may be groundless, if such shall exist at this moment in this city of Edinburgh. It was, with profound deference, and, in truth, with no small degree of hesitation, that I have already proposed to submit to the judgment of the Managers of the Royal Infirmary the means which I conceive, that the accident of my destiny in life (for such it must be held, if I were absurd enough to claim any personal merit from the circumstance) has bestowed upon me. I now, therefore, proceed to lay before you some outline of the general nature of that experience, from which these supposed means of being useful, on such an occurrence as the present, ought certainly to have been derived, whether it has been my fortune to secure them to myself or not.

During the year 1794, in the humble situation of an hospital-mate of the British Army in the Low Countries, it was my fate, first upon this very subject of Typhus Fever, to compare the views I had obtained from the lectures of my learned and eloquent teachers,—from my private studies,—and from the best theatres of civil practice at the Infirmary of Edinburgh, and in St Thomas's Hospital of London, with the awful visitation of that dreadful distemper, when, like a pestilence, in despite of all human exertion and vigilance on the part of our Generals, and of my Medical Superiors, through the

influence of causes operating by the decree of Providence, in the very brunt of war, and extremest rigour of season, more than half of our gallant troops were swept away in its ravages, before our winter retreat into Germany was concluded. The impressions of all the forms of the disease, and of all the exigencies and expedients of hospital practice made upon my mind by what I then saw, were as much stronger than those I had formerly received from what I had seen in civil practice, as I can conceive the impressions of actual warfare of the conquerors in the campaigns of Wellington, to be stronger than those they had originally formed of their art, when training on the secure and peaceful fields of Britain. Nor could it be otherwise. In common with all my comrades, I was a constant actor and assistant in the hospitals. I refer you to Dr Rogerson the Younger, now in this city, then a physician of our forces, for evidence, the value of which you well know, upon the fact, whether I was not, in that single season, compelled to partake of more actual practice in the treatment of this distemper, than I could probably have had, if I had seen all the cases which have since occurred in Edinburgh, down to the present hour. Certainly, in the hurry of these scenes, never to be erased from the recollection of the survivors, I could not distinctly meditate upon the remote and proximate causes of the malady, and upon the modes of prevention and



cure, which might be brought into action in a more settled state of suffering humanity. But when that situation did afterwards occur, the materials for such reflection could not fail to be the most fresh in the stores of memory; and, I venture to say, as to all of us, bore a stamp which nothing in the medical practice of civil life could have impressed.

But if this impression had not been sufficiently strong, I had next, in the years 1796, 1797, and 1798, to perform the duties of a surgeon, generally in garrison, and much in the hospitals, under the still more destructive scourge of the yellow fever, in St Domingo, which there swept off many entire corps, and went near, more than once, to annihilate the 67th regiment, which was my particular care. Upon my practice and exertions at this period, I refer you to the Honourable Lieutenant-General Sir William Stewart, now in this country, whose garrison surgeon I was for some time, while he commanded at Cape St Nicholas Mole; and who, I doubt not, may again state to you upon this head, more than it would become me to repeat.

I should pass over my service in Holland during the campaign of the year 1799, although the casualties of five general actions, and the diseases of an army in the field during the autumnal season of that unhealthy country, furnished abundance of practice to the whole medical depart-

ment, were it not for the approbation with which his Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester was then pleased to notice the performance of all my medical duties in his brigade. I was till then altogether unknown to his Royal Highness. But it is my pride to say, that his countenance has never since been withdrawn, and has often upheld me. Upon a fit occasion, I might still venture to resort to his high testimony, were it requisite. I presume not to think that the present is an occasion of this kind. But if in this I am mistaken, I feel warranted to state, that his Royal Highness will deign to satisfy any suitable inquiry.

In the year 1801, it was my fortune, while acting as Staff-surgeon to the land forces of the expedition in the Baltic, to be on board the flag-ship of Lord Nelson in the battle before Copenhagen; and I was afterwards particularly selected by the Naval Commander in Chief, Sir Hyde Parker, to superintend the removal of the wounded and sick to Yarmouth, immediately after the action. The hero of Trafalgar, as well as his illustrious superior, on this particular service, are now no more. But I again refer you, to the Commander of the land forces on that occasion, the Honourable Sir William Stewart, who, happily for his country, still survives. He can inform you, if the published histories of Lord Nelson, and the records of our great Admiral's

nearest relatives had not already shewn, in what estimation I was afterwards held by his Lordship. I also refer you to that excellent physician, my much respected friend, Sir Gilbert Blane, then Chief Commissioner of the Sick and Hurt, who can satisfactorily inform you in what state I delivered over my whole charge upon my arrival in Britain from the Baltic.

My experience in the whole course of the peninsular war is more recent; and, in my letter of the 26th current, I offered to submit to your consideration a plan of mine to arrest the progress of a Typhus Fever that had depopulated whole districts of Portugal, and threatened destruction equally to the inhabitant of the palace as of the hovel, throughout the whole of that kingdom. I made this offer, because that plan, being approved of by the government, I had the high honour to be chosen a member of a Board of Health at Lisbon, at which sat our Ambassador, now his Excellency Sir Charles Stewart, Minister Plenipotentiary of Great Britain at the Court of France, and another distinguished member of the Portuguese Regency, with several of the great civil officers of that country, by whom it was adopted; and because the regulations there suggested by me, in the course of less than three months, during which this Board sat unceasingly, and enforced their execution, proved completely effectual. For evi-

dence upon all that respects this happiest circumstance of my professional life; the sole reference I deem it necessary to make is to the plan itself, and to the paramount authority of his Excellency Sir Charles Stewart.

This plan embraced the regulations found to be requisite relative to hospitals; to medical attendance; to the assistance of the clergy and magistrates of the kingdom; to parochial visitation throughout its whole extent; to civil and medical inspections and reports; to the form and audit of accounts; to responsibility and discipline in the execution of the whole duties; to the supplies and maintenance of the sick, and of the hospitals; to the purification and cleansing of the patients and their habitations or wards; to all returns and reports necessary in the system; and in particular, to the whole measures regarding the health and police of the afflicted towns.

This was a system, you will observe, purely civil, and independent of that which separately existed at the same time, and also under my charge, for the whole troops in Portugal. But I may be permitted here to mention, that under the latter, as established by me upon similar principles, the Portuguese army, which in all former wars, and previously in the late contest, had been peculiarly liable to contagious and destructive fevers, and from the defective state of

its hospitals, was unable to keep the field, became not less healthy than the British, and was provided with hospitals not less perfect, for every exigency of service. Here too I can likewise refer to the record of this other system itself, which I have here in my possession. But there are likewise many witnesses, several of whom were most meritorious co-operators in this work of reformation now among you in this city; and I know that they will bear an unqualified testimony to what I now state.

Certainly, however, the whole political regimen and frame of society in Portugal, were totally unlike those under which we live in Great Britain. Here, analogy must therefore altogether fail me; and a careless reader may be only struck with the difference in the state of subordination, and in the arrangements of the people, and in the very style and tone of regulations and orders necessarily adapted to these. But Typhus Fever, I need not inform you, is the very same disease in Lisbon as in Edinburgh—too generally arising from the same causes, and propagated in the same manner, unless prevented or arrested in its progress by the application of the same general means, modified only by the difference of local circumstances. Filth, and an atmosphere tainted by accumulation of human effluvia, when allowed to operate upon constitutions “enfeebled by cold and fatigue, and sorrow and

hunger,” as eloquently expressed by my revered and lamented friend the late Dr. Currie, will every where originate distemper in the miserable abodes of the poor, and more particularly in great cities, if the more powerful means of the rest of the community are not seasonably, as well as wisely, and scientifically employed, to remove these causes. In the alleys and closes of your Old Town, and in the habitations there piled upon each other under the same roof, I believe there may be found instances of twenty, if not more, dwellings of separate families, the common thoroughfare for all of which is a stair, called a “turnpike,” but to which the name would be more appropriate, if any common road or passage were as filthy as these in some cases were when I have visited them, and perhaps may still be. Is there any situation in Lisbon more likely to engender Typhus Fever than this, if the police, under the direction of medical skill, shall not anticipate the commencement of that contagious malady, and remove those causes of its prevalence, which human vigilance and exertion, by *timely measures*, may easily and certainly counteract. I believe that in this, by nature most healthy situation, these measures are as likely to have complete efficacy as in any other place of the universe. The contagion may, however, from agencies we neither see nor know, nor can arrest, hang unseen over any abode which can be



selected by the prudence of man. When it does break out, much greater skill and exertion must be employed to arrest its progress, and expel the taint. If it gains head in any considerable collection of people, I venture to predict from experience, which leaves me no pretence of hesitation, that the danger is general and great; more especially, if the patients shall be collected into one ward or house, unprovided with any one of all the requisite and best means of prevention and cure, and these, too, in their most effective and perfect state, no medical man will deny, that such a receptacle must become a reservoir of contagion, which may speedily inundate the whole land with pestilence.

The promptest separation of the infected from the healthy, is, indeed, the most important of all measures at such a crisis, provided that they can be removed to suitable and completely detached hospitals, where purification is perfect, and ventilation duly enforced. But the provision and regulation of such an hospital as this is the first and most indispensable preliminary of the benign work. In framing the system for Portugal, we were reduced to the painful necessity of abandoning this attempt, and even of preserving silence as to its importance, because the funds were altogether inadequate to provide such asylums for the sick, the number of whom had accumulated to an enormous degree, through want of

timely provision, the generous bounty of Britain having unavoidably come too late to prevent the miseries which it did afterwards supply powerful means to alleviate. Had the sick of Portugal been then collected, and thrown into hospitals unduly provided, these hospitals must have become pest-houses, in the literal sense of the term, and could have sent them forth again only to their graves. To the rest of the people, likewise, such hospitals must have been as pregnant with pestilence as with death to them. Should the sick of Edinburgh, infected by typhus fever, then, ever so accumulate, it will be vain to look for succour to the chair of the Professor, however gifted and revered, or to the talents of the most eminent and beneficent civil practitioner. Experience of similar calamities only can avail in arresting the epidemic current of pestilence; and it is no assumption to maintain, in the face of the world, that those alone who have spent much of their professional lives in fleets and armies, and amongst organized bodies of men, where pestilence of the same description has frequently occurred in its most alarming forms, can be qualified, at least by habit, to contend with the scourge. In this happy and well-governed land, it can, however, be no disparagement to our professional men, who have practised only in civil life, that they do want the experience necessary for such a crisis; because it is the very excel-



lence of their own practice and precepts, which, if it has never eradicated, has at least availed to prevent, the contagion of typhus fever, in its ordinary state, from becoming formidable amongst us, and by the result of their own merits, they are thus disabled from acting with the same knowledge and effect in an emergency which they have never witnessed, as individuals, far inferior in other qualifications, may, to whom it has been long familiar. I, with profound deference, farther contend, that these two several and distinct kinds of experience,—the one derived from familiarity with contagion in its ordinary state, and in civil life,—the other derived from familiarity with contagion in its most concentrated and aggravated forms,—must bear the same comparative value, when any attempt shall be made completely to eradicate for the time this formidable scourge, in a city where it has in any degree taken root.

These remarks must at least serve to prove the importance of most careful and deliberate inquiry, and to lead to the conclusion, that your new establishment should, as nearly as possible, be put upon a footing not less perfect than the fever ward of your Royal Infirmary would be, if it were in a house altogether detached from the wards of the other patients in that establishment, and without depriving the parent

institution of any part of that excellent medical superintendence under which it has attained the estimation it possesses.

With these views, I had the presumption to think, that the experience of the most energetic, persevering, and general arrangement, with which I have been personally acquainted, might be of some little utility here, and at this moment. As no reason has been yet given to me for altering this opinion, and as my sole object continues to be that utility, it only remains for me to repeat the same offer to you, with the additional and necessary explanation which I have now endeavoured to give. It also appears to me, that the mode I now take, of printing this letter, is the best I can select for intimating my readiness to afford the communication to any person by whom it may be desired. To explain my grounds for believing it might perhaps be of some value, your former answer, which my own inadvertency to this defect had not led me to expect, has shewn to be indispensable. I have done so with a most anxious desire to reject all the technicalities of expression to which I have been accustomed; and thus, if in my power, to speak upon a point which undeniably concerns the whole community, so as to be perfectly understood by those who are not professional men, as well as by those who are.

In concluding, I have but to beg that you will accept my grateful acknowledgments for the opportunity you have afforded of making this statement, and I have the honour to be,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most faithful and obedient

Humble Servant,

WILLIAM FERGUSSON.

*Edinburgh, No. 4, George Street,  
January 31, 1818.*

## LETTER

TO THE

GENERAL COURT OF CONTRIBUTORS

OF THE

ROYAL INFIRMARY OF EDINBURGH.

*From the  
Author*

(2)  
**LETTER**

TO THE  
GENERAL COURT OF CONTRIBUTORS  
OF THE  
ROYAL INFIRMARY OF EDINBURGH;

CONTAINING  
OBSERVATIONS ON THE MINUTES OF EVIDENCE,  
AND ON THE  
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO ENQUIRE  
INTO THE STATE OF THAT HOUSE.

BY  
A CONTRIBUTOR.

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EDINBURGH:

*Printed by James Ballantyne and Co.*  
FOR ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE AND COMPANY, AND  
MANNERS AND MILLER, EDINBURGH.

1818.



LETTER  
TO THE  
GENERAL COURT OF CONTRIBUTORS  
OF THE  
ROYAL INFIRMARY OF EDINBURGH:  
ON THE  
OCCASION OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
COURT, HELD AT THE INFIRMARY, ON THE 10TH OF  
JANUARY, 1841.  
BY  
A CONTRIBUTOR.  
EDINBURGH:  
PRINTED BY JAMES WILSON, 10, N. B. ROY STREET.  
1841.

LETTER, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

IN consequence of being unable to attend the General Meeting of the Contributors, called to take into consideration the Minutes of Evidence and the Report of the Committee appointed to enquire into the internal management of the Royal Infirmary, I take the liberty to obtrude on your notice, through the medium of the press, a few observations which have occurred to me in the necessarily hasty perusal of these papers. I feel assured that you will agree with me in thinking, that the gratitude of the public is eminently due to your Committee for the uncommon pains which they have bestowed upon the investigation intrusted to their charge, and for the impartiality with which it appears to have been uniformly conducted; and I confi-

dently expect that you will not only express, in the strongest manner, the sense which you must have of the value of their labours, but that you will also urge on the attention of the Managers the adoption of those measures of improvement which have suggested themselves to your Committee in the course of their investigation.

To those who take an interest in the concerns of the Royal Infirmary, it must be satisfactory to find, at the close of so minute an investigation, that nothing which can strictly merit the name of an *abuse*, has ever been suspected to exist in the management of that Institution; and that whatever negligences or defects may have crept into its administration, they are obviously of such a nature as can attach blame only to those, who, when they are pointed out, should endeavour to palliate or defend them. It is, however, I confess, with some feelings of mortification that I have read the account which the Report contains (page 98,) of the actual state of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh in the beginning of July 1817;—of an hospital which we have been always taught to consider not only as an excellent school of instruction for medical students,

but also as an institution for the relief of sick and diseased poor, superior in its regulations and management to most others of the same kind in Europe. The statement of the Clerks, to which I allude, and which has given occasion to the present inquiry, appears to me to be the most important document in the Report. This authentic statement, containing a minute and circumstantial representation of the internal condition of the Infirmary at the time it was drawn up, is signed by four persons, who, from their situation as Clerks, possessed better opportunities of knowing accurately the state of the House, in every respect, than all the other persons connected with the Institution; and who, from the purity of their moral characters, and the strictness of their religious principles, were, individually and collectively, entitled to the highest degree of credit. This representation, which might, at the time it was drawn up, have been abundantly confirmed by the collateral evidence of all the other Medical Officers, ought to have been received with gratitude by the Managers, whose means of becoming acquainted through other channels with such facts as it contains, appear to

have been so limited. The Clerks, instead of being discountenanced and indirectly censured, were, in my opinion, entitled to the warmest thanks of the Managers for their conscientious and disinterested efforts to improve, through them, the condition of the sick poor in the charity under their direction. The result of the inquiry that was set on foot by the Managers, in consequence of this statement of the Clerks, (p. 106) and the various improvements in the internal economy of the House, which are universally allowed to have been introduced during and since the period of that enquiry, and the evidence now before you, afford the strongest confirmation that can be required of the accuracy of that statement; and whatever errors the Clerks may have committed in point of form in presenting it to the Managers, it must procure for those gentlemen the approbation of the benevolent, and the blessings of the poor. The 15th printed regulation, which directs, that "Upon observing any impropriety in the House, the Clerks are immediately to communicate the same to the Treasurer, in order that he may either acquaint the Managers thereof, or take such steps

as he may think proper for correcting the same;" and which the Managers complain was departed from upon this occasion, was, I am persuaded, more honoured in the breach than it would have been in the observance; for adherence to such a regulation, in the circumstances described, must have allowed full time for the temporary removal of many of the defects complained of by the Clerks, before it could have been in the power of the Managers to have become acquainted with their existence. Indeed, it seems to me doubtful whether this regulation could ever possibly answer any other purpose.

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Managers (inserted page 106 of the Report,) will best explain to the Court of Contributors the mode of proceeding, which, on receiving so important a communication, the Managers followed, to ascertain and to remedy the defects which had been pointed out. Let any candid and disinterested person read the account which the Managers have given of their own proceedings, and say whether these proceedings were calculated for the discovery of the truth. For my own part, I do not hesitate to say, that it appears to me that the



Managers committed several great oversights and mistakes upon this occasion. The first and most unfortunate of these seems to have been, their regarding the representation of the Clerks as a libel upon themselves, and their imagining, that the defects which had been pointed out by the Clerks, were defects for which they themselves were primarily and in a peculiar manner responsible. For the occurrence of these defects I agree most cordially with your Committee in thinking, that little, if any blame, can be justly attached to the Managers, either as a body, or as individuals. The fault is in the system, which precludes in so great a degree the possibility of the Managers ever being made acquainted with the practical details of the House. Negligences and defects in the department of the Matron and Nurses can never be attributable to the Managers, unless they abstain from correcting them when they are pointed out, or endeavour to defend the conduct of those with whom these defects originate.

The other errors in the conduct of the Managers on this occasion, arising from this fundamental mistake, are abundantly evident. Instead of summoning, as might have naturally

been expected, the Clerks into their presence, and proceeding with them directly to inspect the wards of the Infirmary, they appoint a Committee, consisting of three civil Managers, to enquire, "at their first convenience," into, and to report upon the statement of the Clerks. This Committee show how they were qualified for the performance of such a task, by employing *three months* in the investigation of a matter which those who know any thing of hospital duties, know well ought to have been gone through in as many hours. The Managers seem to have taken no pains to ascertain, which they might easily have done, what changes had taken place in the interval between the complaints being made by the Clerks, and the commencement of their investigation; and who can be so simple as to believe that the negligences and defects which had been complained of would be permitted to exist for an hour after it was known that they were to be enquired into? and who but the Committee of the Managers, in conducting an investigation like that which they had undertaken, would have thought of passing over the Medical Officers of the Infirmary, and of applying for information to the Matron and Nurses, respecting

negligences and defects alleged to exist in their respective departments? It deserves to be remarked, that it is by statements of the Nurses, different from what they had previously given to the Clerks, that the Committee of Managers, in their Report, have endeavoured to throw doubts upon the accuracy of the representation which had been given in to them by the Clerks;—by the evidence of a description of persons, who, from their situations in the Hospital, could not admit of negligences and defects in their department, without either criminating themselves, or impeaching the conduct of the Matron, upon whose favour the continuance of their employment solely depended; a description of persons, whose evidence your Committee have very properly agreed to set aside as unworthy of credit.

It is with feelings truly disagreeable, that I am compelled to allude to the conduct of the late Matron, but I am sorry to perceive that the Managers should have thought it necessary to defend, as they have done, her conduct in the Infirmary; and the more so, that I am fully persuaded that the greater part of the negligences and defects which have been proved to have existed in that Institution, had their origin in her

want of proper method in the management of the affairs of the house; in her erroneous ideas of domestic economy, and the obstinacy with which she persisted in them; and in her want of all proper intercourse with the Nurses, and control over their conduct. There is every reason to believe that Mrs Montgomery was a woman of strict integrity; but all I have learned with regard to her tends to prove that she was a person of limited capacity, and one in whose mind a narrow economy seems to have held the place of other virtues not less necessary and proper in the Matron of a great Hospital. Her conduct in the Infirmary contrasts in but too many particulars with that of a former Matron, to whose character Dr Hamilton has borne so honourable a testimony. There are many who must remember well the daily visits which Mrs Rennie made through the wards of the Infirmary; her unceasing efforts to add to the comforts of the patients; the tenderness with which she enquired into the circumstances of those who appeared to be in peculiar distress; the numberless little acts of kindness which she performed to them; the strict charge which she took of the character and conduct of the Nurses; her friend-

ly and maternal attentions to the Clerks; and the impartiality, equanimity, and propriety with which, in the faithful discharge of the duties of a laborious and difficult situation, she conducted herself in all her intercourse with the Servants, Medical Officers, and Managers of the Infirmary. It is pleasing to record the virtues of such a character; and in paying the tribute of our respect to the memory of departed worth, to point out Mrs Rennie as a model for the imitation of her successors.

It is unnecessary for me to detail to the Court the various circumstances which, subsequently to the Statement of the Clerks, and the Report of the Committee of Managers, have led to the present enquiry; but now that this enquiry is finished, I will venture to affirm, that it is impossible for any one to read the Minutes of Evidence now under your consideration, and not to perceive that the defects and negligences which have been proved to exist in the internal economy of the Infirmary, have proceeded chiefly from the department of the Matron and Nurses. I feel no inclination, nor is it necessary, to enter into a detail of disgusting particulars; but to me

it appears to be established beyond all possibility of contradiction, 1st, That for several years past, there existed every where in the Infirmary a want of due attention to Cleanliness; and 2dly, That the Food has frequently been observed to be defective both in point of quantity and quality. In proof of the want of cleanliness, we have the direct testimony of the Medical Officers and Clerks, both permanent and temporary;—a testimony that could be supported, were it necessary, by the observation of every student of medicine who has attended the Infirmary during that period. The defect of the food, in point of quantity, has been ascertained by the accounts of the Infirmary, by the evidence of the Cook and Clerks, and also, very obviously, by the greater quantity of alimentary matter, which has been lately introduced into the food of the patients. The facts, which prove the occurrence of the occasional bad qualities of the food, and the slovenly and irregular manner in which it has been distributed, are attested by the evidence of professional gentlemen, who were very competent judges of these matters, and who could have no motive whatever for magnifying the defects which they observed.



Upon this evidence I have but one general remark to offer, which, though it is not expressed in the Report of your Committee, cannot altogether have escaped their observation. It is, that a great part of the evidence before you has been obtained from gentlemen who stand in a very peculiar relation to the Managers of the Infirmary, and who, consequently, in giving evidence relative to the existence of any negligences or defects in that institution, must have felt themselves in the disagreeable situation of being in danger of hurting the feelings of those to whom they conceived themselves to be under peculiar obligations, and who, they could not help perceiving, had considered themselves, though erroneously, to be implicated in the discovery of any errors or defects in the Infirmary. Instead, therefore, of being surprised at the apparent unwillingness of some of the Medical Officers to acknowledge the existence of these defects, we ought, I conceive, to appreciate duly the painful effort which it required to give that evidence which they have given.

I deem it quite unnecessary to dwell upon the great body of accurate evidence now in

your possession, because I am aware that every Member of the Court of Contributors can judge as well as I can do, of its import, bearings, and value. But I may be permitted to remark, that errors and defects of the kind, which have been proved to have existed in the management of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, several of which indeed are admitted by the Committee of the Managers, and all tacitly acknowledged by the improvements which have been lately introduced, are in some degree inseparable from the nature of such institutions, and may often exist for a great length of time without coming to the knowledge of those who may be zealously employed in the general superintendence of hospitals. This is an evil liable to occur in every great hospital, where there is no minute superintendence on the part of those who have the direction of its management over the practical details of its internal economy, and particularly where those who are engaged in the discharge of its active duties, have not frequent opportunities of communicating to each other the discovery of any negligence or defect that may occur in their respective departments. The want of such opportunities is a

serious defect in the constitution of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, and has unquestionably given rise to that want of cordial co-operation between the Medical Officers and Civil Managers, which is so essentially necessary for the proper administration of charitable institutions, destined for the reception and care of sick and diseased poor. Instead of this, there seems to have existed a mutual distrust and jealousy among those connected with the civil management and medical duties of the Infirmary—a distrust and jealousy, which, I fear, have on various occasions been injurious in their operation to the comforts of the sick poor who have been admitted into that Institution. When defects have been complained of, or improvements suggested, we find no example of a general meeting of all those who were concerned in the administration of the Infirmary; no open discussion with regard to the best method of remedying these defects; but, on the contrary, we find the Managers sometimes taking the advice of one branch of the Medical Faculty to the exclusion of the other, in matters which equally affected the departments of both; in other in-

stances, listening to the statements made by one or more Medical Officers, the existence of which was not known to the others. The conduct of the Managers in this respect appears to have been less liberal and wise than I should have expected from persons of their knowledge, benevolence, and independence. Even the existence of a certain proportion of Medical Managers in that body, instead of being a security against the operation of that jealousy, seems to have increased it, and to have had the effect of depriving the Managers of that assistance in discovering and correcting defects in the Hospital, which they undoubtedly had a right to expect from the Medical Officers.

From the evidence now upon record, it appears that the Medical Officers of the Infirmary had been long aware of several defects and errors in its internal economy, the proper correction of which required the active interference of the Managers. The reserve of the Medical Officers with regard to these, a reserve to be regretted on their own account, as well as on that of the Royal Infirmary, seems to have had its origin partly in the disappointment which they

had on various occasions experienced, in not having had these defects remedied by representations, which they themselves had made to the Managers; partly in that distance at which the Medical Officers, as a body, are well known to have been always kept by the Managers; and partly also in the mutual jealousies of these Officers as to the influence which they should respectively possess, directly or indirectly, in the management of the Infirmary. The necessity of being obliged to communicate with the Managers by written statements, and the ignorance in which they were kept of the manner in which their statements would be received and treated, have often, I believe, prevented the Medical Officers, both as a body and as individuals, from making communications to the Managers, that could not have failed to have had the most beneficial effects upon the character of the Infirmary, and of improving the condition of the sick poor admitted into it. Had a free and independent intercourse existed between the Medical Officers and Managers of the Infirmary, no defect or error of importance could have been permitted to exist for any length of time in the domestic ma-

nagement of that Institution; and had a proper system of intercourse between these two bodies been adopted and acted upon, your Committee, I am persuaded, would have been saved the trouble, and the Managers all the disagreeable feelings, that have arisen from the institution and progress of the present enquiry.

I cannot omit the opportunity which is now offered, of urging upon your attention that part of the Report of your Committee which relates to the manner in which the Managers are chosen. Instead of being appointed, as they ought to have been, by the General Court of Contributors, the Managers are entitled by the Charter of the Infirmary to choose their successors in office. The charter provides, that not fewer than four, nor more than six Managers shall go out of office yearly, and that their places shall be filled up by new Managers out of the different bodies in Edinburgh, to which the retiring Managers belong. Now, I beg leave to ask, In what manner has this part of the intention of the Founders been fulfilled? So far from nominating successors to themselves in office, the Ordinary Managers have



always continued themselves, or recommended their sons to be their successors in office; and there is not on record an instance of the appointment of a Manager, in whose election the intentions of the Founders, or the spirit of the Charter, have been fairly, fully, and truly accomplished. It is seen, that, by changing the names of some of the Extraordinary Managers, who, it has been proved, are never allowed to take any share in the management of the Hospital, and who seem to be a sort of a *corps de reserve*, to be called forth only when some testimony is required to the good management of the Ordinary Managers, they appear to have complied with the letter of the Charter in a most scrupulous manner. By this mode of election, the Managers have contrived to perpetuate themselves in office, and to leave the management of the Infirmary, an institution raised and supported by the donations and contributions of the public, as a kind of patrimonial inheritance to their heirs and successors. It is, I firmly believe, the consciousness that their title to this succession is, in many respects, questionable, that has made the Managers of the Royal Infirmary upon all occasions so extremely jealous

of any interference on the part of the Medical Officers, or of others in the affairs of that Institution. Paltry as the patronage may appear to be to the Contributors, which the situation of Managers affords, it has not, I will venture to affirm, been regarded as such, either by the Managers themselves, or by any of those who have had occasion to apply for appointments in the Infirmary. There is no body of men, I believe, in Scotland, to whom so many personal and pressing solicitations are made by all ranks of the community, as are annually made to the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, for the appointment of Clerks and Dressers. And by appointing likewise, as they have hitherto done, the Physicians and Surgeons to situations of great professional improvement in the Hospital, the Managers of the Royal Infirmary exercise a considerable influence over the advancement and interest of a number of Medical Practitioners in Edinburgh. Until that part of the Charter shall be complied with, not only in its letter, but also in its spirit, which directs the annual change of from four to six of those who are engaged in the civil management of the Hospital; until some provision be made to secure a

much more frequent and minute inspection, than has hitherto existed, into the economical details of the house ; and until some controul over the nomination of the Medical Officers is resumed by the Court of Contributors, and they are rendered more independent than they are at present of the favour of the Managers ; until the appointment of the Clerks and Dressers is put upon a different footing in relation to those under whom they are to serve in the Infirmary ; and also until the Medical Officers shall have the privilege of attending and giving their advice in all meetings of the Managers, that have for their object the economical and professional management of the Infirmary, I cannot conceive that any very beneficial, or, at least, permanent reforms, can be effected in that Institution.

With these remarks I should have concluded this Letter, were it not that my attention has been recalled in a particular manner to the Minutes of Evidence now before you, by a Note submitted to your consideration on the part of the Managers of the Royal Infirmary ; a Note, which I am sorry to observe, cannot be regarded in any other light than as a professed defence of

that defective system of domestic economy which has given rise to the present enquiry, and the existence of which seems for a considerable period to have been known to every one who has had an opportunity of visiting the Infirmary, except to the Managers themselves. In proceeding to animadvert upon this Note, I must begin by declaring my sincere respect for the different individuals who compose that body. Towards some of them, indeed, I entertain, and must ever entertain, every feeling of gratitude which obligation can impose, and every sentiment of regard which sense of duty can dictate ; but, in a matter which so intimately concerns the public good as the management of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, I hope I may be permitted to distinguish between the conduct of the Managers as private individuals, and their acts as members of an incorporation employed in the administration of a great Public Charity. No member of the Court of Contributors can be more completely satisfied than I am of the benevolent dispositions and upright intentions of the Managers of the Royal Infirmary ; and, I am perfectly assured, that there is not

one of these gentlemen who would, with his knowledge, have permitted for an hour the existence of any one of the negligences or defects, which have been proved by an irrefragable body of evidence to have existed for a series of years in the internal management of that Institution.

Knowing, as I do, that several of these Managers attended the examination of the witnesses, and believing that all of them must have read the evidence upon record, I confess, that it is with no small surprise, I find them affirming, in the Introduction to their Note, that "nothing has been proved which can materially affect the management of" the Infirmary. This is a point, which, in my opinion, might have been left to be determined by the Public, the tribunal to the decision of which it must be ultimately committed.

Feeling in common with the Managers a wish, that "a further enquiry should be made as to the disturbance given to patients by an individual at unseasonable hours of the night, as mentioned by Mr Benjamin Welsh," I took the liberty to transmit to Mr Glover, the gentleman who I had reason to believe is alluded to, the

following queries, his answers to which, for the satisfaction of the Managers, I now subjoin :—

Query 1st. During the time you have acted as Clerk in the Royal Infirmary, have you been in the custom of visiting the Wards during the night?

Q. 2d. If so, will you be so good as to state upon what occasions, and for what purposes, you made these visits?

Answers. As respects the Surgeons' Wards, which were those more immediately under my care, as Surgeons' Clerk, 1st. Yes; not every night, but many nights before I went to bed.

2d. When the illness of any of my patients required such attention. To see that the Wards were properly ventilated. To know if my patients had all gone to bed, or if they were all even in the house. To see if the nurses had not gone to bed, and if they were in a fit state to attend to their patients.

N. B.—My acquaintance with the Hospital taught me, that in its present state, particularly as to nurses, this was indispensable, to insure the comforts, and preserve the lives of my Patients.

As respects the Medical Wards, or those under the care of the Physicians and their Clerks, No, except the Men's Country Ward, which I visited several times about 11 and 12 o'clock at night during the month of last December, to ascertain, whether the Physicians' night nurses were more attentive than the Surgeons'; in short, to know whether they slept or watched. An additional motive for this arose from a conversation with Mr Welsh, from which I understood it was his opinion, that it was unnecessary to make such visits as I did to my own wards. The doors of this Ward (Men's Country) were sometimes locked; as often as I found them open, I observed the night-nurse in bed, sometimes asleep. I never spoke to a



patient, but literally walked direct through the ward as softly as I could.

Query 3d. In making these visits did you find the night-nurses always awake and sober?

A. Frequently asleep, sometimes drunk, but more frequently sober. Finding on the 1st of January some of my nurses drunk, I was desirous of knowing the state of the other nurses; I therefore visited seven Physicians' Wards, in four of which I observed at least one drunken nurse; in one Ward (Women's Fever,) the night-nurse was in bed with a patient; in one, (Short Soldiers' Ward, then used for fever patients) there was no night-nurse; and as to the remaining (Mens' Country) Ward, it was locked.

To shew the necessity of vigilance on the part of the Clerks in the *then* state of the Hospital, two of my, or Surgeon's nurses, sober on that night about 11 p. m. got out after that time with two patients, and came in about 12 staggering and making a noise. They acknowledged the porter had allowed them to pass and repass to and from the public house.

Query 4th. Had you any conversations with any of the other Clerks respecting these visits, or, in making them, did any of the Clerks ever find fault with you for making a noise with the patients or nurses in any part of the Hospital?

A. I believe I mentioned some of these observations as to nurses both to Mr Cameron and Mr Welsh, when the latter told me, in a cursory way, that some patient or patients, or that the nurse (I understood of Men's Country Ward) complained, and said, that some patients had complained of their being disturbed by my *passing through the Ward* at night. I also mentioned to Mr Cameron the circumstance of the Men's Country Ward being locked, and that the day-nurse said it was his orders, which he denied.

None of the Clerks ever did, or ever could find fault with me for making a noise with the patients or nurses in any part of the Hospital.

Query 5th. Have you reason to believe that the late Matron ever caused sheets to be put upon the beds in the morning that were taken off again before evening; and upon what occasions was this shifting of the linen practised?

A. I have. On occasion of a Managers' visit after the date of our Memorial.

Q. 6. Were the accounts which the nurses gave to the Managers, with regard to fever-bedding, the same with those which they had given to you a day, or two days, before?

A. The accounts given to me were either on the 4th or 5th of last July; that which the nurses gave to the Managers, in my presence, was, I believe, about the middle of last September. They were different.

Q. 7. Were any of the other Clerks present with you when you received your accounts of the fever-bedding from the nurses?

A. Yes. Dr Lee was present during the whole time, and Mr Sims during most, if not the whole of it. Dr Lee *noted down* the nurses' statements as they were emitted. I observed that this was done quite correctly. These Notes I have at present. No regular Notes appeared to be taken before the Managers. I mentioned to the Managers, *where* the statements of the nurses differed from their first statements, which statements I informed them my Colleagues (Lee, Sims,) could prove; but they were *not* called on by the Managers to do so.

Q. 8. Have you any reason to believe that any pains were taken to separate the fever-bedding from the other bedding in the Infirmary?

A. No.

(Signed) W. GLOVER.

Edinburgh, March, 1818.

On this evidence I have only two reflections to offer; the first, a very obvious one,—That it

must have been the night-nurses, and not the patients, that had reason to complain of being disturbed by Mr Glover's nocturnal visitations: the second, That the Court of Contributors must regret, with me, that their Committee had not had an opportunity of examining Mr Glover, as it is difficult to reconcile the statement of the Managers, respecting Mr Glover's failure in establishing the statement of the Clerks, with the account of the inquiry about the fever bedding, which that gentleman has transmitted to me. How, after a lapse of two months, could the memories of the Nurses be supposed capable of enabling them to remember and confirm the evidence which they had given to Mr Glover, in the presence of Mr Sims and Dr Lee, when it will be observed, from the testimony of the very Reverend Principal, (p. 84) that their recollection did not serve them to remember to-day what they had said yesterday, and this even with regard to matters in which their interests were in no ways concerned?

On Article 1st of the Note, I have only to remark, that no one can be more firmly persuaded than I am, that the funds and pecuniary transac-

tions of the Royal Infirmary have always been faithfully and conscientiously managed to the best of their judgment, by those to whom they have been intrusted. But whether in the manner in which the funds have been put out to interest, and whether in the manner in which contracts for expensive and necessary articles of consumption, have been made, the pecuniary transactions of the Royal Infirmary have been always managed to the greatest possible advantage, are points, which it is not my object to discuss, and which I shall, therefore, leave to be determined by those of your Committee, whose attention may have been directed to these subjects.

It is with regret I have read the statement which has been made, in Article 2d, of the comparative mortality in the Infirmary of Edinburgh, with that of similar Institutions in London. The Managers may be assured that they know very little of the proper *data* upon which these comparative statements should be founded, or of the various local causes which occasion a greater mortality in some of the Hospitals in these kingdoms than in others. This injudicious and in-

vidious comparison, can only have the effect of recalling the attention of the Medical Practitioners in other Hospitals, to the numerous defects which have existed for a series of years in the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh; and with the existence and nature of which, from having themselves visited, and many of them having held official situations in that Hospital, these Practitioners are fully acquainted. The continuation of this invidious comparison, in Article 3d, by extending it to the civil management of other Hospitals, is equally improper and injudicious.

In the assertions made in Article 4th, with respect to the Diet of the Infirmary, I apprehend that the Managers have committed a great mistake, in confounding the quantity of food, stated in the private Diet Table of Dr Home, with that which has been actually administered to the patients. It is in evidence, that when Diet Tables have been called for, no one concerned in the prescription or preparation of food in the Infirmary, knew of any such tables, either printed or written. Mrs Montgomery distinctly stated, that her predecessor Mrs Hume, had no Diet Tables, and that she received from her only verbal

instructions with regard to the preparation of the food of the patients, and the quantity of nutritious matter which it ought to contain, and which it will be seen, by the evidence of Mary Manners, the cook, has, in the past practice of the Infirmary, had no fixed reference, or proportion, to the variable number of patients at the time in the House. It appears also from the evidence before you, that the late Matron exercised her discretion in a very remarkable manner in these matters; and contrived to make that quantity of meal, barley, and beef, serve for the support of five persons during her management, which is at present, and was during the time of her predecessor, consumed by three. I am not aware, who the Medical Practitioners are, who are referred to by the Managers, as having approved of the Diet of the Infirmary, nor whether the approbation which they gave to the food of the Infirmary was bestowed upon the Table in Dr Home's possession, or upon that actually served out in their presence to the patients. We would require, however, to be informed of this before we can duly estimate the value of their approbation. You will perceive, from the evidence of Dr Ha-



milton and Dr Spens, that these gentlemen have judged the diet of the Infirmary to be suitable in point of quantity, *only from Tables, the existence of which was not known to the Matron, who had the sole direction of the food*, and that they both confess, that in their visits to the Hospital, they seldom, if ever, had had an opportunity of seeing the food served out to the patients, a circumstance which may account in some degree for what has been considered by the Managers as an officious interference in this matter, on the part of the Physicians' Clerks. From the evidence of Dr Home, it appears that he was in possession of a diet table, though he did not know from whom it had been got, which the Clinical Clerks were directed to copy into their case-books, and which he had conceived to have been a diet table taken from the Statutes of the Royal Infirmary. A comparison of this table, however, with that admirable bill of fare to be found in these Statutes, very few articles of which have ever been seen, far less tasted, by any patient in the Royal Infirmary, shewed very plainly that this could not be the case. Dr Home acknowledges that he had had occasion to complain

repeatedly of the bad quality of the broth; and that he was not aware whether the quantity of meat put into the broth on any particular day, depended or not upon the number of persons to whom the boiled meat was to be served out. It is very plain, from the evidence given by Mr Law, respecting the food which he had had occasion to see served up to the patients, that he considered it as deficient in quantity and quality, and this evidence is supported by that of his colleague Mr Gillespie, and of Mr Wishart and Dr Gordon, at present Surgeons, and who have formerly both acted as Clerks in the Infirmary, the latter of whom seems for a considerable time to have paid particular attention to the state of the food. The evidence of these gentlemen, again, is corroborated in every particular, by that of Drs Beilby and Tweedie, and by Messrs Sims and Hastings, whose opportunities of observation, with regard to the state of the food while they acted as Clerks in the Infirmary, were greatly superior to that of the ordinary Physicians and Surgeons; and consequently their testimony respecting this point must be regarded as the most authentic

and satisfactory that can be obtained; yet this is the evidence which the Managers have been pleased to represent as being derived from "very partial means of information."

With regard to the quantities of wine and porter which the Managers boast of as having been consumed during the last 10 years in the Infirmary, it will not, I believe, be presuming too much upon the very imperfect and slovenly system of internal economy, which has prevailed in the Infirmary, to suspect that a considerable proportion of these liquors may have flowed into very different channels, from those for which they were originally intended. The patients, I imagine, who have been in the Infirmary during this period, would not be less surprised to hear of the prodigious quantities of wine and porter which they consumed while they were there, than they must be to be told of the very excellent beef steaks and other sumptuous fare with which they were feasted.

On Article 5th I have to remark, that in common with the Managers, I feel no inclination to scrutinize the evidence, as to how far the quantity of food prescribed has always been duly furnished by those who had no interest to withhold

it; because it is proved by the evidence, in the first place, that the general quantity and quality of the food furnished to patients has varied according to the pleasure of the Matron, without the knowledge, and therefore without the interference of the Managers and Medical Officers of the Establishment; and, 2dly, because it is obvious that it is in itself a thing quite impossible to ascertain the quantity and quality of any articles of food which may have been furnished to individual patients in the Infirmary, unless at the precise point of time when they were so furnished. It does not appear, however, that before the late investigation any Manager had ever visited this Hospital at the hour of meals, in order to ascertain, by actual inspection, the quantity or quality of the food really furnished, or to ascertain how far patients were in general satisfied with it; but it would seem that this matter, so essential to the health and comfort of the patients, and to the general reputation of the Infirmary, has always been left to the entire direction of the Matron.

It is too much to presume, after the complaints that are ascertained to have been made

by patients in all parts of the Infirmary, and in opposition to all the evidence before you, that because the late Matron had no interest to withhold food from the patients, it must therefore have always been furnished in due quantity and quality. The interest of the Matron consisted, I conceive, in her acting so as to gain the approbation of the Managers, and their records will best shew whether her economy did not procure for her a distinction in this particular over some of her predecessors. It must excite surprise, as well as regret, to find the Managers labouring, as they every where do, in this Note, to identify their own intentions and acts of management, with the errors and consequent misconduct of Mrs Montgomery. The food, in every public Hospital, should be served out to the patients according to a printed diet-table hung up in the wards, and open to the inspection of every patient in the house.

I am quite aware of the doubt and circumspection with which complaints of patients in public Hospitals with regard to their food and treatment ought to be listened to; and also that a great deal of exaggerated statement has gone abroad respecting the food and the manner of

its being served out to patients in the Infirmary; but I am disposed to regard these statements, however much they may have been exaggerated, as a proof that some defects have existed in these particulars, rather than the contrary. In affirming, however, the existence of some negligences and defects in the internal economy of the Infirmary, I am far from wishing to insinuate that this Institution has not been of incalculable benefit to the sick poor in this country, and that the patients treated in it have not had the greatest reason to feel truly grateful for the assistance or relief they have derived from it.

With regard to the steaks mentioned in Article 6th, I would observe, that provided the meat be good and fit for steaks, the plan of dressing it in the wards, with proper conveniences, in preference to having it done in the kitchen, is evidently advantageous to the patients. But with regard to the meat that was served up for steaks during the management of the late Matron, I can find no evidence to prove that there was the slightest attention, either on her part or on that of the servants under her, to see that the meat furnished for steaks was fit for that purpose; and there is



the direct and undeniable testimony, now upon record, of a great number of gentlemen, in proof of the fact, that the meat actually served out for steaks was not unfrequently very unfit for the purpose of being so used.

On Article 7th I have only to observe, that I suspect the Managers have been misinformed with regard to the practices of knives and forks being generally made a charge to the patients in the London Hospitals; but whatever may be in this, the late improvements which have been introduced into the manner of serving up the food in the Edinburgh Infirmary, must be regarded as a tacit confession that that manner was formerly in several respects faulty.

With regard to the personal cleanliness of the patients alluded to, No. 8th, I must say, that I regard this as a matter of the utmost importance in the economy of the Infirmary, as it must be of all Hospitals, and that every attention should be given to enforce and to preserve the practice of personal cleanliness. There are surely few patients, the whole of whose bodies on admission may not be safely enough washed with soap and water, either warm or cold, and none, I believe,

that could be injured by having this done in a proper manner to their faces, hands, and feet. Besides the articles necessary for this purpose, every Hospital should be furnished with a sufficient quantity of combs, and the greatest care should be taken that the careful washing and combing of the patients be a duty daily performed by the patients themselves, in all cases where this has not been forbid by the Medical Officers, and by the Nurses or others to those patients who are disabled from performing this duty for themselves.

With regard to Articles 9 and 10, I have only to say, that I conceive it impossible to read the evidence, and not to approve warmly of the very great labour and pains which the Managers have of late taken to secure the perfect cleanliness of the linen and bedding of the patients; nor would any complaints, I am satisfied, ever have been made, or pains taken to prove the bad state of these during the last five or six years, had not the Managers undertaken to defend, as they have done, the very improper conduct of the late Matron in relation to the sheets and bedding of the patients. The facts which establish her great,

not to say wilful, negligence with regard to these points, are of a kind that it would now be much more agreeable to forget, than to remember or to enumerate.

The opinion so strongly expressed by the Managers (Art. 11) with regard to the impossibility of procuring better Nurses than are at present employed in the Infirmary, is so contrary to that which I have formed after a very long and attentive observation, that I was at first disposed to imagine, that, by some mistake or other, the word "*better*," had got into the place which should have been occupied by the epithet *worse*; for I will venture to say, that the opinion, as it now stands, is contrary to experience and common sense. The situation of Nurses in the Infirmary ought to be, in several respects, better than that of ordinary servants. They should be supplied with several comforts which ordinary servants cannot be said to require. The admission into the permanent service of the Infirmary should not be through the Matron alone; and some provision, not depending altogether on the favour of that person, should be made for the Nurses, when, from age,

they become unfit for their duties. The observations of your Committee on the subject of Nurses are excellent, and have my warmest approbation.

With the opinion expressed by the Managers in Art. 12, my sentiments coincide in every particular; and I am much pleased to be assured by authority, which I cannot question, that the internal state and domestic economy of the Infirmary are greatly improved since July 7th, 1817, a day which must ever be regarded as the commencement of a new era in the history of the Royal Infirmary. But with all the improvements which have taken place, there is, in my opinion, much still wanting to put the internal state and management of the Infirmary upon the footing on which it ought to be. For, besides the very bad state of the Lock-up Ward, which has been brought under the notice of your Committee, there is another matter connected with that subject, which stands much in need of reform in the Infirmary. I allude to the practice, which has so long prevailed, of mixing venereal with other patients through the different wards of the Hospital. This is a very serious evil, and one which,

in a moral, as well as medical point of view, must be highly injurious to the Institution. I have been told, that the Managers have been long aware of the existence of this evil, and that they had even at one time taken some steps to have it remedied, by establishing a separate ward for venereal patients; but which they were obliged to give up, in consequence of some difficulties that occurred about its medical superintendence. This is a point, however, concerning which I am very imperfectly informed, and must, therefore, refer the Court of Contributors to the Managers for more satisfactory information regarding it.

Amongst other defects in the Infirmary requiring to be remedied, is the very obvious one of the want of Fever Wards for the Clinical Professors. The Fever Patients are at present, I believe, and have always been, mixed with the other patients in the Clinical Wards, to the great risk of these patients, and to the almost certain infection of some of the students attending there. Greater pains should be taken also, than have hitherto been done, to cut off the communication between the Fever and the other Wards of the House, so as to preclude the possi-

bility of contagion being conveyed from one part of the Infirmary to another; and some means should be fallen upon to purify the body-clothes of Fever Patients, before they are permitted to leave the House.

There is still another department in the Infirmary, an inferior one, it is true, but one of great importance to the Hospital, which also stands much in need of reform. I mean the office of Janitor or Porter to the Infirmary; for, upon the vigilance and good conduct of the person who fills it, depends much of the sobriety and regularity of the Patients and Nurses in every ward of the Hospital. It is consistent with the knowledge of every Student, who has, of late years, attended the Infirmary, that the duties of the Porter have been most negligently and incorrectly performed. No patient, or his friends, who may have wished to smuggle in food or drink of any kind, have, for many years, met with any difficulty at the door of that House; and abundance of evidence could be brought, were it necessary, to prove, that one of the persons employed as Porter has been long chiefly occupied in conveying liquor into the Infirmary from the spirit-shops in the neighbour-



hood. The office of Janitor has been for sixteen or eighteen years filled by two persons, one of whom, on account of his age and infirmities, ought long ago to have been permitted to retire from the House; and the other, a person, who, from his habits, as well as his age, ought never to have been admitted into the employment of the Infirmary. I mention these as examples of defects in the internal state of the Infirmary, which still require correction, and surely it would not be difficult for any one acquainted with the Hospital and its duties, to enumerate many more.

On Article 13th I have nothing to offer. But it is surely too much for the Managers to expect, that either the Court of Contributors, or the Public, having before them the Minutes of Evidence, will give any place to the assertions and insinuations contained in the 14th Article. Something more than a vague and general approval of the internal management of the Infirmary by medical gentlemen, of however long standing, will now be required, in order to set aside that extensive and consistent body of evidence, which, by a multiplicity of precise and individual instances,

has established, to a demonstration, the defective state of the internal economy of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh during the last ten years. The moral character, the great professional attainments, and superior opportunities of observation, possessed by the persons whose evidence the Managers affect to depreciate, must be regarded by the public as the surest pledges of the accuracy of their statements, and of their benevolent wishes to improve the condition of the sick poor in the Royal Infirmary.

With the sentiments expressed in the two first sentences of Article 15th, I most cordially agree; and I agree also with the Managers, in believing that the Clerks are the Medical Officers in the Infirmary who have the best opportunities of observing, and, by their attention and vigilance, of securing against any neglect connected with the care of the patients in all respects; but after the example of the manner in which that most true and faithful representation of the internal state of the Royal Infirmary, in the beginning of July, 1817, was received, I should be glad to be informed upon what grounds the present Managers can expect that any communication of ne-

gligences, or defects, in the Infirmary, will ever be made to them by the Clerks. Future Clerks will find, I conceive, no bad specimen of the kind of reward they have reason to look for in any communications of negligences or defects, which they may feel inclined to make to the Managers, in that very extraordinary resolution that was passed on receiving the communications of their predecessors in office, a resolution which enacts, that "when a patient is admitted, the Clerk of the Physician or Surgeon, under whose charge such patient is to be, must *attend the patient until he or she is placed in the proper ward, and until a bed, properly furnished with blankets, sheeting, &c. is made up for such patient.* For this purpose, no Clerk, whether Physician's or Surgeon's, is to leave the house until he himself sees this necessary duty performed," and which imposed upon the Clerks an office quite foreign to and inconsistent with their situation and proper duties, and a compliance with which, on their part, could only have had the effect of degrading them in their own estimation, and in that of every other person in the Infirmary. With equal propriety, in my apprehension, might the Mana-

gers, on the discovery of the deficiency of certain utensils in the wards, have resolved, that when any patient required the use of such utensil, the Clerk must attend the patient till he or she be supplied with it, and that no Clerk should ever leave the House until he himself had seen such necessary duty performed.

I agree, likewise, with the Managers in thinking, that they have not at all times received from the superior Medical Officers that cordial co-operation and support in the discovery and correction of negligences and defects, which they had reason to expect; and I must say, that I think it would have been more proper and becoming for these Officers to have laid aside their apathy, upon the occasion so often alluded to, and in availing themselves of the information and assistance of their Clerks, to have themselves made the necessary representation to the Managers. If any thing can be offered in apology for their remissness, it will be found, I believe, in the declaration, which, I have been told, one of these Officers has been heard to make, that, after having been endeavouring for forty years to get the negligences and defects reme-

died which he had occasion to see in the Infirmary, he had abandoned the undertaking as hopeless; and, in the discouragement which another Medical Officer gave to Mr Sims, by saying, while pointing to the place where his abortive efforts seemed to lie dormant, that he had made many representations to the Managers, but that they had all ended in smoke! I am happy, however, to perceive by the evidence, that some of the Medical Officers are aware, that, in abstaining from representing to the Managers, as they ought to have done, the errors and defects which they had observed of late years in the Infirmary, they had been guilty of a neglect of duty.

The public will judge how far the Managers are borne out in any of the assertions contained in Article 15th, by what appears to have been their treatment of the communication of the Clerks, which alone has given rise to the present enquiry. Instead of being displeased that the incidents, founded on by the Clerks in their letter of July last, had not been sooner made known to them, the Managers, in my opinion, would have acted more wisely, both in regard to themselves, and to the Institution under their charge,

had they, upon that occasion, admitted the truth of the common adage, *Better late than never*, and proceeded without delay to rectify the evils which had been pointed out to their notice, by obliging the Matron and Nurses to perform properly their respective duties in the Hospital. Had this been done, as it ought to have been, we should never have heard one word of the present enquiry.

The appointment of a House-Governor, from whose superintendence (Article 16th,) the Managers seem to anticipate so many useful results, is a measure from which, I will venture to predict, very little good will ever be derived to the Infirmary; because I am satisfied that a person will not be easily found qualified in all respects for the duties which the Managers mean to impose upon their House-Governor. This person, who is to act as Apothecary, and to keep a strict lookout on the conduct of the Clerks, is also expected to relieve the Matron of a part of her duties; he is to facilitate the communication between the Medical Department and the Managers; and to remedy, under the saving clause of *as far as possible*, at the moment, any defects as they may occur. In short, the House-Governor is to be a



person responsible to the Managers for the faithful discharge of the duties of the Medical Officers, Clerks, Dressers, Matron, Nurses, and other Servants in the Infirmary ; and by this responsibility, to relieve the Managers from all further complaints or trouble in their management of that Institution. The Managers know little of the qualifications or duties required of Clerks to the Physicians and Surgeons, if they can allow themselves to imagine that they will ever get a House-Governor for the Infirmary fit to take any professional superintendence of the Clerks ; this is a duty which can belong to the Physicians and Surgeons alone. Neither do the Managers appear to me to be so fully aware as they might be, that the services, of all others in the Institution under their care, which are the most likely to be performed with fidelity and zeal, are the gratuitous services of the Clerks, undertaken solely for their own professional benefit, and performed under the direction of the superior Medical Officers, and the vigilant and jealous inspection of their Fellow-Students.

With regard to the functions intermediate between the Managers and Medical Officers, which

the House-Governor is to execute, they could but increase that distance which has always existed between these two bodies, and from which I firmly believe the greater part of the evils have originated which have been found to exist in the management of the Infirmary. I trust no superior Medical Officer will ever be found mean enough to admit of any other representation of the defects and negligences which he may observe in his department, to be made to the Managers by any other person than himself.

If a Treasurer could be found, who would give his undivided attention to the duties of the Infirmary, he, not the Apothecary, is the person whom I should wish to see in the situation of House-Governor. The present Treasurer, than whom, I am well assured, no one can ever feel a deeper interest in the prosperity of the Institution, has been obliged to delegate his duties to his Partner ; and they are duties which occasion no small trouble and consumption of time. The services of a House-Governor, in order to be useful to the Institution, must be unbought, voluntary, and proceed from the heart ; and they must be performed by one who shall find pleasure in

devoting the whole of his time to the important concerns of that Institution. As for the Apothecary, his duties, as they stand and are executed at present, are quite sufficient to occupy his attention. In addition, however, to any House-governor, I would earnestly recommend to the attention of the Court of Contributors, the appointment of Visitors to the Infirmary, who shall not only have the privilege, but who will actually perform the duty of visiting all the wards of the house, at whatever time, or in whatever manner they shall judge proper, that do not interfere with the medical arrangements of the Institution. Without these Visitors, the Contributors can have no security against the recurrence of the evils which are proved to have existed in the Royal Infirmary.

I am sorry that I cannot give full credit to the assertion so broadly stated in the first sentence of the last article of that very injudicious and improper Note, in the analysis of which I have already detained you so long; because I can find no proof that the measure of a House-Governor, in particular, was ever thought of by the Managers before they received that very un-

pleasant, but faithful representation, from the Clerks, of the internal state of the Infirmary, which was given in to them on the 7th of July, 1817; and because I believe that the principal intention of a House-Governor, though this is not avowed by the Managers, was to guard against the possibility of such representations ever being made to them again through that department of the Infirmary.

Nether do I think it necessary to correct the mis-statements, or to repel the insinuations, in the latter part of this Note; for I feel assured, that though you may pity, you can never sympathise with the mistaken and irritated feelings which have led to the expression of the sentiments it contains. The Court of Contributors, in executing their duty to the poor and to the public, cannot but form a proper estimate of the meritorious exertions of the benevolent and truly respectable persons who have undertaken, and discharged so faithfully and impartially, the painful duty of enquiring into, and reporting upon, the late defective state of the internal economy of the Infirmary; a labour which, I trust, cannot fail to procure for them the cordial approbation

of the public. And I may be permitted to hope, that it will not be forgotten, that the benefits which have resulted, or may result, to the poor from the late enquiry, owe their origin chiefly to the benevolent exertions of some persons belonging to the respectable Society of Friends.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Gentlemen,

With all respect,

A SINCERE WELL-WISHER,

AND OLD CONTRIBUTOR,

TO THE ROYAL INFIRMARY.

Printed by James Ballantyne and Co., Edinburgh.

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*John Wm  
Spitham*

## SECOND LETTER

TO THE

GENERAL COURT OF CONTRIBUTORS

OF THE

ROYAL INFIRMARY OF EDINBURGH.



*From the  
Author.*

A  
SECOND LETTER

TO THE  
GENERAL COURT OF CONTRIBUTORS

OF THE  
ROYAL INFIRMARY OF EDINBURGH;

CONTAINING  
REMARKS ON THE PROCEEDINGS AT THE MEETING  
HELD ON THE 30TH MARCH, 1818.

TO WHICH ARE ANNEXED,  
THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE,  
THE REPORTED SPEECH OF THE LORD PRESIDENT,  
AND THE  
RESOLUTIONS OF THE GENERAL MEETING OF  
THE 30TH MARCH.

BY  
A CONTRIBUTOR.

EDINBURGH:  
*Printed by James Ballantyne and Co.*  
FOR JOHN ROBERTSON, 132, HIGH STREET.

1818.

SECOND LETTER  
TO THE  
GENERAL COURT OF CONTRIBUTORS  
OF THE  
ROYAL INFIRMARY OF EDINBURGH  
REMARKS ON THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE  
THE REPORTED STEPS OF THE ROYAL INFIRMARY  
AND THE  
CONTRIBUTORS  
EDINBURGH  
PRINTED BY JAMES GORDON AND SONS  
THE ROYAL INFIRMARY, 1821

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author of the following Letter is fully aware of the well-founded prejudice which exists with regard to anonymous publication, and his name certainly should not have been withheld, could he imagine it would have added any weight to that side of the question, respecting the late Inquiry into the State of the Royal Infirmary, which he has felt himself compelled, by an imperious sense of duty, to adopt. But, in delivering his opinions with the freedom which the nature of the subject seemed to him to require, he is conscious that he has endeavoured to avoid every thing which might give offence to those connected with the management of that Institution; and he trusts, that he has, in no respect, expressed himself differently from what he would have done, had he judged it proper to subscribe his name to this, or to his former Letter.

To the Second Edition of his former Letter,

the author annexed the Note of the Managers, in order that the reader might have an opportunity of referring readily to it. For the same reason he has added to this Letter the Report of the Committee, and the Reported Speech of the Lord President, together with the Resolutions of the General Meeting of the Court of Contributors on the 30th of March. The reprinting of these documents, so necessary for the illustration of his statements and reasoning, by exciting a curiosity to see the Minutes of Evidence upon which they are founded, must, he conceives, tend to promote, rather than to injure the sale of that Publication; and as a proof that it is the good of the Infirmary, and not the desire of private gain, which has led him to reprint these documents, he begs leave to state, that the profits arising from the sale of his Letters, (if there should be any) shall be faithfully made over to the funds of the Royal Infirmary. Whatever, therefore, the intentions of the Managers may have been in entering the Minutes of Evidence at Stationer's Hall, the author trusts, that in re-printing the documents he has annexed, which have already appeared in the

"Caledonian Mercury" Newspaper, he invades no right, and injures no interest, by disregarding the threat held out in the following letter:

(COPY.)

10, LONDON-STREET,  
Edinburgh, 20th April, 1818.

Sir,

On the part of the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, I have to inform you, that the Report of the Committee of Contributors to the Royal Infirmary, with the relative Evidence, &c. taken before that Committee, were regularly entered at Stationer's Hall on the 6th current.

Observing from the Courant of Saturday, the 18th current, that you advertise the above Report, to be annexed to a Letter to be immediately published and sold by you, I beg to intimate to you, that if such publication takes place it will be at your peril.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

(Signed) ALEX. BOSWELL, W. S.  
Clerk to the Incorporation.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON, Bookseller,  
132, High-Street, Edinburgh.



LETTER, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

WITH many of the other Inhabitants of Edinburgh, I had presumed to hope, that the measures adopted by you at your late Meeting, would have been such as to render all further observations on the subject of the management of the Royal Infirmary unnecessary, if not improper. The perusal of the account which has been given in the newspapers of the proceedings of that Meeting, has led me, however, to form a very different opinion; and I should feel myself guilty of a dereliction of duty, in a matter involving so deeply the interests of the Sick Poor, as the management of the Royal Infirmary, were I to suffer these proceedings, and

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the Resolutions voted by a great majority of the Court of Contributors, to pass altogether without remark or animadversion.

After having appointed a Committee to enquire into, and to report upon the state of the Infirmary; after the very great pains which this Committee had bestowed upon the subject; and after the production of the temperate and judicious Report, which they had submitted to the consideration of the Court of Contributors, it is with astonishment I find this Court, specially appointed to receive, consider, approve, modify, or reject that Report, passing over altogether the proper business of the Meeting, and proceeding to vote Resolutions, said "to rise out of, and to be grounded upon the able, intelligent, and valuable Report of the Committee;" but which every one, who will take the trouble to read the Minutes of Evidence, must perceive are, in several essential particulars, utterly irreconcilable with that Evidence, and in direct opposition to the spirit and statements of the Report of the Committee, to whose suggestions, even the mover of the Resolutions acknowledged, that the highest attention was due on the part of the Managers of the

Royal Infirmary. The short period that was permitted to elapse between the printing of the Minutes of Evidence, and the passing of these Resolutions; the small number of copies of these Minutes in circulation at the time of the Meeting; together with the private acknowledgments of many of the Voters, give good reason to believe, that only a very small proportion of those who composed that Meeting could have had opportunity or time to read the Report of the Committee, far less to consider the Minutes of Evidence upon which that Report is founded. The activity and success of the Managers and their friends in procuring the attendance of Contributors, and the readiness with which a majority of these Contributors voted the Resolutions proposed to them, while they prove the great influence which the Managers of the Royal Infirmary possess over the minds and conduct of their fellow-citizens, afford another proof of that facility with which men can be brought in a body to support measures and vote Resolutions in public, to which, on deliberate consideration in private, they would be very unwilling to put their names.

Nothing which took place at the Meeting of the Court of Contributors seems to be more unaccountable than the silence with which the Committee suffered their Report to be set aside, and allowed the very able and specious representations of a Right Honourable Manager to pass without remark or explanation. The Members of the Committee, from the knowledge they had acquired of the concerns of the Infirmary during their investigation, and from the talents and habits of public speaking which many of them possessed, were well able, I conceive, to have given such a statement of the palpable errors committed in the past management of the Royal Infirmary, as must have made many of the Contributors hesitate at least before they gave their assent to the Resolutions which were submitted to them for their approval. That some one or other of the Committee did not give such a statement, has been matter of surprise to their friends, and of regret to many a sincere well-wisher to the improvement and prosperity of that Institution.

No one can approve more sincerely than I do of the adoption of conciliatory Resolutions in every thing that concerns the management of

Charitable Institutions. But in order that such Resolutions could have been adopted with advantage on the late occasion by those who take an interest in the concerns of the Royal Infirmary, it was necessary that they should have been founded on truth, and calculated to promote the permanent good of that Institution. In my apprehension, the Resolutions of the Court of Contributors, on the 30th of March, 1818, were lamentably defective in both these particulars.

The First Resolution, "That the Meeting do return thanks to the Committee for the great zeal and attention with which they have conducted this inquiry," though it contains nothing objectionable, is abundantly sparing of praise to a Committee that had granted to the Managers of the Infirmary the indulgence of being present at its meetings, and had allowed them to examine and to cross-question the witnesses. This admission of the Managers to the meetings of the Committee, which some have regarded as a great and fundamental error, certainly gave the Committee a right to expect at least the praise of candour and impartiality.

The Second Resolution, "That the Meeting



are happy to observe, that, after so anxious and minute a scrutiny, the Committee have not discovered any abuse in the management of this Hospital, and that such instances of inattention as had accidentally crept in, had been discovered by the Managers themselves," consists of two parts. For the sentiment contained in the first of these, the Managers are, I believe, indebted, though without acknowledgment, to my former Letter; and certainly if by the term "abuse" be meant, "corrupt practice," or peculation, none such has been detected by the enquiry; nor indeed do I believe that any such has ever been suspected to exist in the management of the Royal Infirmary. If, again, by the word "abuse" be meant, "bad custom," "unjust censure," "rude reproach," and "contumely," I fear it will be difficult, with the evidence before you, to deny that such things have occurred in the management of the Royal Infirmary.

The assertion, contained in the last part of the second Resolution, seems liable to objection on three separate grounds.—1st, It does not appear

\* See Johnson's Dictionary.

to arise out of, nor to be founded upon, the evidence.—2dly, It is inconsistent with facts incontrovertibly established by that evidence; and, 3dly, What is assumed as being true in this assertion, is, from the nature of the case, impossible. For the proofs which establish the validity of the two first objections, I can with confidence refer the Voters of the Resolutions to the Minutes of Evidence, and to the Report of your Committee. They will not find, I believe, in these documents, an example of inattention in any department of the Infirmary, that had ever been discovered, in the first instance, by a Manager; but they will find the Managers sometimes complaining of the superior Medical Officers, and sometimes blaming, and even censuring the Clerks, for having concealed from them inattentions, defects, and errors in the practical details of the Infirmary, of the existence of which, the most charitable supposition is to believe, the Managers themselves were profoundly ignorant. How, indeed, could it be otherwise? for who, before the present inquiry took place, ever saw a Manager in the Infirmary, except at the time of the Monthly Meetings? At this time, indeed,

the two visiting Managers for the month, have generally been observed gliding for a few minutes hastily along the Wards, properly arranged for their reception, in order to qualify themselves to sign the Report required of them by the bye-laws of the Incorporation. With the Porter only in attendance, and having no intercourse at these Meetings with the Medical Officers of the Infirmary, it was impossible for the Managers, from the documents placed before them, to know any thing of the Institution under their charge, besides its expenditure, and the names and recommendations of those who were soliciting them for the appointments of Clerks and Dressers. Pretensions to any other kind of knowledge than this on the part of the Managers, previous to the late inquiry, will not easily be admitted by those who know any thing of the past history or concerns of the Royal Infirmary; and the Minutes of the Managers will best shew what discoveries of inattentions, defects, or errors, have ever been made or recorded by *themselves*, in any of their Monthly Visitations and Meetings.

The Third Resolution, "That some of these were actually rectified, and the rest in the course

of being rectified by the Managers, before the Committee was appointed, or the inquiry thought of," would have required to have been voted with many explanations and limitations. The defects and errors that are proved to have existed in the internal economy of the Infirmary, have been very properly reduced to three heads by your Committee.—1st, "Those in the state of the Hospital as to cleanliness, and other circumstances, in the domestic arrangement and economy of the House, immediately connected with the personal comfort of the Patients.—2dly, Those in the state of the ordinary diet, as actually administered, both as to its quality and its quantity; and, 3dly, Those in the general character and conduct of those subordinate attendants in the House, to whose personal care and attention, in the absence of the Medical Officers, the patients are principally intrusted." Now, I should be glad to be informed, which of the inattentions, defects, and errors, proved to have existed for a series of years in these three points so essential to the proper management of the Infirmary, had been actually rectified, or were in the course of being so, before the commencement of the inquiry, instituted

on the 7th July, 1817. The Diet at that time, and for a considerable period afterwards, is proved to have been extremely defective, both in quantity and quality; the state of the Sheets and Bedding is proved also to have been disgustingly filthy; and a great proportion of the Nurses, the Managers themselves admit, are still of the very worst description. That public inquiry took place, and that a Committee was appointed to report upon the internal state of the Infirmary, are occurrences for which the Managers have themselves solely to blame; for this Committee and its inquiry owed their origin to that most ungracious reception which was given by the Managers to the Statement of the Clerks; to the unwillingness on the part of the Managers, to acknowledge the existence of the gross defects and negligences, notoriously prevailing in the department of the Matron and Nurses; and to the aversion which the Managers manifested to suffer any thing like interference in the domestic concerns of the Infirmary, even by those who for a long time had benevolently contributed to the support of the Institution. If instead of attempting to controvert

the information given in to them by the Clerks; of resisting the friendly hints of some well-wishers to the Institution; and of defending the very improper conduct of the Matron, and making themselves parties in her practical errors, the Managers had heartily, and at once corrected, as they easily could, and have since in some degree done, the defects which were pointed out to them by the Clerks, in the Diet and Bedding of the Hospital, no one, I am convinced, would have been found to propose, support, or carry on the late inquiry. The Friends of the Managers, therefore, should have contented themselves, at the late meeting, with resting their defence of the Managers where the Committee had so properly placed it, in their ignorance of the internal state of the Hospital, and of the defects which existed in its Food and Bedding, as well as of the conduct of the Nurses; for the public will assuredly never sustain any other apology for those numerous gross defects and palpable errors that are proved to have existed for a series of years in these three essential points of domestic economy in the management of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.



After a repeated perusal of the Fourth Resolution, "That the Meeting are, therefore, of opinion, that it is quite unnecessary to give any recommendations to the Managers on the subject, and resolve,—That the cordial thanks of the Meeting be offered to the Managers for their uniform and zealous attention to the interests of the charity, assuring them, at the same time, that the Meeting place the fullest reliance both on their diligence to discover, and on their zeal to rectify, any occasional defects which may possibly, from time to time, occur in the management of so great an Establishment," I am at a loss to understand what is meant by the opinion expressed in the first clause of this Resolution. Your Committee had presumed to suggest various subjects of improvement in the management of the Infirmary, for the consideration of the Managers, the adoption of which they had reason to believe would have been recommended at least, if not enjoined by you. Even the Mover of the Resolutions had stated it to be his opinion, that these suggestions were entitled to the highest attention on the part of the Managers. Are we to understand, that his own private opinion, so just in itself, and so

properly expressed, was at variance with the Resolutions which were put into his hands, and which he had been requested to submit to you for your approval; or can a new light upon this subject have broken in upon his mind, between the time of his stating his opinion of the value of the Report, and the degree of attention due to the suggestions of the Committee, and that of his reading to you this part of the 4th Resolution? The recommendations alluded to could, I conceive, have been unnecessary only in one of two ways: either because you were satisfied that all the defects formerly existing in the management of the Infirmary, had been remedied, or because you deemed it sufficient that the Managers had shewn a disposition to rectify them, by taking them into their consideration. It must be granted, that several very flagrant defects in the management of that Institution have been rectified; but, notwithstanding the late activity of the Managers, many still remain to animate the zeal, and to exercise the diligence, of these Gentlemen.

Every one must approve of the disposition which the Managers have of late shewn, and of the efforts which they have made, to bet-

ter the condition of the Sick Poor admitted into the Infirmary: but how far the manifestation of a good disposition can render the recommendation of duty unnecessary; and whether, without proofs of the willingness of the Managers to adopt the suggestions of your Committee, you were justifiable in withholding your recommendation of these suggestions, are points which I will not pretend to determine. I wish that some of the Reverend and very Vociferous Friends of the Managers, instead of attempting to cry down, as they did, a man certainly not their inferior in piety and charity, in talents or in learning, and whose superior knowledge of the subject in question demanded their respect and the attention of the Court of Contributors, had spoken to these points, which they must understand so much better than I do. And I wish also that these Gentlemen, whose peculiar function it is to recommend duty as well as to administer reproof for the neglect of it, had explained to the Meeting, what degree of perfection in virtue can place any class of men, and more especially the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, in the predicament in which they stood, beyond the necessity of being admonished of their duty.

Had the word "present" been introduced in place of "uniform," in the second; and before "diligence," in the last clause of the 4th Resolution; and had "at present" been added after "this Hospital," in the last Resolution, which states, "That this Meeting feel themselves called upon to declare that this Hospital well deserves the confidence and support of the Public," I should have had great pleasure in giving my sincere and warmest vote of thanks to the Managers, and in recommending the Infirmary to the confidence and support of the Public. But we must remember that the zeal of the Managers has in it at present something of the pleasure of novelty, and that when this impression wears off, there may be a danger of their relapsing into their former state of ignorance and security. This is another point, concerning which I should have wished to have had the opinion of the Reverend Friends of the Managers, because I know they are great advocates for moderation in zeal, and approve only of the exercise of that which is according to knowledge. If it would not be considered as trespassing on the province of these Gentlemen, or anticipating a duty which they may wish to perform themselves,

I would beg leave still to recommend the suggestions of your Committee to the most serious attention of the Managers of the Royal Infirmary. They may be assured that they will never again receive advice delivered with more mildness, or advice, the adoption of which is better calculated to procure for them the blessings of the poor, and the good will and approbation of benevolent minds, than that which is conveyed to them in these suggestions. If they reject it, they will have themselves to blame, should the Inhabitants of Edinburgh withdraw their subscriptions from the Infirmary, and seek to establish an Hospital for the Sick Poor more immediately under their own superintendence and controul.

That Resolutions so inconsistent with the Report of your Committee, and containing so many assertions capable of being disproved by the Evidence, should have been passed by a great majority of the respectable body of men whose names appear in the newspapers, as having been present at the Meeting of the Court of Contributors, can be accounted for only, I conceive, by the great personal influence of the Managers,—by the ignorance of those who voted for these Resolutions of the evidence on which they were

said to be founded,—and by the effect produced upon the Meeting by the very plausible statements and eloquent speech of a Right Honourable Manager.

I have to regret that I have not had it in my power to judge of the merits of that speech, except from the necessarily imperfect sketch which has been given of it in the newspapers. As there are, however, many positions in the reported speech which are at variance with the opinions I have expressed in my former Letter, and which seem to be at variance with the evidence before you, I trust I may be permitted, with all deference for the rank, abilities, and information of the Right Honourable Manager, to state some of the more material points on which my sentiments still differ from those which are stated to have been delivered by him in the meeting of the Court of Contributors.

Few, I believe, will be disposed to concur with the Right Honourable Manager in the opinion which he is reported to have expressed respecting the injurious effects of public discussion on the management and condition of Charitable Institutions; and no one who has read the Minutes of Evidence, and the Report of your Commit-



tee, and who has learned from them what the precise state of the Infirmary was as to Diet and Cleanliness, previous to the 7th July, 1817, compared with what it is at present, can doubt for a moment of how much utility public discussion has already been to this Institution.

It was the opinion of your Committee, founded on the evidence of several Medical Gentlemen, some of them long connected with the Infirmary,\* that the communication between the Medical Officers and Managers of that Institution, is by no means so easy, direct, and frequent as it ought to be; and it is obvious that the evils which are proved to have existed in the internal condition of the Infirmary, were all of such a nature as could not possibly have occurred, or have been permitted to exist, under a free and proper intercourse between these two bodies. It is somewhat surprising that the Right Honourable Manager should have been 12 or 14 years in the government of that Charity, without having perceived this want of communication to have been a great defect in the constitution of the Infirmary, and without having been told that the Medi-

\* See Evidence of Mr Russel in Minutes of Evidence, p. 59.

cal Officers had been often heard to express their dissatisfaction at the situation in which they stand in relation to the Managers, and at the result of the communications which they have sometimes been induced to make to that body. The Right Honourable Manager has not stated that he ever saw the Medical Officers of the Infirmary, as a body, in free communication with its Managers; and I doubt much whether these Officers, certainly the best qualified, from their situation, to give information and advice, have, for a long period, been consulted on any thing connected with the management of that Institution. It is seen, from the evidence indeed, that some of these Officers were sometimes consulted, and are stated to have been upon a particular occasion "*in attendance*" upon the Managers,\* and I believe that had the rest wished to approach the Managers, and "knocked at the door," they would have been admitted also, though it is somewhat doubtful what the nature of their reception might have been. This kind of intercourse, depending entirely on the courtesy of the Managers, and more like that between menial ser-

\* See Extract of Minutes of the Managers. Minutes of Evidence, p. 110.

vants and their masters, than between those engaged in discharging the duties of two distinct, but equally important departments in a Public Charity, is the very evil which has been so much felt and complained of, and so far from proving that a proper communication has subsisted, proves directly the contrary. I have been at some pains to inquire into this matter, and I have reason to believe that there is not a medical Gentleman in Edinburgh, out of the management of the Infirmary, who does not know the accuracy and feel the truth of the statement contained from page 13th to page 17th of my former Letter.

It is in vain to pretend, as the Right Honourable Manager has done, that a wish on the part of the Managers to avoid giving additional trouble to the Medical Officers, is the reason why there has hitherto been little or no communication between these two bodies. Will it be said, that it was to save the Medical Officers trouble that they have never been consulted in the appointment of their Clerks and Dressers, who assist them in performing their duties in the Infirmary; when it must be obvious that a confidence in those who are to assist them, arising

from a knowledge of their character and qualifications, must not only be highly beneficial to the Hospital, but of great importance to the Medical Gentlemen themselves, by saving them much anxiety and trouble? With the recollection of the appointment which took place not longer ago than Monday the 13th April, 1818, will the Managers of the Royal Infirmary venture to allege, that they have ever had any other object in view in this matter, than "to secure to themselves the unlimited and uncontrolled use of their own vast influence, under the sole direction of their own private favour?"

It is true, that when the Medical Officers have had any complaint to make, or improvement to suggest, it must be in writing; but can any one believe, that this is for the reason given by the Right Honourable Manager, when it is known that no record whatever has been preserved by the Managers of a very important written Memorial, given in to them in 1811 by Drs Hamilton and Spens, in which these gentlemen pointed out many improvements that were necessary in the state of the Infirmary at that time, nor of any steps that were taken by the Managers, in consequence of receiving that Memorial?

It would seem probable also, from the silence observed by your Committee, that they had not discovered in the Minutes of the Managers the Memorial, by which the attention of the Managers was called, in a particular manner, to the subject of a Lock Hospital. And is it not a little curious, that the written statement of the Clerks, which has given rise to so much discussion, and upon which the Managers themselves instituted an inquiry, is not to be found in the Minutes of that body? After this, will it be believed that memorials given in writing *must* be entered in the Records of the Hospital?

It is not easy, from the report of this speech, to conjecture, what the objections are which the Right Honourable Manager has to that part of the Report of your Committee, which recommends the reform of the great practical error that has been committed in the perpetual re-election of the same individuals to the management of the Infirmary; or what the circumstances may be, which he contemplates as preventing this recommendation from being overtaken. There can be no doubt, however, that the practice alluded to is a violation of the spirit of the Charter, as well as of the express terms of the

bye laws;\* and it cannot but be matter of surprise, that this should have occurred in a body of which the Right Honourable Gentleman, in particular, is a member. The total exclusion of the Extraordinary Managers from the government of the Infirmary, the perpetual re-election of themselves by themselves to be Ordinary Managers, and the great apparent unwillingness of these Managers to admit of any change in this mode of election, are all calculated to create a suspicion in the minds of the Public, that, however "laborious, unpleasing, or dangerous," the duties of the Managers of the Royal Infirmary may be, there must be something in the office which induces these Gentlemen to cling to it with as much avidity as if it were indeed a "*sinecure*."

A picture has been drawn by the Right Honourable Manager of the condition of Patients in the Royal Infirmary, much more disagreeable than any representation that has ever been given of it, even by those who have been accused of exaggerating the defects of that House. "When it was considered that the family consisted of 250

\* See Statutes of the Royal Infirmary, p. 51.



Patients, who, from the very nature of the Institution, must be supposed, as they really do, to belong to the very lowest classes of society—when it was considered that these were left to the superintendence of 30 or 40 Nurses, selected from among the most miserable of their sex, how was it to be expected that no cause of complaint should ever creep into such an Institution?" I cannot subscribe to either part of this statement. The Patients who enter the Infirmary are by no means all of the very lowest classes of society; but are, many of them, respectable trades-people, or people from the country, who resort to it, not from absolute poverty, but from a wish to obtain there the benefit of superior Medical advice and assistance; and many of them, also, are the servants of the best families in Edinburgh, sent in by their masters. Some of the Nurses are bad, very bad, indeed; but I can assure the Right Honourable Manager, that if he had been fully acquainted with the state of the Infirmary, and the characters of the Nurses, he would have known, that they do not all deserve that character which he has given of them. One is surprised to find it asserted, that no woman

will ever adopt that line of life who can possibly earn her bread in any other, since it is well known that, in Catholic countries, women of every rank and condition in life voluntarily devote themselves to the service of the sick in hospitals; and since it is known, that, even in this country, many women in the lower ranks of life prefer, from feelings of humanity, and a natural disposition to sympathise with those in distress, attendance upon the sick to every other kind of employment. That superior wages would procure superior attendance, is a proposition, I believe, which has never appeared dubious to any one, except to the Managers of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, who, for a series of years, seem to have resisted making any trials with regard to this matter, so important to the welfare and comfort of the Patients in that Institution. A very slight acquaintance, however, with other Hospitals in these kingdoms, where the situation and comforts of the Nurses are superior to those in the Infirmary of Edinburgh, would have taught them that it is not so difficult a matter as they seem to imagine to "procure Nurses of a better description," than most of those who

are at present employed in the service of that Institution. I cannot allow myself to believe that the other sentiments expressed, and the comparisons stated in the paragraph to which I have alluded, were uttered by the Right Honourable Manager, as they have been reported, for they are sentiments and comparisons, not only ungenerous to the other sex, but which betray great ignorance of the good principles inherent in human nature.

I have already expressed my opinion respecting the injudicious nature of the comparison that has been attempted to be made, in the Note of the Managers, of the Edinburgh Infirmary, with other Civil Hospitals in Britain. The allusion that has been made by the Right Honourable Manager to the Naval Hospital in Plymouth, inferior, I believe, to none in Europe, except the Haslar at Portsmouth, is, in my opinion, equally injudicious. I doubt whether any of those who have had the immediate charge of Naval and Military Hospitals, will assent to the opinions so confidently delivered respecting the superiority of tile to wooden floors in Hospitals. To dry speedily is undoubtedly an advantage,

but it does not from this follow, that even the tile floors of an Hospital should be often washed. This practice has been prohibited, I have been informed, in Military Hospitals, and the custom denominated "pernicious."

I agree in some measure with the opinion expressed by the Right Honourable Manager respecting the use of knives and forks in the Infirmary. Provided that the meat to be eaten is supplied in due quantity, and of a proper quality, the luxury of a knife and fork to each person will not afford, I believe, much additional gratification to the greater part of the patients admitted into that Institution. There ought, however, to be a few knives and forks in every ward of the Infirmary, and there must be something materially wrong in that part of the domestic arrangement that permits these to be easily stolen. But it will be remembered, that it was the slovenly and improper manner of administering the food, which was found fault with, and which is proved to have existed, and that the complaint, with regard to the want of utensils, was not confined to that of knives and forks alone, but extended also to the want of spoons and plates, articles still more necessary to a due de-

gree of comfort in the meals of the patients.\* The confession now, that these articles were not supplied to the patients in the Infirmary, contrasts strangely with the surprise of another Manager, at the Meeting of the Court of Contributors, on the 4th January, 1818, on its being alleged that every patient in the Infirmary was not supplied with a plate.† These defects, I am glad to hear, have, since the Meeting in January, been, in a considerable degree, remedied, and I am satisfied they never could have existed had any of the Managers been in the habit of visiting the Hospital at the time of meals, or had they taken an opportunity of seeing the food of the patients, or of observing the manner in which it was served out and consumed.

It is curious to observe the manner in which the Right Honourable Manager has attempted to gloss over the very filthy state of the sheets in particular, that is proved to have existed in the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, even for several years previous to the com-

\* Mr Gillespie's Evid. Minutes, p. 17, 18.; and Dr Beilby's, p. 29.

† See Proceedings of Court of Contributors, as reported in Scotsman newspaper of 10th January, 1818.

mencement of the late investigation. Of what importance could it be to the patients in the Infirmary, who were allowed to lie without sheets, or in sheets extremely dirty, and who were found to be many of them in sheets and blankets, that were seldom, if ever changed, to be told that the Managers had, as early as the summer of 1816, taken this matter into their consideration, or that the Right Honourable Manager had procured, for the inspection and consideration of the Managers, the model of a drying machine? The Statement given in by the Clerks, upon the 7th July, 1817, proves, in an undeniable manner, that however long this matter may have been under the consideration of the Managers, no improvement whatever had been made at that time in the state of the Bedding in the Infirmary,—a state which had become matter of notoriety to every student attending there; but more particularly to a very numerous class of Naval and Military Surgeons, who may be considered as tolerably good judges of such matters, many of them having themselves had the charge of Hospitals.

Nothing can illustrate better the difference which exists between poetical description and



plain matter of fact, than that part of the Right Honourable Manager's speech, which relates to the washing of the linen of the Infirmary. The very filthy state in which many of the sheets, washed in the country, are proved to have been when first put on the beds of the patients, might have satisfied a mind less scrupulous in these matters than that of the Right Honourable Manager, that there is very little danger to be apprehended, that, by the establishment of a washing machine in the Infirmary, the patients will have any reason to complain of the loss of the "caller smell of a country bleachfield;" but if this consideration is not sufficient to remove his doubts upon that head, I am sure they cannot exist, after he has been informed of the particular manner in which the linen of the Infirmary was actually washed and bleached in the country. I have good authority for stating, that, instead of being "bleached on the gowany brae, and beetled in the burn," the sheets of the Infirmary were put into a plash-mill, with cold water, "there fretting in their own grease;" and that neither hot water, soap, ashes, nor alkalies of any kind, were used, except on very particular

occasions; that they were required to be returned in forty-eight hours after being sent out of the Infirmary; and that the price paid for this operation, on each pair, was *two-pence*.

The statement, with regard to the number of blankets washed in 1817, is very satisfactory; but it would have been agreeable to know how many of these had been washed before July of that year. The present state of the bedding is such, I am informed, as to meet with the approbation of all who visit the Hospital; and it is to be hoped, that the lesson which the Managers have received upon this point, will, in future, insure due attention on their part to a matter of so much importance to the credit, comfort, and healthiness of the Institution.

It is impossible, I conceive, that the paragraph beginning with the words, "And now with respect to the period at which this business was agitated," can give an accurate account of the opinions delivered by the Right Honourable Manager, respecting either the time or circumstances in which the Statement of the Clerks was made, or of the motives in which that Statement originated, because I know that this part

of the Right Honourable Manager's speech, as reported, is a continued series of errors and misapprehensions.

That the dangerous illness of an only daughter should have occupied much of the attention of the late Matron, about the period at which the Statement was given in by the Clerks, is most natural; but this surely can never be admitted as an apology for the very dirty and slovenly state of the Hospital, which is proved to have existed for a long time previous to this period, or for the ignorance in which the Managers seem to have been of that state. No person could conceive that the Managers should have interposed their authority to prevent the Matron from visiting her dying child, but it was surely their duty to take care that no inconvenience or injury should accrue to the Infirmary from Mrs Montgomery's necessary attendance on her daughter. Because Mrs Montgomery's daughter was dangerously ill, were 250 people, many of whom might also be on their death-beds, to be deprived of the benefits which the public intended they should receive, by their admission into the Royal Infirmary? The evils which are allowed to have ari-

sen to the Institution, from Mrs Montgomery's very natural and proper attendance upon her daughter, may point out to the Managers the propriety of the first Regulation with regard to the Matron, to be found in the printed Statutes, which directs, that "The Matron of the House shall be unmarried, *without a family*, and capable of keeping accounts;"\* a Regulation which appears to have been infringed, by Mrs Montgomery's appointment to that office. But with regard to the period at which this Statement was made, could any time call more for strict attention to cleanliness in an Hospital, than that in which a contagious and dangerous disease is acknowledged by the Managers to have made its appearance? Or can any person, who knows any thing of the character of the Clerks, suffer himself to believe, that they could wish to add to Mrs Montgomery's distress, by bringing forward their Representation at the time it was given in?

I have reason to believe, that the Members of the Society for the relief of the Destitute Sick, will be not a little surprised at the account which has been given by the Right Honourable

\* Statutes of the Infirmary, p. 59.  
 See of the Royal Infirmary C. since the same time.

Manager, of the time when, and the manner, in which their deputation was received, or to hear of a cordial disposition having existed on the part of the Managers of the Infirmary to co-operate with that Society, in endeavouring to arrest the progress of the Contagion of Fever; and they cannot be less surprised at the account which the Right Honourable Manager has given, of the circumstances which gave rise to the fitting up of Queensberry House, and the time of its being opened for the reception of fever patients. Is it possible that the Right Honourable Manager could have been ignorant, that there was no unusual influx of patients into the Infirmary in the month of July, 1817;\* that the deputation from the Society for the relief of the Destitute Sick, was in October, not in July; that Queensberry House was not opened till the month of February, 1818; and that this Hospital was obtained, not in consequence of a Statement made by the Society to the Managers, but by the unwearied and repeated application of that Society to the Lord Provost and Magistrates? The Managers of the Infirmary best know whether they ever

\* See Table in Minutes of Evidence, p. 128.

seconded the Society in any of these applications. It is curious, also, in reading the statement of the Right Honourable Manager, to recollect, that long after the commencement of the present contagious Epidemic, considerable pains were taken by various individuals, and even by Managers of the Royal Infirmary, to persuade the Inhabitants of Edinburgh, that the reports of its prevalence, which had been made through the medium of the periodical Journals, were unfounded; and that the efforts of the Society for the Relief of the Destitute Sick, in relation to this Fever, were not only unnecessary, but calculated to do mischief, by exciting alarm.

The Statement of the Clerks was given in July, 1817; and it is difficult to conceive how the increased influx of patients into the Infirmary during the following winter, or how the fitting up of 70 beds in Queensberry House, in January, 1818, should have produced any scarcity of sheets or bedding in the Royal Infirmary previous to July, 1817. In point of fact, it is agreeable to know, that neither any scarcity nor irregularity with regard to the matters in question, have been observed to occur in the practice of the Royal Infirmary, since the commence-



ment of the labours of your Committee in the beginning of January, 1818.

It had been asserted by the Clerks, "that it appears from the testimony of several of the Nurses, that the beds of the Fever Wards circulate indiscriminately through the whole House;" and it is added by the Clerks, that, "during the last five months, several patients, originally affected with local diseases, were attacked, after admission, with continued fever, which in some cases proved fatal;"\* and these assertions were supported by the discovery, in a particular instance, of a bed having been brought from the Fever Ward to a patient admitted into the Surgical Ward.† This account, which had been given by the Nurses to the Clerks, than which, I believe, none was ever better founded, has not hitherto been attempted to be disproved by any other kind of evidence, besides the statements obtained by the Managers from the Nurses, contradictory to those which they had given two months before to the Clerks, and by the negative declaration of one of the Physicians, that he

\* Statement of the Clerks in Minutes of Evidence, p. 101.

† Minutes of Evidence, p. 75.

had not known fever communicated in that Hospital by the bedding. It may be that the attention of this very respectable person had not been so much directed as it ought to have been to this point; but I feel confident, that even he will not affirm, that fever has not occasionally been communicated in this manner to patients in the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh. For, to say nothing of the communication of this disease, from one patient to another in the Medical and Clinical Wards, how otherwise can we account for the very great number of patients who have been affected with Typhus in the Surgical Wards, during the prevalence of the present Epidemic? This disease is understood to require for its production the application of a specific poison, and this poison must have been communicated to the Surgical patients, I conceive, if not by the bedding of the Infirmary, by too free a communication with patients in other parts of the House. I shall leave it to the Right Honourable Manager to reconcile as he best can, his reprobation of the conduct of the Clerks, on the subject of the fever bedding, with the praise which he has bestowed upon the vigilance and attention of the Medical

Person on duty, who, on a particular occasion, detected the indiscriminate use of the bedding practised in the Infirmary, and who, the Right Honourable Manager might have seen from the Evidence, was no other than one of those Clerks themselves.\* It could not have failed to be extremely agreeable to the Court of Contributors to have been assured by the Right Honourable Manager, that pains were even then taken to separate the fever from the other bedding of the Infirmary, and also that precautions were used by the Managers to prevent the danger which formerly existed of fever being sent out of that House to different parts of the Town, by means of the unwashed and unpurified body-clothes of fever patients. Indeed there seems, from the Minutes of Evidence, but too much reason to believe, that the four Clerks, whose conduct has been so strongly reprobated by the Right Honourable Manager, were the first persons connected with the Royal Infirmary who had ever given particular attention to the important subject of the management of the fever bedding in that Hospital. Had it been otherwise, it is difficult to conceive, why, in a point which concerned so nearly the proper domestic management of that Institution, the Managers should have contented themselves with endeavouring to controvert, by the contradictory evidence of the Nurses, the statement of the Clerks, instead of having adduced proofs to show that pains had actually been taken in the Infirmary to separate the fever from the other bedding of the House. I am convinced, that had the Right Honourable Manager been in the slightest degree acquainted with the state of the bedding of the Infirmary, or known how much the disposal of it was intrusted to careless and drunken Nurses, he would never have applied that epithet which he has done to the assertion of the Clerks, but must have perceived that the word "villainous," if it was to be used, could with propriety be applied only either to the state of the bedding, or to its disposal in that House.

I trust the public will not think it necessary for me to take notice of the insinuations in which the Right Honourable Manager has so freely indulged himself, with regard to the motives by which he supposes the Clerks to have been actuated in the Representation which they made to

\* Minutes of Evidence, p. 75.

the Managers, unless to express my belief that they are totally groundless. This is a matter which must be left to the feelings of the Clerks themselves. But whatever their motives may have been, these motives surely could not have produced that deplorable state of the internal economy of the Royal Infirmary, which is proved to have existed at and before the time at which their Representation was drawn up and submitted to the consideration of the Managers. In reference to the Clerks, however, I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without stating, that though I have not the pleasure to be particularly acquainted with any of these Gentlemen, yet, from all I have been able to learn upon inquiry, I am satisfied that they are regarded by their friends as young men of the utmost veracity, and, in every respect, of the most strict moral principles and conduct; and I doubt whether, in the situation which they held in the Infirmary, a stronger proof of their integrity could have been afforded than was given in their yielding as they did to the impulse of humanity, and in their being impelled, by a sense of duty, to make that Representation which has brought upon them the disapprobation and obloquy of the Managers of that Institution. A little

more experience of the world than these young men seem to have possessed, would have taught them the difficulty of the enterprise in which they were about to engage, and the truth of the observation, that "it is an undertaking of some degree of delicacy to examine into the cause of public disorders." If a man happens not to succeed in such an enquiry, he will be thought weak and visionary; if he touches the true grievance, there is a danger that he may come near to persons of weight and consequence, who will rather be exasperated at this discovery of their errors, than thankful for the occasion of correcting them." I trust, however, that these young men will not allow the truth of this observation, discovering in its author so profound a knowledge of human nature, to influence their future conduct, and the more so, as they have already had their reward in the important improvements which have been made in the condition and comforts of the patients in the Royal Infirmary. The satisfaction they must have received from the knowledge of this, should more than compensate to them for any disappointment or chagrin they may have formerly felt from the censure, or, more recently, from the accusations, of



the Right Honourable Manager. I leave it to the Right Honourable Manager himself to consider, how far, upon reflection, he can approve of the use which he has made of the authority of his name, and of his great influence with the inhabitants of Edinburgh, to depreciate the characters, and to stigmatise with the epithets he is reported to have employed, the conduct of four young men, who, to every impartial person, must appear to have been actuated by the most upright principles, and purest motives, in the Representation which they felt it to be their duty to make to the Managers of the Royal Infirmary of the state of that House on the 7th July, 1817.

In my former Letter, page 6th and 7th, I had said, "Instead of summoning, as might have naturally been expected, the Clerks into their presence, and proceeding with them directly to inspect the Wards of the Infirmary, they (the Managers,) appoint a Committee," &c. In answer to this, I find the remark termed a mistake, and it stated by the Right Honourable Manager, that the Managers did not separate till they had examined the bedding of some of the Wards themselves. It is not said, however, that they

made any very particular inquiry into the state of the bedding of the Hospital during that visit, a visit, it deserves to be remarked, of which there is no mention made, either in the Minutes of Evidence, or in the Note of the Managers. That the Managers should have omitted to mention the result of their examination on that day, is the more singular, that they must have found, had they inquired into it, the state of the bedding, with regard to sheets in particular, to have been very much improved—better, indeed, than usual on that day. The truth is, that the Matron, having been aware that a complaint of the state of the bedding was about to be made to the Managers by the Clerks, in order to meet this complaint, had new linen put upon the beds on the day before the Monthly Meeting of the Managers, which was taken off again in the course of the evening after that Meeting, upon pretence of having it marked or hemmed.\* That Mrs Montgomery was capable of such conduct, is, I am afraid, but too plain, from various circumstances well known to the Clerks, some of

\* See Minutes of Evidence, p. 77, and Answers to Queries, by Mr Glover, in the former Letter to the Contributors, p. 26.

which are recorded in Evidence. The day of the Monthly Meetings of the Managers was known by the washing and scrubbing which took place at an early hour in every part of the House; by the clean coverlets that were put upon some of the beds for the occasion; by the comparatively good broth prepared for the Patients; and by the pudding extraordinary that was added to the dinner of the Clerks.\* It will be seen, that when Sir William Forbes came to the Infirmary on the 5th July, in consequence of Mr Sims' request, to examine into the state of the linen, that 6 of the beds out of the list of 9 or 10 that had been given by him to Sir William Forbes, after his arrival in the Infirmary, were allowed by Sir William to be certainly defective, though the remainder did not appear to be particularly objectionable.† It is to be regretted, that this benevolent Manager, instead of waiting till he should have had it in his power to visit the Hospital, in company with Mr Jardine and Mr Wilson, had not gone instantly with Mr Sims; and that he had not accepted of Mr Sims' offer to point out to him the particu-

\* Minutes of Evidence, p. 34. † *Ibid.* p. 1.

lar beds which he considered as defective, because it is averred by Mr Sims, that those gentlemen did not visit the Hospital before several changes had been made in the beds, and a considerable amendment made on the dinner, as stated by the Patients.\* The beds alluded to are stated to have been chiefly in the Surgical Wards, and it may be remarked, in corroboration of the assertion with regard to the general state of the bedding in these wards, that, when Mr Law, about a year and a half ago, made a survey of the beds, chiefly in the Men's Surgical Wards, along with Mr Wishart, it appeared to him that one-half of the sheets were not in the clean state they ought to be; and this defect appeared to proceed in part from their having been too long on the beds, and in part from being ill washed.‡ Mr Law states, that in his intercourse with the Matron, she seemed to him to indicate a wish to be over civil to him;§ and Mr Gillespie also states, that when he was in use, about two years before the inquiry took place, to mention defects to the Matron, she seemed to wish that he should

\* Mr Sims' Letter in Minutes of Evidence, p. 103.

† Minutes of Evidence, p. 11. ‡ *Ibid.* p. 15.

ask those things as a favour, which he preferred stating to her in the way of injunction.\* We see also, from the evidence of Dr Hamilton, that when a Nurse was desired by him to be dismissed, on account of her unfitness for her situation, from dullness or stupidity, that the Matron, instead of complying with his injunction, contented herself with merely transferring this Nurse from a Medical into a Surgical Ward.† It appears also, from the evidence of Mr Gillespie, that on one occasion, a Nurse was removed from the Surgical Ward to one of the Medical ones, against the express wish of the Surgeons, and even though they made application in writing for her being restored, it was not attended to; and that on another occasion, when the Surgeons requested a Nurse to be dismissed for drunkenness, the Matron removed the Nurse down stairs to one of the Medical Wards.‡ In another instance, mentioned by Mr Welsh, a Nurse, who had taken up a poker, and threatened to strike a Patient in the Soldiers' Fever Ward, was put up to the Surgeons' Ward;§ and it will be seen, from Mr Tweedie's evidence, that a Nurse, turn-

\* Minutes of Evidence, p. 17. † Id. p. 5.  
‡ Id. p. 19. § Id. p. 61.

ed off at Mr Law's desire, on account of prevarication, was readmitted three weeks afterwards by the Matron.\* We have a proof of the same disposition in the fact, that the beef steaks and broth prepared for the visit of the Extraordinary Managers on the 3d January, 1818,† were excellent, while the broth the day after were such as appeared to more than one Medical Gentleman who tasted it, to afford an average specimen of the bad qualities of the broth of the Infirmary.‡ The method which the Matron took of revenging herself upon the Clerks for the complaints which they had ventured to make with regard to the food and bedding of the Patients, and the very extraordinary manner in which these complaints were judged and disposed of by Mr Wilson, may be seen by referring to the 55th page of the Minutes of Evidence. That Gentleman, Mr Jardine, and several of the Managers, know well, that these complaints did not originate with the four Clerks, who have been already so often alluded to; but that they

\* Minutes of Evidence, p. 32.  
† See proceedings of the Court of Contributors, as reported in the Scotsman Newspaper of January, Speeches of Sir William Forbes, and Dr Stewart.  
‡ Minutes of Evidence, p. 68.



had been sometimes expressed verbally, and sometimes in writing, in the course of the years 1814, 15, and 16, as may be still substantiated, were it necessary, by several of the gentlemen who lived in the Infirmary as Clerks during these years. It was quite consistent with the knowledge of the four Clerks, that their predecessors had often made, with the concurrence of the Medical Officers, under whom they acted, representations, both verbal and written, respecting the food and bedding of the patients; and that these representations had produced a slight, though, in general, but temporary improvement. But the liberty which Mrs Montgomery is proved to have taken, without the knowledge, it must be presumed at the time, either of the Managers or Medical Officers of the Infirmary, of diminishing the quantity of nutritious matter in the food of the Patients, is, with me, the head and front of her offending; and that she should have been allowed to practise this so long, or that, after it was discovered, attempts should have been made to palliate or defend it, are to me perfectly unaccountable.

I shall not stop to enquire, how far the Miller's suspicions, with regard to the presence of barley-

meal in his porridge, were well founded; nor what the precise state of the oat-meal, or of the porridge, was in the Infirmary at the time that had given rise to this opinion in the mind of the Miller; one thing, however, has been established, by evidence that is incontrovertible, that the quantity of meal allotted to five persons at the time this Miller was a patient in the Infirmary, is at present consumed by three.\* But there is surely nothing in the Statement of the Clerks, with regard to this man's evidence, that could warrant, in the slightest degree, the insinuation that the Miller's assertion had "existed only in their imagination." Neither shall I enter into the inquiry, how far the tough parts of meat are rendered tender by putrescence; nor how far tainted meat may be rendered tough by long boiling; nor whether the complaints of toughness and putridity were made by the same persons about the same piece of meat; because it is enough for me to find it recorded, "that of 104 Patients, 47 complained that the meat was tough, in small quantity, and occasionally old and putrid;" while others affirm,

\* Minutes of Evidence, p. 46. and Tables, p. 128-9.

that "the steaks were hard, tough, and bad smelled;"\* because I find it also in evidence, that the pieces of meat allotted for steaks to Patients were frequently observed by the Medical Officers to be very unfit for the purpose of being so used; and because I have myself seen, since this inquiry commenced, a portion of meat which had been allotted for a steak to a patient in the Infirmary, which consisted almost solely of skin and membrane. It was such a portion of meat, I am convinced, as never was served out for a steak in any other Hospital in Britain.

Of what consequence can it be to the poor admitted into the Infirmary, or to the public of Edinburgh, to be informed that the Diet of that Hospital had been fixed forty or fifty years ago by able Physicians? since it is certain that, even if any Diet Tables had been formed, they had long ceased to exist, and that their existence was completely unknown to a succession of Matrons and Medical Practitioners. It is not, I must remind the Right Honourable Manager, by the articles enumerated in the printed Statutes of the

\* Statement of the Clerks in Minutes of Evidence, p. 100.

Infirmary, without their quantity being fixed, or by the quantity of some of these articles stated to have been fixed in the private Diet Tables of Dr Home, or of Dr Spens, that we can ever judge of the sufficiency of the food which has been actually supplied to Patients in the Infirmary. It would therefore have been highly gratifying to the public, if, instead of being informed of the inferiority of the food in St Anne Street, and of that of the farm-servants of a tenant on the estate of Granton, to the Full Diet of the Royal Infirmary, the Right Honourable Manager had been able to inform the Court of Contributors, that either he or any of the other Managers, had ever seen the victuals served out to the Patients in the Infirmary, and that this comparison had, in all its parts, been founded upon actual observation. It has been proved in evidence, that the quantity of food supplied to Patients in the Royal Infirmary, has had no fixed relation to the number of Patients in that House, and that this, as well as the quality, has been changed according to the discretion of the Matrons. The very extraordinary liberties which were taken in these matters by the late Mrs Montgomery, have ended in bringing to open

disclosure a variety of circumstances respecting the food of patients in the Infirmary, which were known to and regretted by most families in Edinburgh, who have ever had occasion to recommend poor persons, or to send their servants to that House. Until these families, therefore, can forget the frequent private demands that have been made upon them for provisions by those for whom they had procured admission into the Infirmary, it is in vain for the Right Honourable Manager to boast of the "fish, fowl, chicken, eggs, all kinds of fruits in their seasons, nay, even grapes from the hot-house, in addition to the usual allowance of the Infirmary," that are permitted by the Managers to be prescribed by their Medical Officers. The enumeration which the Right Honourable Manager has given of the luxuries of the table to be enjoyed in the Royal Infirmary, reminds us of the story of Schacabac; and it will be fortunate for the patients who may have heard of these delicacies, if, like Schacabac, they are ever feasted in reality with these very things which hitherto they have been entertained with only in imagination. I am quite aware that the articles which the Right Honourable Manager has alluded to may be, and

occasionally are prescribed by the Medical Officers of the Infirmary. But were this a general practice, as one might be led, by the Right Honourable Manager's speech, to imagine, I should not regard it either as a proof of good management, or of the sufficiency of the general diet of the House, but of the contrary. How far the ordinary diet of the Infirmary can even at present be considered as sufficient, notwithstanding the improvements that have been made in it, in consequence of the experiments of the learned Professor of Chemistry, may be estimated from the Table to be found at p. 129 of the Minutes of Evidence. From an average taken of the food consumed on the three last days of the month of January 1818, in the Royal Infirmary, it appears that the expense for the provisions for each individual, including Matrons, Apothecaries, Clerks, Nurses, and Servants, as well as Patients, amounted to the sum nearly of *five-pence* and *one farthing* daily; that, of this sum, four-pence was for bread, meal, beer, and milk, and that *one penny farthing* was all that remained for the expense of beef steaks, and of the meat, barley, groats, and potatoes, used for making the broth, which, by so high an authority in these



matters as the Professor of Chemistry, had been declared to be "palatable," and "quite suitable" for the ordinary broth of the Infirmary.\* How far it may be possible to detect by chemical agents the presence of animal matter in such broth, I leave it to the Professor of Chemistry to determine; but surely it need not now excite any astonishment, that, by the ordinary test of the tongue, various individuals should not have been able to detect the presence of animal matter in the broth of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.

I agree with the Right Honourable Manager, in the opinion, that the food of the Patients should be regulated by the food which they had previously been in the habit of taking at their own homes; but I cannot permit myself to believe that the meal allotted for the porridge of each patient in the Royal Infirmary, ought to have been nearly one-half less in the year 1817, than that which we know is allotted in 1818, or that the quantity of meat used in making the broth of the Patients in that House, should be so much less than it is in other similar Hospitals. Nor can I suffer myself to believe that the practice which is proved

\* Minutes of Evidence, p. 91.

to have existed in the Infirmary of Edinburgh, of allowing the diet to be regulated in so great a degree by the discretion of the Matron, is one which ought to have been permitted to exist, as it appears to have been, for a series of years, either by the Managers or the Medical Officers of that Institution. I should be happy to learn that this great defect was now remedied by the adoption of Diet Tables, similar to those that are employed in other Hospitals. That Tables of this kind should have been so long of being adopted and enforced, is another proof of the tardiness with which obvious improvements are introduced into the practice of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh; or, in other words, of the length of time which they must remain under the consideration of its Managers.

It will be seen from the Tables annexed to the Minutes of Evidence, that a most remarkable diminution in the expence of the maintenance of the Hospital took place the year after the appointment of the late Matron, and continued to the commencement of the present year.\* This diminution is such as cannot be accounted for,

\* See Minutes of Evidence, Tables, p. 116, 117.

without supposing that a great diminution had also been made in the food; a circumstance which enables us to perceive readily why this food of late years should have been so very generally complained of by the patients. This diminution in the expenditure for the provisions of the House, could not fail to have attracted the notice of the Managers; and it is singular, that they should not have been led to inquire into the circumstances which enabled Mrs Montgomery to maintain the patients at so much less expence than her predecessor. Can it be that the Managers' admiration of Mrs Montgomery's economy prevented them from discovering the *secret* of it, and operated, at the same time, as an encouragement to her to persevere in that mistaken parsimony which has given rise to the present inquiry?

I am doubtful how far the public will admit, as sufficient or proper, the apology which the Right Honourable Gentleman has made for the Managers for the support which they conceived it to be necessary to give to the late Matron, in the various disagreements which had existed between her and a succession of Clerks, relative to the Food and Bedding of the Patients in the In-

firmery. Neither my acquaintance with human nature in general, nor with Charitable Institutions in particular, will allow me to believe in the necessity of investing any individual in the management of the Royal Infirmary with arbitrary and despotic power; but if such power must be lodged somewhere in that House, the Matron surely is not the person in whom it ought to be vested, nor the Clerks the persons over whom it ought to be exercised; for no one acquainted with the nature of the duties of the Clerks in the Infirmary, can suppose, for a moment, that it could be for the advantage of the Hospital, that, in the performance of these duties towards their patients, the Clerks should be in any degree under the superintendence and controul of the Matron. Are we to understand, that a belief in the necessity of supporting the Matron in the exercise of a despotic power, so distinctly avowed by the Right Honourable Manager, was the reason, why, in the disputes which occurred between that person and the Clerks, relative to the Food and Bedding of the Patients, the Managers should have deemed it their duty, on all occasions, to give the Matron their unqualified support; and that it was to this absurd and mis-

taken principle of government, in the management of the Royal Infirmary, that the welfare and comforts of the Patients in that Institution, were, in reality, sacrificed for a series of years?

I cannot regard the explanation which the Right Honourable Manager has given respecting the Lock Ward, as at all satisfactory. The great necessity which has ever existed for a Lock Hospital in Edinburgh, does not arise, I must inform the Right Honourable Manager, so much from the presence of a Lock Ward in the Infirmary, as from the prevalence of a practice in that House, of which he has not chosen to take any notice, but which, I conceive, I had sufficiently explained, by merely alluding to it in pages 39 and 40 of my former Letter. It is a practice most disgraceful to the Institution, and one which, so long as it is permitted to exist, renders it impossible, I affirm, to preserve cleanliness, or any thing like the appearance of common decency, in the Wards of the Infirmary. It must appear to every one quite unaccountable, that this practice, or the filthy and neglected state of the Lock Ward, should have been topics of anxiety with the Managers for 10 or 12 years, without some attempt having been made to remedy these

evils. Neither can I consider the excuse of the want of funds to fit up another house as satisfactory on this head; because I am credibly informed, that the Managers, not only "have often had their eyes on the house near the Infirmary," but that, some years ago, this house was actually fitted up by the Managers, and that bedsteads were placed in it for the reception of Venereal Patients; and that, after all this expense had been uselessly laid out, and the building had stood empty for some years, it was again converted into dwelling-houses. After being thus fitted up, but little additional expense could have been incurred by treating the Venereal Patients in a separate establishment; and I must still suspect, that it was not the want of funds to dispose of, which prevented the intention of the Managers from being carried into execution, but the very circumstance to which I have alluded in my former Letter. Besides, I am not disposed to admit, nor do I conceive that the public will admit, the want of funds as a valid excuse for the existence of this or any other glaring defect in the Royal Infirmary, when it is considered that the Managers have not, of late years, made any representation of



the necessity of their being enabled to remedy such defects, to the Contributors, or to the Inhabitants of Edinburgh, nor have made any public call for their assistance—a call which the liberality of the public in former times, and particularly on the occasion of the late collection, sufficiently shows would not have been disregarded.

With respect to that part of the Right Honourable Manager's speech, in which he charges the Author of the Letter to the Court of Contributors, as having brought an accusation against the Treasurer, I have to remark, that I must have been very unfortunate in the expressions I used relating to Mr Jardine, if they can admit of such an interpretation; because I know that I wished to be neither unjust, nor sparing of praise to that gentleman. What I have affirmed in my former Letter with regard to the delegation of duty, was not meant as an accusation against the Treasurer, but was the simple expression of a fact well known to every person connected with the Infirmary, and supported, I conceive, to the extent for which I wished the assertion to receive credit, by the evidence of Mr Wilson, his partner.\* I can subscribe, with pleasure, to the eulogium

\* Minutes of Evidence, p. 52.

which the Right Honourable Manager has made on the zeal and diligence with which the services of the Treasurer have been rendered to the Infirmary. That Mr Jardine has performed, for many years, the duties of a House-Governor in that Institution; that he has attended regularly the Monthly Meetings of the Managers; and that he has taken a most active part in all the concerns of the Infirmary, there can be no doubt. But with whatever benevolence and good intentions these services have been performed, they have been, I have reason to believe, one of the many causes which have operated in separating the Medical Officers of the Infirmary from a more immediate and direct intercourse with the Managers; an intercourse without which I am satisfied, from all I have been able to learn of the nature of such Institutions, and in particular of the affairs of that in question, the Managers of the Royal Infirmary can never be enabled to conduct the practical details of the Hospital committed to their charge, either to the full benefit of the Patients, or to the entire satisfaction of the Public. This separation, I may be permitted to add, has been greatly increased, instead of

being diminished, by the almost daily attendance of Mr Jardine's partner in the Infirmary, and by the adoption and operation of the 15th Regulation, which enacts, that "Upon observing any impropriety in the House, they (the Clerks), are immediately to communicate the same to the Treasurer, in order that he may either acquaint the Managers thereof, *or take such steps as he may think proper for correcting the same.*"

I forbear to say any thing of the epithets which the Right Honourable Manager has been pleased to bestow upon my former Letter, or of the motives which he has assigned for its publication. I have the satisfaction to feel they are not applicable, and am willing to believe that these insinuations and epithets must have escaped from him during the mingled feelings excited by the disagreeable truths which that Letter contains. The Vocabulary of the English language lies open to me, as well as to the Right Honourable Manager; and did I choose it, it certainly would not be difficult to select and to apply to the speech, reported to have been delivered by him to the Court of Contributors, terms which to some the occasion may seem to require, and to others, his

example to justify. But feeling, as I do, that I have no purpose to serve in any thing that relates to the concerns of the Royal Infirmary, but to contribute, as far as lies in my power, to the utility and permanent good of that Institution, I abstain willingly from every expression of re- crimination, that might tend to irritate farther the feelings of those who must have the same objects in view with myself with regard to the Infirmary, however much our opinions may be at variance as to the means by which these objects can be best obtained: Before concluding this Letter, however, I feel it due to myself, in relation to the Right Honourable Manager, upon whose reported speech I have animadverted so freely, to state, that no-one could feel more disappointed than I did at the part which he took in the proceedings of the late Meeting of the Court of Contributors; because, from the liberal views which he is known to have entertained with regard to the Infirmary, and the generous efforts which, I have been informed, he made on a former occasion to improve the Surgical department of that Institution, as well as from the known active benevolence of his character, I had expected, that, in opposition to all personal feelings which might arise from a

supposed imputation of neglect on the part of the Managers, he would have set an example worthy of imitation to the other Members of that Body, by entering heartily into the consideration and consequent adoption of every suggestion which could tend to improve the condition of the sick poor admitted into that Institution. That the Right Honourable Gentleman has not done so, must have arisen, I conceive, either from his suffering himself to believe that the late investigation into the state of the Royal Infirmary, bore in it something of the appearance of a political character, or from his allowing his judgment to be misled by information given to him by persons who entertain opinions with regard to the Infirmary, and other public Institutions in Edinburgh, far less liberal and enlightened than his own.

But the judgment in the case of the late Inquiry into the defective State of the Royal Infirmary, has now, by the printing of the Minutes of Evidence, and of the Report of your Committee, passed from you, Gentlemen, as a Court of Contributors, to the Tribunal of the Public; and in following it to that Tribunal, I have, with the

Right Honourable Manager, the satisfaction to feel, that my conscience approves of the efforts which I have now and formerly made, by the publication of my opinions, to secure for the Sick Poor, admitted into the Infirmary, all the benefits which the public intends, and has a right to expect, they shall receive in that Hospital. But in order to obtain and to secure the permanence of those benefits, material changes, I am persuaded, must be made in the management of that Institution—by correcting the error which has crept into the practice of the Royal Infirmary, in the perpetual re-election of the same persons to be Ordinary Managers—by the Court of Contributors exercising some control over the nomination of the Medical Officers, and rendering them more independent than they are at present of the favour of the Managers—by establishing a more free and frequent intercourse between the Medical Officers and Managers of the Infirmary—by following a different mode in choosing those who are to assist the Medical Officers, as Clerks and Dressers—and by improving the condition of the Nurses, and enforcing, by a vigilant inspection, the proper performance of their duties



to the Patients; an object which, it appears to me, could be best promoted by the appointment of Visitors, who should, at unstated hours, visit the Infirmary, and examine into the conduct of its subordinate agents. Were these changes effected, they could not fail to remedy many defects which still exist in the Institution, particularly to occasion the adoption and observance of a better system of Regulations with regard to Food and Bedding, than has hitherto prevailed in the Royal Infirmary—and to prevent the recurrence of many of those evils, the accumulation of which has given rise to the late Inquiry.

### COMMITTEE

Appointed at the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF CONTRIBUTORS to the ROYAL INFIRMARY of Edinburgh, held on the 5th January, 1818, to Inquire into the State of that Hospital.

FRANCIS JEFFREY, Esq.	LORD BALGRAY
THOMAS THOMSON, Esq.	SIR WM. HAE
J. A. MURRAY, Esq.	REV. PRINCIPAL BAIRD
J. F. ERSKINE of Mear, Esq.	WM. ARBUTHNOT, Esq.
ALEXANDER MUNRO, Esq.	ALEX. DUNCAN, W. S.
LIEUT.-GENERAL MAXWELL	ROBERT DUNDAS, W. S.
SIR WM. FETTES, Bart.	JAMES DUNDAS, W. S.
ADAM MAITLAND, Esq.	LEONARD HORNER, Esq.
JOHN CRAIG, Esq.	JOHN WIGHAM, Esq.

### REPORT

OF THE

### COMMITTEE OF CONTRIBUTORS,

READ AT THE ADJOURNED MEETING OF THE COURT OF CONTRIBUTORS, HELD ON 30TH MARCH, 1818.

Extracted from *Calcutta Mercury Newspaper*, March 28, 1818.

In reporting to the Court of Contributors the result of the inquiries which the Committee were instructed to make into "the state of the Hospital, and particularly into the matters which had been complained of in the domestic management of the House," the Committee beg leave, in the first place, to state what has been the general course and scope of their proceedings, and the limits within which they have judged it expedient to confine their investigations.

The subjects to which the Committee conceived it to be the intention of the Contributors that their inquiries should be directed, were principally three:—namely, the state of the Hospital as to cleanliness, and other circumstances in the domestic arrangements and economy of the House, immediately connected with the personal comfort of the patients;—the state of the ordinary diet, as actually administered, both as to its quality and its quantity;—and the general character and conduct of those subordinate attendants in the House, to whose personal care and attention, in the absence of the Medical Officers, the patients are principally entrusted.

In the view of obtaining the requisite information on these several heads, as well as on every collateral point affecting the actual state of the Infirmary, the Committee determined to resort to the best and most unsuspected testimony within their reach, and have accordingly obtained the declarations of the Medical Officers who are now connected with the Establishment, or who have been connected with it within the last few years, with the exception of such only as were either no longer resident in Edinburgh, or were prevented by indisposition from attending the Committee; and in order that the examination of those gentlemen might be rendered as complete and useful as possible, the Managers were requested to depute some of their number to be present on all such occasions.

The examination of the Medical Gentlemen connected with the Infirmary, has proved much more laborious, and has extended to a much greater length, than the Committee could have anticipated; and on deliberately considering the import and effect of the voluminous evidence which had, thus been obtained, the Committee, for reasons which appeared to them invincible, and which are referred to in some of the minutes of their daily proceedings, determined to abstain from the examination of nurses, patients, and servants. In limiting their investigations to the testimony chiefly of the Medical Officers, and to certain written documents bearing upon the subject of inquiry, the Committee apprehend that enough has been done to enable the Court of Contributors to form a useful opinion on the main points of the case; and in now laying the whole of the evidence before the Contributors, accompanied with such other documents as appeared to them of importance, the Committee shall confine their observations on the result of this inquiry within very narrow bounds.

The Committee conceive it to be almost unnecessary to offer their testimony to the excellence of the medical treatment of the patients

in the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh; for they believe it to be universally acknowledged, that from the arrangements which have been long established, the patients in this Hospital receive every aid from medical skill and experience which the most wealthy individuals could have it in their power to command; and that there is probably no institution of the kind where the prime object of healing the sick and diseased has been prosecuted with more eminent ability or success.

In evidence of this general statement, the Committee are happy in being able to concur with the Managers in appealing to the very low average number of the deaths that have occurred in the Royal Infirmary; and they have much satisfaction in directing the attention of the Contributors and of the Public to that fact, not only as it bears on the medical conduct of the Hospital, but as it may serve to demonstrate, that whatever defects may have existed at any time in the domestic economy or arrangements of the House, these never have been of a nature or extent that has perceptibly interfered with the great and primary purpose of the Institution, as a receptacle for the sick and diseased among the lower classes of the community.

At the same time, on a review of the evidence, both written and parole, which has come under their consideration, the Committee are of opinion, that there have existed some errors and defects in the ordinary domestic economy of the House; and that the established arrangements have failed to prevent the occasional occurrence of circumstances injurious to the comfort of patients, and affecting the general character and repute of this most interesting and most useful adjunct to the great Medical School of Edinburgh.

In stating this as the result of their inquiries, the Committee are fully impressed with the conviction, that the evils which may have existed have arisen even in spite of great zeal, anxiety, and active benevolence, on the part of the Ordinary Managers, in the discharge of their official duty. Of the disposition of the Managers to rectify neglects and disorders, when aware of their existence, the Committee do not entertain the slightest doubt; and it is with sincere satisfaction they have it in their power to state, that for a considerable time past the Managers appear to have been diligently employed in preparing and introducing various practical improvements in the state and conduct of the House. Whatever defects have formerly existed, or may yet exist, the Committee apprehend that these ought to be regarded as the almost insensible growth of a system, imperfect in some

of its subordinate checks and means of controul, rather than as the consequences of culpable oversight in any of the higher classes of Officers connected with the Establishment.

The particular defects to which the Committee would beg leave to direct the attention of the Contributors, as appearing in evidence, are the following:—

1st. It appears, that, at no very remote period, the state of the bedding in the House was faulty; and that cleanliness and comfort in that article were not uniformly or effectually secured. To this object, however, the attention of the Managers has been directed; and the Committee have much satisfaction in reporting, that in the course of the last year, such measures had been adopted and carried into execution, as appear to have left little or no ground for present complaint on this head.

2d. It appears, that the requisite degree of attention has not been paid to the cleanliness of the persons of the patients; and the Committee beg leave to suggest to the Managers, that some more efficient regulation on that head ought to be adopted and enforced. They may further submit it as a subject for their consideration, how far it may be practicable to have a sufficient supply of body-linen for those patients, the scantiness of whose provision in that respect seems at present to preclude the possibility of ensuring personal cleanliness. As connected with this branch of the economy of the House, the Committee may add, that in the several Wards of the Infirmary, the ordinary supply of furniture and utensils has of late been enlarged; and that a set of baths for the use of patients are in progress.

3d. On the subject of diet, it appears in evidence, that although the regulations respecting it have not been reduced into tables, as in many other Hospitals, yet for many years back there has been a known system and routine for the ordinary diet of the several classes of patients, which appears to have been adopted and continued with the approbation of the Medical Advisers of the House. It further appears, that in the general arrangement for procuring articles of food of the best quality, there does not exist any defect. At the same time, on a review of the evidence before them, the Committee are of opinion, that in the preparation of the food of the House, as well as in the quantities of it actually served out to the patients, the practice of late years has occasionally erred on the side of a too rigid economy; the natural consequence of which has been to aggravate the extent and effect of those irregularities, which unavoidably attach to the

daily preparation and distribution of food for some hundreds of individuals. To this important subject, however, the attention of the Managers and of the Medical Officers has been directed for a considerable time past; and the Committee shall merely express their hope, that their deliberations will lead to the adoption of regular diet tables, such as seem to be generally in use in other Hospitals of this description; and that in the actual administration of their ordinary diet, there will be left to the patients and their friends no apology or pretence for introducing into the Wards supplies of additional food, in violation of positive rule, and of the injunctions imposed on the ordinary attendants of the House.

4th. On the subject of diet, the Committee beg leave further to offer it as their opinion, that in the mode of serving it out to the patients, a due degree of attention has not been paid to cleanliness and comfort. To the greater number of patients who resort to this establishment, it is not a great deal in this respect that can be required as essentially necessary for their comfort and accommodation; and the Committee feel assured, from recent observation, that to this subject the attention of the Managers is sufficiently awake.

5th. From the concurring testimony of all those connected with the Hospital, it evidently appears, that there has existed the utmost difficulty in procuring the service of Nurses, whose character and habits are such as to ensure regularity and fidelity in the discharge of their laborious and disagreeable duties. It is unquestionably to the low qualifications of a great proportion of this class of attendants, that the most offensive defects in the state of the Hospital have been chiefly owing; and it appears to the Committee to be a subject deserving and requiring the most serious consideration, how far it may be truly practicable to engage the services of a better description of Nurses than heretofore. The difficulties which may attend the attempt, the Committee have no inclination to diminish or disguise; and without meaning to prescribe the fittest course to be adopted by the Managers, they will merely beg leave to submit, that unless the rate of wages paid to Nurses shall exceed that of ordinary domestic servants, in the middle classes of society, it will be impossible to draw into this laborious and disagreeable line of service, any individuals but such as from character and habits are nearly unfit for every other.

6th. On the subject of cleanliness and comfort, the Committee have only further to observe, that defects in those respects appear to have existed in a greater degree in what is called the Lock Ward, than in



any other part of the House. For this it would not perhaps be difficult to assign a probable cause; but the Committee feel more anxious to state it as their opinion, that it would redound to the general credit and repute of the Establishment, and perhaps to the advantage of this unhappy class of patients, that they should be removed into a house completely detached from the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.

On a general review of the evidence, the Committee apprehend, that the Contributors will concur with them in thinking, that while there appear to have existed defects in the state and arrangements of the Royal Infirmary not undeserving of their notice, and of the serious consideration of those to whom the ordinary management of the Institution has been committed, yet that the complaints on those heads which had gone abroad have been in some instances exaggerated much beyond what the facts now in evidence appear to justify, while in some other instances they are unsupported or disproved. In matters of this kind, a great deal of mis-statement is but too common, and must be carefully guarded against in forming a fair and useful opinion on the subject of the present inquiry; yet it cannot be either necessary or useful to disguise what appears to be the prevailing opinion of the Medical Gentlemen who have been examined, and who have recently visited other hospitals, that not many months ago the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh was, in point of cleanliness and general attention to the comforts of the patients, inferior to most other hospitals they had seen; and that the improvements in its domestic economy and arrangements, by which it may now challenge a more favourable opinion, have not been dated beyond the middle of the last year. At the same time, it is fit to bear in mind, that in almost every other hospital of which the Committee have received any information, the rate of expense bestowed on the support of the Establishment exceeds that of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.

While such appears to be the fact, and while at the same time the Committee feel the deepest conviction that the Ordinary Managers have been actuated by a degree of zeal for the welfare of the Institution which could not be exceeded by any other individuals in their situation, it has presented itself to the Committee, as an observation of the utmost importance, that the existing arrangements and course of proceeding in the management of this Institution cannot possibly have been such as to bring fairly, fully, and promptly, under the notice of the Managers the errors and defects which, from time to time, may be generated and suffered to spring up in the practical details of

the Establishment. And looking, as they have anxiously done, to the real evidence of the case, as well as to the opinions of the Medical Officers of the Hospital, the Committee feel no hesitation in offering it as their opinion, that there has not hitherto existed a sufficient facility of official intercourse between the Medical Attendants of the Hospital and the Ordinary Managers; and though not prepared to propose any complete and regular plan, the Committee would beg leave to suggest, that the communication of the observations and sentiments of the Medical Officers ought not to be left to depend on casual intercourse, or to be thrown into indirect and circuitous channels; but that at the stated meetings of the Managers, and certainly not less than once in every quarter, the Physicians and Surgeons of the House ought, *ex officio*, to be present, for the purpose of deliberation on the state of the Hospital; and that the Clerks and inferior Medical Attendants should be required to record whatever may, from time to time, occur to them as calling for attention or correction, in order that the information thus afforded may be brought under the notice of the Managers with the utmost facility and certainty.

The Committee do not venture to predict, that the arrangements now suggested will, of themselves, be fully sufficient to prevent the recurrence of those grounds of complaint to which they have adverted; and they are of opinion, that in the system of mutual control among the inferior officers and servants of the establishment some new and additional provisions will be required.

In speaking of the existing arrangements under which the Royal Infirmary has been governed, the Committee must be permitted to observe, that in the annual election of Managers, (when, according to the bye-laws of the Corporation, not less than four, and not more than six of their number should be changed,) the uniform practice has been to throw the whole of the change into the class of Extraordinary Managers; a description of civil officers who, by other arrangements, and in actual practice, have been reduced nearly to absolute insignificance. While the Committee, the Contributors, and the Public, cannot fail to be aware, and to acknowledge, that the present Ordinary Managers cannot possibly be replaced by others, who, as individuals, are more amply entitled to their utmost confidence and gratitude for their generous and disinterested services; the Committee are of opinion, that in the perpetual re-election of the same individuals, a great practical error has been committed; and that in the present, as in every analogous case, the natural, though perhaps unforeseen

consequence of the system has been, to intercept and annihilate a great deal of individual activity and zeal which might have been brought to bear on the prosperity of the Institution, and to prevent or destroy, at numberless points, that immediate contact with the Public, without which no institution, dependant on public favour and support, can hope to maintain its ground.

To this conclusion the Committee have been drawn in part by attending to the present state of the ordinary funds of the Royal Infirmary; which, notwithstanding the prudence and economy employed in the management, have been found scarcely adequate to the increasing expenditure of the Establishment. On comparing the actual income and actual expenditure, it manifestly appears to have been the anxious and benevolent purpose of the Managers to extend the benefits of the Institution to the greatest number of individuals whom the House was capable of receiving; and during the last year of epidemical sickness, the demands upon the Charity have of course been more numerous and urgent than perhaps at any former period. On this account, it is not without anxiety that the Committee look forward to the possible adoption of the measures which they have ventured to suggest, and which, of course, could not be carried into execution without entailing on the House some increase of expenditure in proportion to the number of its patients. Perhaps, however, they might be warranted in supposing, that the actual adoption of those improvements, by attracting the increased confidence and favour of the Public, might in the end,—probably within a very short period, enable the Managers to extend the benefits of the Charity to a number as great, if not greater, than the most parsimonious employment of their present income could enable them to accomplish. But be that as it may, the Committee cannot conclude their Report without urging on the immediate attention of the Contributors the propriety of appealing to the Public to come forward in aid of an Institution so important to the health of the lower orders, and constituting so essential a part of that school of medicine for which this city has been so long and so justly celebrated.

*All which is humbly reported.*

We, the undersigned Members of the Committee of Inquiry, while we concur in many of the statements contained in the foregoing

ing Report, feel ourselves called upon to record our sentiments on the following points:—

1st, That when the Report mentions that there have existed some errors and defects in the ordinary domestic economy of the House, it says nothing of the rules under which that domestic economy is conducted, so as to enable the Contributors to judge of their fitness for the object in view, and of the deviations from them which are alleged to have taken place in practice.

On this head, it appears to us necessary to bring to the recollection of the General Court, that this Institution was one of the earliest of the kind in the kingdom, erected under many disadvantages; and indeed the difficulties were so great, that nothing but the unbounded patriotism of the Chief Magistrate of the City and of a few noble and wealthy individuals, could possibly have overcome them. The period at which the House was erected did not afford the opportunity of benefiting by experience. The mode of construction, and the proper manner of finishing such buildings, was not then so well understood as now, but every thing essential to the recovery of the sick was duly provided. Besides, the scantiness of funds necessarily prevented that scale of accommodation which might otherwise have been adopted, but which, if attempted, must at once have precluded the extensive benefit which has been derived from the Institution; and the same cause has prevented the adoption of many improvements at subsequent periods.

The ordinary Managers are twelve in number; of these the President of the College of Physicians, the Professor of Anatomy, one Professor of Medicine, and two Members of the College of Surgeons form a part. By the terms of the Charter, the Ordinary Managers are directed to meet on four stated days annually; but it has been the practice for the Managers to meet regularly once a month; and in the course of last year, in consequence of the influx of fever patients, it was resolved that these meetings should be held once a week. Besides this the Managers individually and in succession visit the Hospital at various intermediate periods.

From this summary it appears to us, that both the civil and medical administration of this Hospital is as complete as can well be devised; and we perfectly agree in opinion with the Heads of the Medical Department, that if the Rules of the Institution are conscientiously observed by the different persons to whom they apply, the great objects of it must be attained.

ably, That while the Report bears, that the complaints against the Hospital, "which had gone abroad, have been in some instances exaggerated much beyond what the facts now in evidence appear to justify, while in some other instances they are unsupported or disproved," it does not apply these observations to any of the statements, deliberately made at the last General Meeting, or to the charges afterwards given in to the Committee in writing; neither does it draw the attention of the Contributors to those charges, so as to enable them to see how little they have been supported by the proof.

Those charges, it will be in the recollection of the General Court, were of the most serious nature, and justly exciting the attention of every humane person, and every well-wisher of the Institution. In the statements regarding these, as appearing in the Appendix, "the existence of several gross and extraordinary abuses" is asserted. The food for patients is said to be occasionally bad in quality, and in general altogether insufficient in quantity, inasmuch that, in one case, the quantity was totally "inadequate to support nature;" and that if the patient had not had supplies from other quarters "he would have died for want." The statement, that the mode of distributing beef-steaks was by throwing them on the beds of the patients when raw, was also of a nature that could not fail to excite feelings of great dissatisfaction, perhaps even of disgust, against the management of the Hospital.

The Treasurer (whose salary seems not sufficient to pay the Clerks employed by him in the Hospital's affairs) is in use, either personally, or by means of his partner, to attend the Hospital almost daily, and thus gratuitously to give his attention to the domestic economy of the Establishment.

The Chaplain of the Hospital, instead of confining his attention to his proper duties on Sunday, is in the laudable practice of visiting all the wards twice a-week.

The Matron is, by the rules of the Hospital, bound to visit the wards every day.

The Medical Attendants consist of two Physicians and two Surgeons; and at a precise hour, they daily visit the patients in the Hospital, a certain number of whom are under the charge of each of those practitioners. These visits are made in presence of the House Clerks, and of such of the Students of the University as chuse to attend.

Besides these, there are four consulting Surgeons, who are occasionally employed, and who are in use, from time to time, to visit

the wards; and there are four Clerks or House Surgeons, who constantly reside in the House; to each of whom the inspection of a certain number of wards is especially allotted. It is the duty of these Clerks to visit the patients in the wards frequently every day, and specially to attend to every thing relative to their comfort or their cure, whether it may regard medicine, diet, or cleanliness. And by regulation, No. 15, it is enjoined, "That upon observing any impropriety in the House, they are immediately to communicate the same to the Treasurer, in order that he may either acquaint the Managers, or take such steps as he may think proper for correcting the same."

In addition to these, there are certain Physicians and Surgeons connected with the Clinical Wards, and Clerks are also attached to these.

The beds were said to be "filthy and insufficient in many instances," and the sheets "too disgusting to admit of an attempt to describe them;" and that these were often not changed for "seven or eight weeks."—That there are "no traces of the blankets being cleaned or scoured." That not only the bodies of the patients, but some of the beds, are "from neglect, swarming with lice;" and that patients "have caught the itch in the Hospital." In short, that "the medical duties were the only ones well performed."

It appears to us that these, which were the most prominent charges, are all of them exaggerated—that most of them are unsupported by proof—while there are others, and those not the least important, which are clearly disproved.

ably, It appears to us that the Report is calculated to convey the idea, that, previous to the complaints by the junior Medical Officers in July last, no steps whatever had been taken by the Managers, calculated in any respect to improve this Institution: Now we are of opinion, that the management has been all along in a gradual course of improvement, though the limited nature of the income, which, on an average of years, has been exceeded by the expenditure, prevented the adoption of expensive alterations. It is in evidence, that at various times improvements took place relative to the bedsteads and bedding; that water-closets were introduced; and an improved washing-house was fully resolved upon early in the year 1817. In the preceding year a revision of the rules of 1804 took place, and a complete set of rules and regulations for every department in the domestic economy of the House were prepared and promulgated by the Managers:



and had the junior Medical Officers duly observed these rules, by communicating the first instances of occasional neglect or inattention as they occurred, we are convinced that such remedies would have been applied, as would in a great measure have prevented the recurrence of any such incidents.

4thly, It appears to us, that the statement in the Report is also calculated to convey the idea, that the ordinary diet of the Hospital is insufficient, and affords an apology for introducing into the Wards additional food, contrary to the rules of the House. It appears to us, that there is no ground for this idea. The ordinary diet is declared to be suitable by the four Physicians attending in the House; and they, as well as the Surgeons, have the unlimited power, which they are in the constant habit of exercising, of ordering either additions in quantity, or a variety in the kind of food, &c. as may suit the case of each individual patient. The alterations as to diet, now in contemplation, appear to relate, not to the quantity, but to the introduction of greater variety in the stated Hospital allowances.

5thly, While we do not object to the suggestion in the Report for obviating the want of a facility of communication betwixt the Medical Department and the Managers, which seems to be felt by a part of the Medical Officers, we cannot avoid expressing our hope, that a more beneficial co-operation may take place, than an official meeting held quarterly seems calculated to produce: on this head, we think that the Report ought to have noticed the resolution of the Managers in September last, as to "the appointment of a respectable and intelligent Medical Man to reside in the House, take charge of the Apothecary's department, and have a general superintendence of the House." This appointment appears to us to be precisely such as the Medical Gentlemen suggest, for the improvement of the communication betwixt them and the Managers, and seems well calculated to prevent the occurrence of those occasional instances of inattention, which have given cause to complaint against the internal economy of this Establishment.

6thly, It appears to us, that the Report does not point out with sufficient precision the state of the Hospital at the period when this inquiry was moved for. From the statements which were then given, it must have been inferred, that the grounds of complaint brought forward were at that moment existing. It is now however proved, not only that the whole of these matters had been taken under the deliberate consideration of the Managers, many months before, and

that the most expedient measures had then been resolved upon, but that the improvements required were in progress, and even in most instances carried into effect, long previous to this inquiry being moved for.

Lastly, However much we should have been disposed at the outset to have recommended a different mode of proceeding, we earnestly join in the hope, that the result of this inquiry may tend to attract the increased confidence and favour of the public towards this Institution, to which, upon a full review of the evidence, we conceive it in every way most justly entitled.

DAVID ROBERTSON WILLIAMSON.  
WILLIAM HAE.  
GEORGE H. BAIRD.  
WILLIAM ARBUTHNOT.  
ALEXANDER DUNCAN.  
ROBERT DUNDAS.  
JAMES DUNDAS.

RESOLUTIONS  
OF THE  
GENERAL COURT OF CONTRIBUTORS,

HELD ON THE 30TH MARCH, 1818.

*Extracted from Caledonian Mercury Newspaper of 2d April, 1818.*

Resolved—That the Meeting do return their thanks to the Committee for the great zeal and attention with which they have conducted this inquiry.

That the Meeting are happy to observe, that after so anxious and minute a scrutiny, the Committee have not discovered any abuse in the management of this Hospital; and that such instances of inattention as had accidentally crept in, had been discovered by the Managers themselves.

That some of these were actually rectified, and the rest in the course of being rectified, by the Managers, before the Committee was appointed or the inquiry thought of.

That the Meeting are therefore of opinion, that it is quite unnecessary to give any recommendations to the Managers on the subject, and resolve—That the Cordial thanks of the Meeting be offered to the Managers for their uniform and zealous attention to the interests of the Charity; assuring them at the same time, that the Meeting place the fullest reliance, both on their diligence to discover, and on their zeal to rectify, any occasional defects which may possibly, from time to time, occur in the management of so great an Establishment.

And further, this Meeting feel themselves called upon to declare, that this Hospital well deserves the confidence and support of the Public.

SPEECH OF THE LORD PRESIDENT.

*Extracted from Caledonian Mercury Newspaper of April 2d, 1818.*

THE Lord President observed, that on all subjects of this kind public discussion was much to be lamented, not, however, from the fear of any investigation leading to results which would occasion the slightest uneasiness to the Managers, but from the unfounded reports which it gave rise to. Was it not from discussions of this kind, and the grossly exaggerated reports which had already been so industriously circulated, that the present inquiry owed its origin?—reports which were calculated only to do injury to the Institution, by intercepting the benevolence of the Public. It is now twelve or fourteen years since he became connected with the management of this House, he ought, therefore, to be supposed to know something of its concerns; and in the whole progress of this investigation, nothing had hurt his feelings half so much as that a persuasion should actually have existed on the part of the Medical Attendants of the Hospital, that there was any difficulty in approaching the Managers, or that their complaints would at any time have been passed over unheeded. There was no foundation whatever for such an idea; on the contrary, their door was open to every individual who chose to knock at it, and surely they had no grounds on earth to expect an uncivil or an unkind reception. The salary or allowance to the Physicians was petty in the extreme, and could not even be mentioned as a remuneration for the pains, the trouble, and the anxiety they bestowed on the Hospital. To the Surgical Attendants there was no allowance whatever. How then could it be supposed that any thing like a reluctance on the part of the Managers to listen to their suggestions could ever have existed, while, at the same time, it was as naturally the wish of the Managers to give the Medical Officers as little additional trouble as

possible. But, if they had any complaint to make, or improvement to suggest, it is plain that it must be in writing, as it must enter into the record of the Hospital, and be regularly considered by the Managers.

In the enumeration of the different recommendations which he found in the Report, there were some which could not possibly as yet be overtaken, even if judged to be expedient, such in particular as the change in the election. But he would beg to assure the gentlemen present, that the office of Manager was neither so simple as might be suspected, or a sinecure, as some considered it. He was very willing to avow, however, that notwithstanding the utmost possible exertion on the part of any set of men—in spite of the best management that any human exertion could attain, perfection was not to be expected. When it was considered that the family consisted of 250 patients, who, from the very nature of the Institution, must be supposed, as they really do, to belong to the very lowest classes of society—when it was considered that these were left to the superintendence of thirty or forty nurses, selected from among the most miserable of their sex, how was it to be expected that no cause of complaint should ever creep into such an Institution? It had been asserted, that superior wages would procure superior attendance; this, however, was a proposition very dubious in itself; for, when we found among the lower classes that high wages were given for the price of labour, we generally found it followed by dissipation and wretchedness. The class of colliers presented a striking instance to this effect: they earned more wages than any other set of labourers, but it was only to enable them to spend two or three days in the week at the ale-house. It uniformly happened that the greater the wages the greater was the profligacy. There was another avocation very disgusting, but very necessary, which he might also mention, he meant that of the public executioner; did gentlemen believe that any increase of his salary would procure a more respectable character to undertake that painful duty? With respect to nurses, their business was of the most disagreeable, laborious, and disgusting nature; and therefore no woman will ever adopt that line of life who can possibly earn her bread in any other; and if gentlemen will only consider how difficult, nay, he would almost say how impossible, it was in private society to procure persons in that capacity to whom no fault could be found, they would cease to be surprised that the Managers of a public Hospital were not able to procure nurses of a better description.

He did not wish to indulge in any invidious comparison between this and any other establishment of the same kind; and although he does not wish to arrogate to the Managers any merit for the very splendid talent with which the Medical department has uniformly been administered, still he considers the Managers entitled to the credit of the medical arrangements; and it is only within a very few years that the same Managers had put an end to one of the most mischievous practices in the Surgical Department of the Institution; nor is it many years since the whole bedsteads in the House were of wood and canvas. The same Managers had substituted bedsteads of iron, an improvement which was uniformly allowed to be of the most salutary nature. It was not two years ago that he visited the great Naval Hospital at Plymouth, where every thing might have been expected to be in the very best condition; there, however, he had nothing to learn, though every thing to praise and admire in the conduct of the house: But the bedsteads were of wood, no cross lights to air the wards, and nothing but wooden floors. The floors had been objected to by some; but for his part, having been educated in England, he never can forget the impression of cleanliness and comfort the brick or tiled floors of the cottages uniformly conveyed to his mind. In an hospital, however, they are peculiarly useful. The floors do not retain infection, they are easily cleaned of stains, and they dry almost immediately on being washed.

Great complaints have been made of the want of various utensils, particularly knives and forks. He was not aware that any establishment of the kind supplied them; and, surely, when it is considered that even the poorest individual is possessed of a knife, the hardship was not so great. The fact, however, is, they were formerly supplied, but as it was found they quickly disappeared, the practice of supplying them was given up.

It had likewise been asserted, that none of the improvements which have lately been made on the Hospital originated prior to the date of the letter addressed by the Clerks to the Managers, in July last; but with respect to one point, he could speak with the utmost precision; that was the washing of the linen. That matter was under the consideration of the Managers as early as summer 1816; and, therefore, when he was at Plymouth in October of that year, he procured a model of the drying machine, which was sent down for the inspection and consideration of the Managers. These things, however, required arrangements, particularly when it is considered that the same plan



was formerly in use, and had been abandoned, because it was thought better to bleach the linen in the country; and he had his doubts whether it was a prudent measure to alter this plan now, and whether the spots and specks upon the sheets were not more than compensated by the *caller* smell of a country bleachfield. The linen which was "bleached on the gowan brae, and beetled in the burn," would, to him at least, be preferable. One gentleman, from whom the Committee had got much valuable information, had stated, that the washing in the hospitals of London was infinitely superior, but with great candour admitted, that on examining the sheets, he had observed some small stains. Where such existed, there could be little doubt that larger also existed occasionally; and as for the information he derived from matrons of the different hospitals, who asserted that their sheets were washed free from all stains by a common washer-woman at Somers' Town, he must be allowed to discredit it as a thing impossible, on chemical principles.

The bedding too of the Hospital had been much found fault with; and how was it possible that some bedding in an establishment of the kind must not occasionally prove faulty—proper respect to economy would not allow them to throw things away: nay, such was their situation respecting funds, that they were compelled to wear every thing to the back bone. It had been asserted, that there was no trace of any of the blankets being scoured, but how did this fact turn out? In 1817, no less than 1791 pairs were scoured, which, supposing there had been 250 beds made down in the House all the year round, would have supplied seven pairs of clean blankets to each. Again, with respect to sheets, no less than 3300 pairs had been washed last year, allowing thirteen pairs to 250 beds during the year.

And now, with respect to the period at which this business was agitated, he could not help saying a few words.—It was in the month of July, when, from the epidemic which then prevailed so extensively over the country, an extraordinary influx of patients poured into the Hospital—if, during this time, some little derangement in the regular supply of linen took place, it was not to be wondered at. It was at that time the Society for the Relief of the Destitute Sick waited on the Managers. A deputation from that truly philanthropic institution was received by the Managers in the most friendly manner; and, in consequence of their statement of the prevalence of fever among the lower orders, Queensberry House was fitted up for the reception of seventy fever patients;—could it be wondered at then, that some

little delay might sometimes have occurred in changing sheets? But when he considered too, that the period at which these Clerks of the Hospital thought fit to bring forward their complaint was the moment when the much-respected Matron, Mrs Montgomery, now no more, had an only child stretched on the bed of sickness and of death, in a house at the head of Burntsfield Links, where maternal affection called upon her to attend—was it surprising, either that some little derangement of the domestic economy might have taken place, or that the Managers did not interpose their authority to prevent the Matron from occasionally visiting her dying child;—but yet this was the period they thought fit to bring it forward. Among other complaints, the Managers have been accused of discountenancing this statement, and they had indeed no small reason to be dissatisfied with it: Still, however, these Clerks were not found fault with for giving it in, but for not having given it in much earlier; for having allowed this account—current of accusations, too plainly intended to overwhelm the Matron at once, to accumulate to such an extent; because, if true, it reflected the highest degree of blame on the Clerks themselves, for not having checked each as it occurred. They had, moreover, too much reason to be dissatisfied with this catalogue of grievances, and to receive it with jealousy, from their personal knowledge that several of the accusations were altogether false and groundless, of which he thought it necessary to give only one or two instances. In page 105 of the Evidence, it was stated, that an individual, a miller too by trade, had complained of his porridge being too thin, and made of barley meal.—Now, unless barley meal had been specifically ordered him by his Medical Attendants, of which the Clerks ought to have been aware, the thing was totally impossible, and as direct a mis-statement as ever was palmed upon any individuals; for it was not within the nature of possibilities, unless it could be supposed that his mess of barley-meal porridge was taken out of the oatmeal pot, as no barley meal is used in the House, unless when used for a particular patient. Another assertion, (page 101) but of a far deeper dye, they also knew to be totally inconsistent with truth, namely, that the beds of the Fever Ward were allowed to circulate indiscriminately through the House; and what did this villainous assertion ground itself upon, but that one of the Surgeons having called for a bed to be brought to a patient who had been carried in with some bad accident in the night time, and that bed being produced so soon as to make him suspect it belonged to the adjoining Fever Ward, which he found to

be the case, he instantly dismissed it, without even allowing the patient to be laid upon it. On this simple story, so creditable to the vigilance and attention of the Medical Person on duty, has been reared this vile and infamous accusation; and knowing as they did how totally groundless some of the charges were, was it wonderful the Managers should hesitate to adopt the statement of the Clerks, and to act upon it without further consideration—would they have been warranted in at once charging the Matron with all the delinquencies which the Clerks had laid to her charge? It is well known, that on the respectability of this person every thing depends, in an establishment of this kind; and few are able to command the respect which Mrs Rennie, who so long filled that situation, at all times did. Mrs Rennie was by birth a gentlewoman, and a lady in her manners, who was received in the best society in Edinburgh, and who was amply qualified to keep the numerous individuals, and particularly the young men who were under her charge, in order. The Matron in such a house required all the support the Managers could give her, to assume and to maintain the necessary authority over such a mass of heterogeneous elements as the inhabitants of the Royal Infirmary consisted of. The authority which it was necessary for her to assume put him in mind of Dr Bushby, the Master of Westminster School, who, when the King honoured the School with a visit, as he received his Majesty at the door, clapt his hat on his head, whispering to his Royal Visitor, that the boys in his school must not be allowed to believe that a greater man existed than himself.

Much fault had been found with the Lock Ward, and he was sorry to say, that it had, for not less than ten or twelve years, been a constant topic of anxiety to the Managers. In Edinburgh there was no other receptacle for the miserable individuals that were received into it: What were the Managers to do? were they to shut their doors upon them entirely, or were they to grant them such accommodation as their funds would allow them? They had often wished for the means of fitting up an additional house, but these were not at their disposal. From the nature of the case, it was impossible that the Lock Ward could be kept equally clean with the other departments of the House, nor was it in the power of the Managers to bestow an equal accommodation upon it; from the great influx of their patients within these few years they had been obliged to alter the Ward from the upper part of the House to a lower, the former being required for the extension of the Surgical Wards. It was much to be desired that se-

parate establishment for the reception of these miserable creatures could be procured; the Managers had often had their eyes on an adjoining house, formerly inhabited by the late Dr Hope, and belonging to the Infirmary, to be fitted up expressly for that purpose; and if any means could be devised for accomplishing this desirable object, it would meet every support which the Managers could possibly contribute; meantime, however, he was sure the Meeting would not wish them to shut their doors upon the miserable and the wretched.

One part of the Report he did not expect to originate in the quarter it did, namely, that part of it which seemed to convey a censure on the Managers for economy. It was seldom that men having the charge of public money were to be accused of this; but if, in the present instance, it could be supposed an error, it was an error on the safe side; as it was admitted, that for ten years, their expence exceeded their income. But in what are the Managers to blame?—The diet which was allotted to the House was fixed more than half a century ago, by the first physicians of the age, and acted upon ever since; and when it was considered by whom it was fixed, and by whom it was acted upon for such a length of time, were the Managers to blame for continuing it?—His Lordship then stated how the fact stood with regard to the liberality and the quality of the victuals given out at the Infirmary, when compared with the usual diet of classes of the same description; and in his avocation as elder of St Andrew's church, it had been his duty for many years, sometimes in company with Mr Harry Davidson, and sometimes alone, to visit one of the poorest quarters in the New Town; he meant St Anne's Street—a street which (craving pardon of the Lord Provost), he could not help most sincerely to lament, no longer existed; but here he found the diet of the inhabitants neither so good nor so plentiful as the usual full diet of the Hospital. Among another class of people he also made it his business to inquire—among the farm servants of a tenant on the estate of Granton, and even these he found not so well fed. It had been insinuated that his honourable friend Dr Hope, in the course of his evidence, had stated that the diet was good enough, as if he had intended to draw an invidious distinction between our own countrymen and those of the south. But what he had stated, and wisely stated, was, that the diet ordered for patients must be in some degree regulated by the food they have been previously in the habit of taking; and when it is known that the Medical Attendants are empowered to order whatever they may judge proper, fish, fowl, chicken, eggs, all kinds of

fruit in their season; nay, even grapes from the hot-house, in addition to the usual allowance of the House, surely the fault must lie with them, not with the Managers, if the patients want for any thing. In an infamous pamphlet, which had just made its appearance, for the purpose of influencing the minds of the Contributors, it had been asserted, that the wine and porter ordered was probably intercepted in its transit to the patients; but when it was known that the Apothecary was in fact the butler of the House, and that wine was measured out as medicine, it not only became his duty to give it out, but the duty of the Clerks to see that it was regularly administered.

It had been attempted to palliate this inquisition by asserting that no possible blame was attributed, or attributable to the Managers; for himself, and for his coadjutors, he disclaimed, in the most direct terms, the possibility of these charges existing without heavy responsibility, and their conduct would have been culpable in the extreme, had they been grounded in fact; he scorned the pitiful attempt to hold them guiltless, could such gross and improper conduct have existed in the House.

Among other improvements, the establishment of a House Manager had been for some time under the view of the Managers, and upon this subject he could not sit down without noticing the incalculable obligations they lay under to their Treasurer, Mr Henry Jardine. According to the regulations of the Establishment, the duties of this officer were confined to the management of the public money, and the adjustment and discharge of all claims upon the House, and for this a very inadequate salary is assigned; but how has the Treasurer conducted himself? Instead of confining himself to the mere paying and receiving money, which might at all times be done in his own private chamber, Mr Jardine has actually done the duty of a House Manager; he has visited the establishment almost daily, and as if actuated by the spirit of his grandfather, who may indeed be considered as the founder of this great institution, he has exerted the most unbounded zeal in attending to every department of the Hospital. In this same contemptible pamphlet he is forthwith accused of delegating his duties to his partner; and why should he not have done so, if he found that his other avocations would not allow him to attend so constantly and so long as he wished to the affairs of the House; what harm could be derived to it by his obtaining the assistance of his partner, Mr Wilson, in gratuitous services not required of him by the rules of his office? To such a Treasurer the Establishment was under the deepest

obligations, and should they lose him, where could they find one, actuated by hereditary attachment, who would be inclined to bestow that patient, zealous, and constant attention to all the affairs of the House, and fulfil duties which no Manager, no House Steward, or scarcely any individual but himself, could be expected to perform?

Before sitting down, his Lordship stated that he would not have trespassed so long upon the time of the Meeting, had he not been anxious, for the sake of the Institution, to explain to the Contributors the result of this long and minute inquiry. It was to him only wonderful that so little was found on which to rear charges against the Managers. But with respect to their offering any vindication of their conduct in the management of the concerns of the House, they distinctly disclaimed all such intention; and he, for one at least, cared not what the voice of malignity might urge against him, so long as his own conscience left him unimpeached.



1) *with the map*

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*From the Author (4)*

OBSERVATIONS

BY THE

MANAGERS

OF THE

NEW TOWN DISPENSARY,

ON THE

REPORT

TO THE QUARTERLY MEETING OF MANAGERS OF THE  
PUBLIC DISPENSARY, 7TH AUGUST 1817.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED AT THE CALEDONIAN MERCURY PRESS.

1817.

*Edinburgh, 25th August 1817.*

At a Quarterly Meeting of the New Town Dispensary,  
held this day :

MANAGERS PRESENT :

THOMAS THOMSON, Esq. in the Chair :

Rev. D. Dickson, junior	George Ross, Esq.
Rev. Archibald Alison	John Wood, Esq.
Rev. R. Morehead	Walter Cook, Esq.
Bishop Cameron	T. Guthrie Wright, Esq.
Convener Miller	George Lyon, Esq.
William Trotter, Esq.	T. Blackwood, Esq.
John Manderston, Esq.	George Wilson, Esq.
Dr William Wright	James Swan, Esq. Secretary :

MEDICAL OFFICERS PRESENT :

Dr John Thomson	Dr J. W. Turner
Dr W. P. Alison	Dr D. M'Lagan
Dr B. Bartlet Buchanan	Dr James Murdoch :

The Secretary having reminded the Managers, that at last Meeting the Reverend D. Dickson, the Reverend Andrew Thomson, Mr Lyon, and Mr Wood, had been appointed a Committee to draw up and submit to the present meeting such observations on "the Report to the Quarterly Meeting of Managers of the Public Dispensary, 7th August 1817," as should appear to

them necessary to be laid before the public, Mr Wood, the Convener of that Committee, presented the observations prepared by them; which having been read,

It was moved by Mr Ross, that these observations be approved of and ordered to be printed and circulated, which motion having been seconded by Convener Miller, was unanimously carried; and a remit was made to the former Committee to take charge of the printing and distribution.

Mr Dickson then moved that the thanks of the meeting be given to the Convener of the Committee, for the able and satisfactory manner in which he had drawn up the observations; which motion having been seconded by Mr Cook, was unanimously agreed to.

#### OBSERVATIONS, &c.

It is with feelings of the deepest regret, that the Managers of the New Town Dispensary find themselves under the necessity of again appearing before the public. They have ever been most anxious that the merits of the institution under their management should be judged of by its effects, of which it was their intention merely to lay a plain statement annually before the subscribers, at the period of their general meeting. They feel also peculiar reluctance at having any thing like the appearance of a controversy with the managers of another institution, whose benevolent object is the same with their own—to whose funds many of themselves are at this moment subscribers—to whose exertions they have all uniformly paid a ready tribute of applause,—and with whom they have ever been, and still are, most desirous to continue on an amicable footing. They feel, however, at the same time, that they would be deficient in the duty which they owe to themselves and to the institution intrusted to their care, were they to pass over in silence certain statements contained in a recent Report, directed



by the Managers of the Public Dispensary to be "sent to each of the subscribers to both Dispensaries." By such silence, they might justly be held to acquiesce in the correctness of observations, which attribute to them, as they conceive, the most illiberal views, and represent their institution, instead of being beneficial, as on the contrary, one "productive of many evils." To obviate so injurious a representation, they feel themselves called upon to submit the following Statement to the consideration of the public.

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THE number of poor patients who flocked from all parts of the city and suburbs, to avail themselves of the benefits of the New Town Dispensary, far exceeded the expectation of its founders. Within eighteen months from the period of its commencement, it had given relief to no fewer than 8062 persons. It was not, therefore, at all surprising, that its medical officers should have represented, that "when the number of patients who attend at the Dispensary is considered—the attention necessary to be given to each case—the quantity of prescriptions to be written and prepared—the number requiring to be visited at their own houses—and the extent of town over which these patients are spread,—it must at once appear evident, that these duties cannot be performed without much exertion on the part of the medical officers, and a consumption of their time almost incompatible with any other employment."

The Managers were deeply impressed with the justice of this representation; and the only question, therefore, with them, was with regard to the best mode in

which the labours of the medical officers might be alleviated, with as little detriment as possible to the public. For this purpose two expedients occurred—either to enlarge their own establishment, by assuming an additional number of medical men, and establishing a branch of their institution in the Old Town; or else to enter into an arrangement with the other institution, for a division of the town between the two Dispensaries, for the purpose of visiting the sick poor. The latter of these seemed to them the preferable expedient: it could not only be accomplished with less expence to the public, but had also other advantages to recommend it. The opening a branch of their institution in the Old Town might possibly, as they conceived, give some offence to the other establishment, a circumstance which they have on all occasions been desirous, as much as possible, to avoid; while, on the other hand, they were clearly of opinion that the arrangement proposed, without destroying an honourable emulation (the advantages of which in this, as in every other department of usefulness, have already been so fully experienced), would produce a system of co-operation tending greatly to the mutual accommodation of both institutions, and rendering each far more beneficial to the public.

They therefore authorised Mr Trotter, who is in the direction of both institutions, to communicate to the Managers of the Public Dispensary their sentiments upon this subject. He embraced, accordingly, what he considered to be a very favourable opportunity for this purpose, at a meeting of the Managers of that institution, called for the express object of making a division of the town into districts to be allotted to their own medical

officers. At that meeting "Mr Trotter, as authorised by the Managers of the New Town Dispensary, stated their anxious wish to co-operate with the Managers of the Public Dispensary, in any plan of dividing the town and suburbs which might be mutually approved of, as likely to increase the usefulness of both institutions. He therefore moved, that a committee be appointed to hold a conference with the Managers of the New Town Dispensary, in order to consider by what means or plan of co-operation the benefits of both institutions may be most effectually and advantageously dispensed to the public." The meeting considered the motion out of place, and postponing the consideration of it to a future occasion, *forthwith* proceeded to allot the whole town to their own medical officers. At the next quarterly meeting, however, of that institution, which Mr Trotter, in consequence of absence from town, was prevented from attending, it appears that a motion was made by Dr Duncan senior, and approved of, "That, in compliance with Mr Trotter's motion, a committee of the Managers of the Public Dispensary," consisting of the gentlemen whose names appear at their printed Report, "be appointed to meet with a similar committee of Managers from the New Town Dispensary, to consider in what manner the efforts of the medical practitioners attached to both may be most advantageously united, for affording relief to those who have at once to struggle with poverty and disease."

The result of the conference which ensued is already before the public. The committee of Managers of the New Town Dispensary reported it as their opinion, that

the object in view would be most beneficially promoted by a division of the town between the two institutions, "and that it was by no means expedient that they should be blended and incorporated into one establishment;" which Report received the unanimous approbation of the ordinary Managers of that institution, at a *pro re nata* meeting held on the 17th day of June last. The other committee, on the contrary, reported it as their opinion, that any arrangement for a division of the town was "altogether inadmissible" on their part, unless accompanied with a total union of the two establishments; which Report was approved of by a majority of the Managers of the Public Dispensary, at their quarterly meeting on the 7th of August. The nature, however, and tone of that Report, called forth a strong dissent from some of the Managers present on this occasion, who conceived, that whatever might be the opinion of a majority of the Directors of the Public Dispensary with regard to the proposition submitted to them by the other institution, the language of the Report was improper, conveying insinuations that were, in their opinion, unfounded; and that the facts stated in it did not accord with their knowledge, as they were not aware of any pernicious consequences that had arisen from the new establishment, but, on the contrary, good ones to the public—the attendance given at the patients' houses, and the institution of several new branches by the Public Dispensary\*.

In that Report the Managers of the New Town Dis-

\* Reasons of dissent transmitted by these gentlemen for insertion in the report of the other Dispensary, but which were stated to have arrived too late for that purpose.

pensary are represented as having totally rejected a "can-  
 " did and liberal plan of union," substituting in its place  
 " a proposal altogether inadmissible," and apparently  
 involving in itself " a gross absurdity;" one which would  
 have the effect of continuing a system attended with  
 " many pernicious and disagreeable consequences;" one  
 which " would evidently be a material step towards the  
 " accomplishment of what seems to have been a favour-  
 " its object with the projector of the New Dispensary  
 " from its commencement, the conversion of the Public  
 " Dispensary into the Old Town Dispensary alone," and  
 as accompanying their proposal with " insinuations and  
 " conditions which do not carry that spirit of concilia-  
 " tion and justice which the Public Dispensary had a  
 " right to expect."

How far these representations are well founded, the  
 public will be better able to judge, when they have had  
 an opportunity of considering the comparative advan-  
 tages and disadvantages of the two plans here brought  
 into competition. And,

I. With regard to the plan for uniting and incorpo-  
 rating the two establishments. This proposal appeared to  
 the Managers of the New Town Dispensary to be at-  
 tended with manifest disadvantages. It seemed, in the  
 first place, to be destructive of that highly useful spirit  
 of emulation, the benefits of which had been held forth  
 to the public in the original "Statement" of the found-  
 ers of their institution, and had been since so amply con-  
 firmed by experience. It is obviously, in a great mea-  
 sure, owing to the existence of these two separate and

independent establishments, that the sick poor of this  
 city and suburbs are at this moment placed in a situation  
 so superior to that of any former period. A far greater  
 number of the inhabitants are now interested in the ob-  
 ject of such institutions, and annually contribute to their  
 support; a far greater number of individuals, labouring  
 at once under disease and poverty, are annually relieved;  
 and far greater accommodation is afforded to them in the  
 mode of procuring that relief. Not only has the new  
 institution been established upon a much improved plan,  
 but also, since its establishment, the Managers of the  
 Public Dispensary, as might naturally be expected, have  
 been induced to adopt some of its most material improve-  
 ments. The original object of their institution has been  
 so far changed, that, instead of leading the poor merely  
 to expect from that charity the alleviation of those com-  
 plaints which do not require confinement within doors,  
 they too have recently made an arrangement, for the  
 purpose of visiting at their own houses all those patients  
 who require this mode of attendance. They have also,  
 since the establishment of the New Town Dispensary,  
 been induced to open branches of their institution in  
 various districts. In consequence of their increased  
 exertions, the number of patients relieved at that  
 institution, in the course of last year, were 1000 more  
 than in any former year; while, during the same  
 period, no fewer than 6728 received relief, of one de-  
 scription or another, at the New Town Dispensary.  
 Highly as the Managers of the new institution value the  
 services of their medical officers (and they cannot, in truth,  
 be too highly valued), they are at the same time fully  
 satisfied, that the same advantages never could have re-



sulted from these gentlemen merely uniting their exertions with those belonging to the old establishment. They, on the contrary, sincerely believe, that if the New Dispensary had not existed as a separate and distinct establishment, the benefits already mentioned would have been in a great measure lost to the public. Deeply impressed with this conviction, they were unwilling to give their sanction to a measure by which, without the prospect of any adequate advantage, all the benefit arising from the independent existence of the two establishments would be entirely sacrificed, and a serious obstacle thus be thrown in the way of their future improvement.

But, in the *second* place, the Plan of Union, submitted to the Managers of the New Town Dispensary, afforded them no sufficient security, either for the adoption or continuance of those peculiar advantages which they considered their own institution at present to possess, and to which in no small degree they were induced to ascribe the unprecedented usefulness and success which, beyond all dispute, had attended their exertions. Of this description were those regulations by which their Dispensary is open every day in the week—their medical officers give a permanent attendance, instead of one only by rotation at remote intervals,—lying-in women are waited upon at their own homes,—the duties of manager and of medical officer are kept perfectly distinct, &c. By the proposed plan the union was immediately to take place, while every matter of detail was left open to subsequent arrangement, according to a plan to be prepared by the medical gentlemen of both institutions, of whom those belonging to the New Town Dispensary would form an extremely small pre-

portion. Its managers had some reason to apprehend, that matters which they regarded as of fundamental importance might elsewhere be viewed in a very different light. Nor were their apprehensions entirely imaginary. One of these regulations (that of having the Dispensary open every day in the week) is, in the recent Report of the Managers of the Public Dispensary, treated as unnecessary and superfluous; while another (the midwifery department) is actually represented as “productive of many evils.” The public will judge how far in such circumstances the guardians of an institution, which, in the course of two years from its commencement, has given relief to no fewer than 12,185 individuals, would have been justified in acceding to a proposal by which they were called upon to sacrifice at once the name and the independence of their own establishment, without, at the same time, having any sufficient security for the continuance of those advantages which had rendered it so beneficial.

To weigh against these strong objections to the proposed plan of incorporating the two institutions, the only argument which has been adduced in support of such a proposal is, “that many pernicious and disagreeable consequences which must of necessity result, and which indeed have already, to a very considerable degree, resulted from the establishment of two rival Dispensaries at Edinburgh, would in future be effectually prevented.” Of these “many pernicious and disagreeable consequences” one only has been mentioned, and that as a specimen of all the rest (*ab uno disce omnia*;) “such as patients running from one Dispensary to another, and taking medicines from both at

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p. 2.

"the same time." Such an objection as this however seems scarcely to require any serious answer. For it must be perfectly obvious, that if this *running* of patients from one Dispensary to another be an evil, it is one by no means likely to be of frequent occurrence, and if it were, the present system of the Public Dispensary itself is liable to precisely the same objection; for it is just as likely, and accordingly has as frequently happened, that patients should run from one branch of the same institution to another, as that they should run to different Dispensaries. It is hardly possible to suppose that such a consideration can have weighed much with the Managers of the Public Dispensary; and it is therefore to be regretted, that if there be indeed "many evils," which can alone be remedied by a complete union of the two institutions, these have not been more distinctly pointed out; and that the one held up as "the head" and front of the offending, is in itself of so perfectly insignificant a nature.

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dispensary,

II. With regard to the plan for dividing the town between the two institutions, the Managers of the Public Dispensary have stated, in the *first* place, that such a proposal is "altogether inadmissible."—"For we conceive," say they, "that any division of the town into districts, with any other Dispensary, would be a breach of faith on the part of the Public Dispensary, with all those gentlemen who, by their benefactions to that institution, have become governors for life; and that it would be a violation of a sacred obligation which the Managers of the Public Dispensary have come under to the dead, who have left legacies to that institution

"for the relief of the sick poor, not in particular districts, but in every quarter of the town." Far be it from the Managers of the New Dispensary to call upon their brethren of the other institution either to be guilty of "a breach of faith" to the living, or to violate any "sacred obligation which they have come under to the dead;" but they must fairly own they cannot possibly bring themselves to view this objection in so very grave and serious a light, or to consider it so "insuperable," as it has appeared to the gentlemen of the other institution. If indeed these gentlemen had been called upon to accede to any arrangement, not calculated for the benefit of the objects committed to their charge, then doubtless they would have been bound by this consideration alone, to withhold their sanction from any measure of that description, even though there had been no "Governors for life," nor any contributors among the dead. But if, on the contrary, the proposed arrangement was one which would have rendered the services of each institution more beneficial to the public, and have thus promoted the general advantage of the whole sick poor of the city and suburbs, it is difficult to conceive any contract, either with the living or with the dead, by which they could have been precluded from accomplishing so desirable an object,—the only legitimate object indeed of their institution. Any argument to the contrary would prove a great deal too much. It would be a total bar to all improvement on the part of the institution, which, whatever be the change of circumstances, must for ever remain such, and no other than it was at the period of this alleged contract. A Life Governor, or a testamentary benefactor, would thus become the most

dangerous enemy of such an institution. Happily however such a consideration has not deterred the Managers of the Public Dispensary from making those other improvements which, with so much credit to themselves, they have recently introduced into their establishment. They have now placed upon a regular footing the visiting of the sick poor at their own houses, though it is by no means unlikely that among their Life Governors, or their deceased contributors, there may have been some who, in their partiality for the system of hospitals, have thought that such mode of attendance would be injurious to that system. They have also opened branches of their institution in various quarters of the town, though some benefactor dead or alive may have imagined that such an arrangement would lead to "pernicious and disagreeable consequences, such as patients running from one Dispensary to another, and taking medicines" at them all. Nay more, they have even announced their resolution to take steps for obtaining a royal charter, though some such benefactor may have considered this as not a due application of funds destined by him exclusively for the relief of poverty and disease.

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lic Dispensary,

But it is further said, that "to these insuperable objections it might also be added, that it is impossible to form any division of the town, which although it might be highly beneficial to the New Dispensary, would not diminish both the usefulness and the funds of the Public Dispensary." The Managers of the New Town Dispensary are quite at a loss to discover any ground for this opinion. They can see no good reason why it should be "impossible" for these two in-

stitutions, both of which have at this moment the charge of the sick poor of the whole city and suburbs, "to form any division of the town," which would not be liable to the objection of benefiting one exclusively at the expence of the other. On the contrary, they conceive that such an arrangement would equally and materially promote the usefulness of both institutions; and that any thing which contributes to their usefulness would naturally have likewise the effect of augmenting their funds; while, at the same time, less expence would thus be incurred, than by both institutions continuing to take charge of the whole town as at present. And they trust it is unnecessary for them to declare, that it was from such conviction alone they were induced to make the proposal to the other Dispensary. The idea of promoting the benefit of their own institution at the expence of any other, never once entered into their contemplation.

Again it is stated as appearing to be "a gross absurdity that patients, without regard to their place of residence, may resort to either Dispensary which they may prefer, but that when the state of their disease requires confinement, they are to be debarred from being visited by the practitioner who prescribed for them, unless they reside in a particular situation." But if there be any thing in this objection at all, it is an objection which applies equally to their own institution as it exists at the present moment. Patients from all quarters of the town resort to the Dispensary at Richmond-street, where the whole medical men do duty by rotation; but an arrangement has been made, by which particular districts are allotted to each, for the purpose of visiting patients at their own houses. Under such an

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lic Dispensary  
p. 8.



arrangement, it is obvious that it must frequently happen in that institution, where its medical officers are so extremely numerous, that when the state of a patient's disease requires confinement, he will be attended by a different practitioner from the one, or more than one, who prescribed for him at the Dispensary. The idea, however, that any medical gentleman, whether belonging to either Dispensary or not, is to be "debarred" from visiting any poor man who wishes his attendance, is in either case entirely out of the question. All that is meant by such an arrangement is to afford accommodation to the medical men, by a due division of labour; and that they shall not be compelled in the ordinary discharge of their Dispensary duties to visit beyond the particular bounds allotted to them.

Report of Public Dispensary, 8.

It is further alleged, that "insinuations and conditions are attached to the proposal from the New Dispensary, which do not carry that spirit of conciliation and of justice which the Public Dispensary had a right to expect." What is here meant by "insinuations" the Managers are utterly at a loss to conceive. They on the contrary submit to the public, whether in every respect their conduct has not been most fair, open, and explicit. They can also, at the same time, with the most perfect sincerity, declare, that in drawing up that Report, it was their most earnest wish to express themselves in terms not only free from all offence, but as conciliatory as possible towards the Managers of the other institution. So far from having any desire to avoid doing them "justice," they eagerly embraced that, as they had done every other opportunity, to pay that heartfelt tribute of applause to which these gentlemen are so well entitled for their "meritorious exertions" and services to

the public. For the truth of these observations they need only refer to the document itself, on perusing which, they are confident the public will readily acquit them of a charge which has been most painful to their feelings.

That there were "conditions" attached to their proposal (as there must ever be conditions in every arrangement between two contracting parties), they are, on the other hand, free to acknowledge. But they are sure that they will carry the opinion of the public along with them, when they assert that there is not one of these conditions which has not for its object exclusively the benefit of the poor. And when it is further considered, that, by the proposed arrangement, they were to give up the care of a great proportion of that class of the community at present committed to their charge, it was obviously incumbent upon them to secure to these the advantages which they had hitherto enjoyed. Surely if the Managers of the Public Dispensary, from similar views, did not consider themselves warranted in acceding to such an arrangement at all, they at least must, upon reflection, duly appreciate the motives which, upon this occasion, guided the conduct of the Managers of the new institution.

These conditions were, 1. The regular attendance upon patients in their own houses when necessary. 2. That the Dispensaries of each institution be open every day in the week: And 3. The continuance of the accoucheur department.

1. With regard to the first of these conditions, this was one to which it was now impossible for the Managers

port of Pub-  
Dispensary,  
p. 2.

of the Public Dispensary to have any objection, as they themselves had "lately enacted rules" for that purpose. But there is no little difficulty in understanding one observation of theirs upon this point, in which, after stating the nature of these rules, they observe, "Your Committee cannot possibly discover what benefit the sick poor would derive from being deprived of this assistance in any part of the town." For it must be perfectly plain, that so far from depriving the poor of this assistance, the sole object of the stipulation made by the new institution was to secure to them this mode of relief, and to afford to the medical practitioners in each district more leisure for the discharge of this important duty.

— p. 2.

But it is said that the proposed plan "would evidently be a material step towards the accomplishment of what seems to have been a favourite object with the projector of the New Dispensary from its commencement, the conversion of the Public Dispensary into the Old Town Dispensary alone." The consequences they add, "which would result from the accomplishment of this object, are too obvious to require notice." It does appear strange that the Managers of the Public Dispensary should have so widely mistaken the nature of the plan submitted to them, and should, in consequence of so unaccountable a mistake, have been led to regard a measure intended merely for the public benefit, as a "material step" towards the accomplishment of an illiberal but "favourite object." Whoever will take the trouble to peruse that plan of division, will at once perceive, that so far from having in view to convert the Public Dispensary "into an Old Town Dispensary alone," a great part of the New Town, compre-

Report of the  
Public Dispensary  
p. 2.

sary alone," a great part of the New Town, comprehending the whole of that quarter from Hanover-street westwards has, in order to obviate this very objection, been expressly allotted to that Dispensary. And, besides, if this plan was not satisfactory, let it be remembered that the New Town Committee, in their report, expressly "beg that it may be distinctly understood that they will, with the greatest pleasure, listen to any other plan of the kind which may be suggested as better calculated to promote the object in view." With regard to the views attributed to "the projector of the new Dispensary," its Managers conceive that by far the best contradiction which they can give to so groundless an allegation, is to state that this very plan, by which the other institution was to be put into the exclusive possession of so large a portion of the New Town, proceeded from him. In justice, however, to that eminent and respectable individual who has thus been personally alluded to, they feel themselves at the same time called upon to state that they have, on all occasions, witnessed in him the most liberal spirit towards the other institution; and they can have no doubt that any opposition with which he has had to contend, will hereafter be viewed in the same light with that which the venerable and distinguished founder of the Public Dispensary had to encounter at the time of its institution.

2. With regard to the condition that the Dispensaries of each institution should be open every day in the week, it is observed, "Medical aid by means of the practitioners at their own homes, and of a careful apothecary, whose shop is always open for the supply of

— p. 2.

"medicines, may justly be said to have been afforded  
 "to the patients of the Public Dispensary, *not only*  
*"every day of the week, but even every hour of the day,*  
*"ever since that charitable establishment was founded."*  
 The Managers, however, trust they will be pardoned in  
 avowing that they have found nothing in the foregoing  
 statement to induce them, in the slightest degree, to alter  
 their former opinion as to the infinite importance of daily  
 attendance at the Dispensary. And if it be undoubted  
 that the poor themselves must be the best judges of the  
 facilities afforded to them, their opinion has been pretty  
 strongly evinced by the striking circumstance of the  
 vast disproportion between the numbers who resort to  
 each institution for relief.

3. It is with a mingled emotion of astonishment and  
 regret, the Managers of the New Town Dispensary  
 have perused that part of the Report of the other insti-  
 tution, which relates to the accoucheur department.  
 "With regard," say they, "to midwifery, we confi-  
 dently hope that the Managers of the Public Dis-  
 pensary will never give any countenance to a plan  
 which must injure a highly interesting charitable in-  
 stitution already established in Edinburgh, and which  
 "is a most useful appendage to the University; and we  
 "are assured, from unquestionable authority, that this  
 "branch of the New Dispensary has already been pro-  
 ductive of *MANY EVILS*!! Now, with regard to the  
 Lying-in Hospital, there is every reason to believe that  
 neither its usefulness, nor the support which it had  
 hitherto received from the public, have been in the  
 slightest degree impaired by this department of the

Dispensary. The other charge, however, is of a kind  
 far less tangible, and from this very circumstance  
 infinitely more dangerous. The undescribed nature  
 of the "many evils" which it attributes—the parade  
 of unknown though "unquestionable authority" with  
 which it is introduced,—the air in short of mystery in  
 which it is wholly involved, are but too well calculated  
 (however they might be intended) to excite the most  
 groundless alarms, to injure at once the character and  
 usefulness of the institution, and to inflict a painful  
 wound on the feelings of those professional gentlemen  
 whose services in this department merited a far other  
 requital. The Managers indeed feel it impossible for  
 them by any tribute of theirs to do justice to the me-  
 ritorious exertions of these gentlemen, who for the last  
 two years have devoted so great a portion of their time  
 and talents, by day and night, to the care of the help-  
 less mothers of the poor. A regular record of each  
 case, with the particular circumstances attending it, is  
 carefully preserved at the Dispensary; from which it  
 appears that no fewer than 443 women have been de-  
 livered at their own houses, and carefully attended during  
 their recovery. Several of these were cases of difficulty,  
 in which the physicians' accoucheurs were called in to  
 the assistance of the ordinary attending midwives. The  
 benefits which the poor must have derived from the at-  
 tendance of practitioners, of their knowledge and skill,  
 are too obvious to require any explanation. And the  
 gratitude with which these benefits were received by  
 those for whose relief they were intended, may best be  
 learned by an appeal either to themselves, or to the Di-  
 rectors of those institutions which make the female poor



the peculiar object of their care. What "evils," on the other hand, can possibly have arisen from the services of these gentlemen, the Managers are utterly at a loss to conceive; and if there actually were any, it surely was the bounden duty of those who brought forward the allegation, distinctly to point them out, and not to leave every thing open to vague conjecture and surmise. Had the highly respectable individuals whose names have given sanction to this injurious rumour, reflected for a single moment on the consequences which it might occasion, it is doing them no more than justice to believe that they would have paused before they sent forth such a statement to the world. And had they made due investigation, there can be as little doubt they would have discovered nothing in this department to condemn, but much on the contrary to applaud.

In concluding, it is only proper farther to remark, that if the Managers of the other institution be correct in their opinion, that the poor of Edinburgh will "obtain from the institution, under their care, more effectual medical assistance, than is derived from Dispensaries in any other large town in Europe," there can be no ground to apprehend that the New Town Dispensary, which has so much more extensively diffused its benefits, should suffer from a similar comparison. If therefore the old institution merit (as it undoubtedly well merits) "the continued support of a liberal public," the Managers of the new institution have surely no reason whatever to dread that a continuance of that support will be withdrawn from them.

*From the Author* (5)  
OBSERVATIONS

RELATIVE TO

THE TREATMENT

BY

SIR WILLIAM ADAMS,

OF THE

OPHTHALMIC CASES

OF THE ARMY.

BY

JOHN VETCH, M. D.

PHYSICIAN TO THE FORCES,  
MEMBER OF THE MEDICAL AND CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON,  
AND OF THE ROYAL MEDICAL SOCIETY EDINBURGH.

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## OBSERVATIONS.

AT an early period with respect to the appearance of Ophthalmia in the British army, I was placed in charge of the Hospital established for the reception of that disease; and having conducted with success the treatment of more than three thousand cases, when its ravages at other places ~~was~~ great and alarming; I am in a more particular manner called upon to examine, with some attention, the grounds on which Sir Wm. ADAMS has advanced pretensions to the discovery of "those new and successful methods of treating the disease," which have been announced to the army, in the circular letter of the Right Honourable the Secretary at War, dated August 1817.

In consequence of a statement, made by the Right Honourable the Secretary at War, in the House of Commons, in the latter end of the

Session of Parliament of 1816, which gave me the first authentic information of the nature of the claims advanced by Sir Wm. ADAMS, to a more effectual treatment of the Ophthalmic cases of the Army—I lost no time in submitting a detailed account and return of the success which had marked my treatment of the acute disease, both with a view to its cure and eradication from the army; as well as of that affection of the Cornea which is liable to supervene, when the previous disease has been neglected or mismanaged.

This statement I was led to submit, less in justice to my own claims, than in behalf of those who were practically concerned in the issue of the question; inasmuch as the pretensions of Sir Wm. Adams led to the temporary substitution of a severe, and ineffectual operation, in the room of that treatment which I had successfully employed, in a wider range of cases than, it is to be hoped, will again occur in military practice; and the efficacy of which I professed myself willing to demonstrate, if admitted to a fair and comparative trial, with any means it was in the power of Sir Wm. Adams, even at that time, to suggest.

In a letter addressed by Sir Wm. Adams to the Governors of Greenwich Hospital, the nature and the value of his discoveries are at last detailed. However averse I am to carry the discussion of such a subject beyond the strict limits of professional arbitration, the direct reference made in that letter, to my name and practice, induce me to take this general notice of the pretensions he has advanced, and which appear to come under three distinct heads.

§ With respect to Sir Wm. Adams's treatment, in the commencement of the disease, by violent vomiting, I shall say but little, convinced as I am, that even he himself, should he ever see a case of real Egyptian Ophthalmia, in its violent and purulent stage, will not venture to place his principal trust in such a remedy.

On this head he has manifestly founded his conclusions relative to the treatment of the purulent Ophthalmia, which prevailed in the army, from the *catarrhal* form of disease, which chiefly shows itself among children, when much crowded together, and which, although an infectious disease, is specifically different from the one with which I have had to combat; or at the most, his experience of the purulent disease in



its early stage, has been confined to its appearance at the Military Asylum, where the age or the sex of the patients, prevented it ever acquiring the excessive violence which it assumed in the army.

Sir William insists particularly on the distinction betwixt violent vomiting, kept up for eight or ten hours, by emetic tartar, which he proposes, and a constant degree of nausea, which was one of the means of cure, commonly tried by others. The difference may readily be admitted; but I am able to assert, that if far more efficacious means than either, are not had recourse to, in the genuine form of the disease, the termination will add to the number of those who have already fallen victims to its ravages, and will soon prove, that innovation may be tried at too great a risque. No person can, with less justice than myself, be accused of a rash and indiscriminate recourse to the lancet; and I wholly disclaim the abuse of this efficient remedy, as described by Sir Wm. Adams. The rules which I was enabled to lay down, to guide the employment of general depletion, and the aids I derived from powerful and local treatment, are open to examination, and on an early occasion will be strictly detailed.

§ I proceed to examine the nature and the efficacy of the discovery, claimed by Sir Wm. Adams, for the cure of Opaque Cornea. With respect to his present practice, I must presume, that he either adheres to his original plan of treatment by excision, which I have declared, and which I can now prove to be from his own evidence, (independent of many objections to its general application) incompetent of itself to the cure of the disease; or, that he is forced to combine with the operation those very means which it was introduced to supersede, and of which, I may venture to say, that Sir Wm. Adams has still something to learn, both as to their value, and their proper mode of application.\* I shall, therefore, in the *first place*, submit some general observations respecting the

\* In the month of September, 1814, Sir W. Adams admitted to a patient (who, in consequence of that admission, put himself under my care) that there were but two ways of applying caustic for the cure of opaque cornea—one was by dropping a solution of it into the eye, which he actually ordered; the other, he said, would be so violent in its operation, as to occasion excruciating pain, and endanger the safety of the eye. I refer to the case of the Honble Capt. C——, R.N. The success which immediately attended the use of caustic in this case, without causing either pain, risque, or even momentary confinement, only shews the material difference produced by the same remedy, according to the mode in which it is employed.

disease itself; and, in the *second place*, I shall review the statements, now published, of its practical results.

It has been objected to the claims of Sir Wm. Adams, that he took the knowledge of the operation from the practice of the late Mr. Saunders; I must, in justice to myself observe, that in my account of the Ophthalmia of the Army, printed in 1806, when it would be easy to prove that I could not have had access to the opinions or practice of Mr. Saunders, I distinctly, and prior to any modern writer, made use of the term of Granular Surface, to describe the diseased state of the linings of the Palpebræ, which supervenes on Purulent Ophthalmia; and explicitly mentioned the bad effects resulting from the excision of the surface so diseased, and the means which I then found, and still assert to be better adapted to the purpose of restoring the membrane to its healthy condition. My subsequent experience rendered the cure of opaque cornea, depending on that diseased state of the palpebral linings, so much a matter of uniform result at the Ophthalmia Hospital, that long before I heard that there was such a person as Sir Wm. Adams, I had no reason to doubt

but that my success was both understood and appreciated.\*

If it be objected to these early operations that the scissors were used instead of the knife, I beg to say, that both these instruments had been repeatedly employed; and I do not scruple to assert, that where the operation is required, the scissors are the better instrument of the two; that the surface which follows excision by them is less irritable, and less disposed to a reproduction of fungus; that there is also less risque of wounding the semilunar cartilage of the palpebræ, an accident very likely to occur in the mode of operating performed by Sir Wm. Adams, and which I apprehend to have happened in some cases where the operation has led to a termination fatal to the organ.

The cure of this granulated surface of the palpebræ, by means of excision, is mentioned by Hippocrates; and the disease under the names of *Sycosis* and *Scabies Palpebrarum*, is distinctly described by the succeeding authors of the Greek and Latin schools; and the cure as

\* The change in the direction of the Army Medical Department subsequent to the Walcheren expedition, will explain the want of support which my services would otherwise have received.

precisely directed by the three methods of excision, abrasion, and cauterisation. The Arabian authors are still more minute in their details respecting the treatment of opaque cornea, under the term *Sebel*, nor has it been left to modern times to suggest any improvement even in the mode of operating. The eversion of the eyelid upon a metallic plate, although rather an addition than an improvement, is expressly directed by the commentators on these authors. However much these facts are at variance with originality, I nevertheless consider that he who revives a useful practice, after it has fallen into general disuse and oblivion, is entitled to as much merit as if he had made the discovery in point of time, as well as in point of fact; and every liberal person must regret that the knowledge of antiquity should ever be used to obscure the reputation of a successful innovator. In the present instance, however, the revival of the operation is a retrogression in point of practice, and it is against the utility and the exaggerated expectations held out from its adoption, that I have hitherto endeavoured to contend. As the excellence of modern surgery is not less conspicuous in the abridged necessity for operating in many diseases, than in the refinement of those operations which it retains; the introduction of an

operation where milder means are sufficient, could never have been deemed an improvement, by those appointed to judge, if the case had been brought fairly before them.

I shall now follow the evidence of the cases recently published by Sir Wm. Adams, in order to shew how inexpedient the operation has proved itself to be, and how completely he has failed in the application of it.

Of the cases adduced by Sir Wm. Adams, in the publication referred to—"A Letter addressed to the Governors of Greenwich Hospital"—I shall confine my observations to those which he received from the hospital under my directions, and which he includes in what he calls the second trial of his operation. Their names are Joseph Winter, John Capel, and David Grey, being three men out of five whom Sir Wm. Adams was permitted to select from the whole number of cases, which I left at the Ophthalmia Hospital, when removed from that duty, and which he of course selected as the most favourable for the plan of treatment he had then in view.



I must not omit to mention, amongst the difficulties which I had to surmount, in the management of army cases, the practices used by men, for the purpose of retarding their recovery, and of resisting the means of cure, when they wished to obtain their discharge from the service. On the occasion of the cases selected by Sir W. Adams for the trial of his treatment, an official letter was sent by the Adjutant General, to the Commandant of the Dépôt, conveying a promise to the men so selected, that in the event of their recovery, under the treatment which Sir Wm. Adams might employ, they would receive each a bounty of thirty-six guineas, or a free discharge and a pension. The moral obstacles being thus removed, the little success which seems to have followed, can only be imputed to the injudicious use of the operation; the occasional effects of which may be learned in the cases preceding those to which I confine my observations.\* I

\* For instance, in the case of John Bickley, the inflammation, by which "he nearly lost his eye," is ascribed to the Walcheren Fever.

In John Smith, the failure is said to be owing to the purgative quality of some cascarrilla bark internally administered; and the unfortunate issue of the case of John Miller, whom he states "to have entirely lost one eye by the violent inflammation and fungus which resulted from the operation," is ascribed to the same purgative quality in cascarrilla bark.—vide page 51.

am fully warranted in the belief, that if these men had been simply removed to a healthy situation, and if the offer made to them of a free discharge had been allowed to operate in place of Sir Wm. Adams, the result would have been more favorable than it has actually proved.

The names of the two men whom Sir Wm. Adams omits to notice in his published report, are William Wells of the 52d, and Sergeant Treble of the 43d regiments: these men Sir Wm. Adams found it expedient to reject, after having kept them for a month under his treatment, on the frivolous pretext that caustic had been applied to them by the officer who succeeded me in charge of the Ophthalmic Hospital. *Of the three remaining cases, John Winter is reported to be cured, and, according to the promise given, is discharged with a pension; John Capel is dismissed with one eye "irrecoverably lost;" and David Grey with only one eye improved, after the lapse of two years and three months.*

I shall afford each of these cases a separate examination.

*First.* In relating the case of Joseph Winter, Sir Wm. Adams states, "that it never was my practice to examine the interior of the upper eyelids, until my return from the York Hospital in March 1812, where I had been to see his new operations;" and when (he adds in a note) "*he saw Dr. Vetch.*" On what grounds Sir Wm. Adams has had the hardiness to advance an assertion so wholly without foundation, I am at a loss to conceive. On the examination of, and in the application to the inner surface of the upper eyelids, no man can have insisted more strongly than myself. I shall annex two cases; one extracted from the Hospital Registers, and treated by incision, in 1809; the other, by an escharotic application, in 1811, as stated by the patient himself, Capt. Robinson, of the 88th Regiment.

The remaining part of the assertion, which makes me appear at the York Hospital, for the purpose of seeing Sir Wm. Adams, and his new operations, is equally erroneous, and up to the present hour I have never been in the same room with Sir Wm. Adams, nor seen any case on which he has operated for opaque cornea.

I am still in possession of a letter from the late Director General, expressing his dissatisfaction at my having declined an interview with Sir Wm. Adams; together with my answer, containing my reasons for so doing, until his operations could be judged of by their *final* effects. The time to which Sir Wm. Adams refers, is June, and not March, 1812; in which month I did accompany Mr. Weir to the York Hospital, but without seeing either Sir Wm. Adams or his practice, farther than the former was pointed out to me at a distance too great for me to know one person from another.

*The second case, John Capel.* — Sir Wm. Adams says, that this man was considered by me as incurable; a statement not only contrary to truth, but inconsistent with the whole tenor of the regulations which I had established, and which, as long as I had charge of an hospital, were steadily adhered to. By these regulations, all men affected by opaque cornea, no matter to what extent, were returned, not as blind, but as recoverable for at least garrison duty, and treated accordingly. The impaired state of this man's health, and the unfitness of the situation for his recovery, sufficiently explain the length of time,

during which he continued to lose by frequent relapses, the progress gained in the intervals; when admitted he laboured under a third attack of acute purulent Ophthalmia, and was saved from the imminent hazard of losing his right eye, by the treatment immediately resorted to.

But a more important error in the narrative of this case remains to be noticed. At the time this man was selected by Sir Wm. Adams, it appears by the evidence of the official report made to the Medical Board of the state of his eyes, as well as by that of a memorandum in the handwriting of Sir Wm. that he was selected with the susceptibility of recovery in both eyes; and indeed, it is not to be supposed that Sir Wm. Adams would have made choice of a case which was otherwise. This man, however, is in the final return stated by Sir Wm. Adams to have "irrecoverably lost" the left eye, and which he asserts was lost under my care. The registers of the hospital, afford a minute detail of the case, the evidence from which is, that the left eye was the best of the two: Sir Wm. Adams, in his own hand writing, states the case as one of opaque cornea, with diseased palpebral linings, and notices an inversion of the upper eye-lid, but no mention is made of the left eye

being different from the right. The state of this man is farther reported, by my successor at the hospital, as one of simple opaque cornea, with diseased linings of the palpebræ. That Sir Wm. Adams should lose an eye by the operation, does not surprize me; but if the statements I have quoted are correct, his attempt to conceal the misfortune by such a subterfuge, is what I could not expect. It is not enough for Sir Wm. Adams to say, or rather to prove, that he did not perform the operation on the left eye, as he must be well aware that the inflammation excited by the operation in one eye, might very possibly lead to such a return of active disease in the other, as would, in the debilitated state of the organ, eventually occasion its "irrecoverable loss."

In the narrative of the case of David Grey, the last in which I have any interest, he states him to have been "upwards of two years at Bognor" (page 38); whereas he was admitted on the 7th of August, 1812, and selected by Sir Wm. Adams on the 12th of October, in the same year, making a period of nine weeks; and during that short space of time, he experienced a more rapid improvement, than he appears to have



done during two years and three months, which elapsed from the time of his selection by Sir Wm. Adams, to his final examination by *the physician, the surgeon, the apothecary, the assistant surgeon, and the assistant apothecary, of Greenwich Hospital*, whom Sir Wm. Adams nominates as a board of appeal, from the report given by Sir Henry Hallford, Dr. Baillie, Sir Everard Home, Mr. Cline, Mr. Cooper, and Mr. Abernethy. the Board appointed by the Commander in Chief.

By a P.S. at page 38, Sir Wm. Adams appears but half satisfied with the opinion given by this Board of his own selection.

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Selected by Sir Wm. Adams on the	
12th of October, 1812, five cases	
—(of which) .....	
Two were afterwards rejected .....	2
Two cured of one eye—and .....	2
One cured of both—all discharged with	
pensions .....	1
<hr/>	
Total .....	5

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From the ample experience now gained of the operation, in consequence of its having been employed in army practice, with rather more zeal than discrimination, the following conclusions will, I believe, be found correct.

First, that of itself the operation, however frequently repeated, is unequal to the cure of opaque cornea; while, on the other hand, the treatment I adopted in the disease, does not require the aid of an operation in one case out of fifty.

Secondly, that the operation, besides being in itself very painful, requires to be indefinitely repeated, and is often followed by inflammation; while the treatment by the properly graduated application of caustic substances, produces neither pain nor inflammation.

Thirdly, in many cases where a new and white surface has been obtained, after the repeated use of excision, the cornea often remains vascular, a circumstance which never happens when the cure of the membrane lining the eyelid, has been effected by the action of escharotics, properly applied, the cure of the cornea

invariably keeping pace with that of the membrane.

EXTRACT from a GENERAL RETURN of the OPHTHALMIA DEPÔT from the 17th November, 1807, (the date of its establishment) to the 12th March, 1812, shewing the result of the treatment of OPAQUE CORNEA.

ADMITTED.

Labouring under Opaque Cornea, with vision either lost or impaired ..... 536

DISCHARGED.

Cured of both eyes—to their Regiments ..	65
Ditto, ditto, but transferred to Veteran Battalions ..	247
Sent to Chelsea, on account of age and other infirmities ..	70
Deaths, by other diseases ..	7
Discharged, with Pensions for Blindness, being two-thirds of the total loss out of 3000 cases ..	20
Under treatment ..	127
Total .....	536

The third claim of Sir Wm. Adams, consists in asserting, that he first called the attention of the Medical Board to the importance of restoring the healthy state of the palpebral linings, previous to the discharge of the patients. On this very point I am willing to rest the whole of my claims to consideration, for however great the saving has been to the nation, by my successful treatment of more than three thousand cases of this formidable disease; and of which success, I again invite the most minute and severe scrutiny; yet this saving of men is not to be compared with the benefit derived by my unwearied exertions in calling attention to this particular point of practice. Charges have been preferred against me in consequence of what I may call a religious adherence to this rule, which I was the first to introduce into practice, and on which, I well knew the immunity of the army from the disease, would in a great measure depend. The issue of one charge, preferred by a general officer, supported by the certificate of surgeons, who were ignorant of this important feature of the disease, after much vexatious enquiry, procured me a letter of full approbation from His Excellency Sir David Dundas, dated 9th of November, 1809.

To prove my undeviating attention to the restoration of the healthy colour and condition of the palpebral linings, previous to the discharge of any man to his regiment, I can call upon every individual, who ever came under my care for this disease. Not one of them was considered cured, until this point was confirmed, by repeated and careful examination of the inner surface of the eyelids. Their testimony will be corroborated by every military or medical officer employed in duty along with me, from the latter end of 1806, when I first took an independent charge of the disease, to the autumn of 1812, when I resigned it. *During the whole of the above time I never was prevented, either by sickness or by absence, from personally performing this duty.* If Sir Wm. Adams means to say that he would employ the operation of excision in convalescent cases, where this is the only remaining affection left by ophthalmia, either with a view of rendering the recovery more certain, or more expeditious, it is altogether too absurd to be reasoned upon; if he does not, his proposal goes no farther than to follow the criterion which I established, which I zealously adhered to in my own practice, and endeavoured to promulgate as extensively as it was in my power to do. It is most unreasonable that I should be implicated in any ignorance or

inattention, manifested by others, on this or any other question connected with the disease.

An error having obtained at quarters of high authority, that the cases of blindness sent at one time in great numbers, from the Ophthalmic Dépôt to the York Hospital, had been lost to the service while at the former place; I think it right not to omit this opportunity of stating, that these cases merely passed through the hospital under my care, on their arrival from foreign stations, in a state of hopeless blindness; the number of such was at times so great, as to render it necessary to erect tents for their accommodation, the hospital being fully occupied by acute cases, to which even separate beds could not be allotted. The returns accompanying such men to the York Hospital, will shew the place where each individual lost his sight, and the loss at the Ophthalmic Hospital will not be found to exceed *thirty cases*.

I shall conclude these observations with two practical maxims, of the highest importance, for the truth of which I can appeal, both to my hospital practice, and to those who assisted me in the execution of it—viz. that the first attack of Ophthalmic Inflammation may, in every case,



be conducted to a successful termination; and that the Purulent Ophthalmia may at all times be prevented from spreading itself in any regiment, or body of individuals, by making the state of the membrane lining the eyelids, the criterion of the commencement, as well as of the termination of the disease.

Seymour Terrace,  
1st Feb. 1818.

## APPENDIX.

### Case of Robert Bolderson, aged 19, 84th Foot.

Nov. 20, 1809. Disease principally confined to the lining of the palpebræ, which are swollen and villous, secreting a quantity of thick purulent matter. Lachrymal discharge little augmented, but hot.

21. Eyes feel easier, lachrymal discharge cold.

22. The fungus palpebrarum continues the same.

Dec. 17. The fungus less prominent; has been frequently touched with the argentum nitratum and also portions have been removed by the scissors, with evident relief; no purulency.

Jan. 15, 1810. The lining of the palpebræ assumes less of a granulated appearance, and is of a much paler color.

N.B. This man, after being attacked by fever and a tedious affection of the skin, was dismissed cured to his regiment, the 2d of July, 1810.

### Case of Captain Robertson, 68th Regiment.

I regret that I cannot describe your treatment of my eyes in the language of the profession; but, I hope, that in the brief and simple narrative I shall give of it, I shall be able to make myself understood. I reached the Ophthalmia Dépôt about the 20th of February, 1811, and the benefit I derived from your practice and attention at the

Depôt, made so deep an impression on my mind, that I still do, and ever shall retain, a perfect recollection of your treatment of my eyes. Your first instructions to me, after my arrival at Aldwick, related to regimen, exercise, and in a general way to the manner I was to live; you first gave me some purgative medicines, and then began to apply *vitriol* to the inside or inner surface of my upper eyelids; you continued this application generally every second day, for at least two months. Sometimes the application of the vitriol caused considerable irritation; on those occasions you allowed the eye to recover a little before you applied it again. I was under your immediate care at the Ophthalmia Depôt nearly three months, viz. from the latter end of February to the 20th of May, 1811. My eyes made no progress towards improvement for some months before I got to Aldwick, the disease was then in a chronic state; but I had not been at the Depôt above a fortnight, when I found that I could see much better, and my sight continued to improve without any interruption after. Indeed I was equally delighted and astonished at the rapidity of the recovery I made whilst under your care; and I repeat, that I conceive it is to your abilities, exertions, and experience, I am entirely indebted for the restoration of my sight.

DANIEL ROBERTSON.

*Blair Athol,*  
18th Dec. 1817.

THE END.

*Printed by J. DAVY, Queen Street, Seven Dials.*

(6)  
*The Director General  
with the Authors copy*

A

REPLY,

8c. 8c.

*Handwritten notes in cursive script, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.*

A  
REPLY,  
BY  
SIR WILLIAM ADAMS,  
TO  
A PAMPHLET RECENTLY PUBLISHED  
BY  
DOCTOR VETCH,  
UPON THE SUBJECT OF  
**The Egyptian Ophthalmia,**  
AND TO  
OTHER PRODUCTIONS OF A SIMILAR CHARACTER.

London:  
*Printed by W. Clowes, Northumberland-court, Strand.*  
PUBLISHED BY J. CALLOW, MEDICAL BOOKSELLER, CROWN-  
COURT, PRINCES-STREET, SOHO-SQUARE.  
1818.



REPLY, &c.

AMONG the numerous and unwarrantable attacks which I have had to sustain, in consequence of my respectful obedience to the humane wishes of His Royal Highness the Commander in Chief, to establish by public experiment, and to promulgate for the benefit of the army, a particular mode of cure for the Egyptian Ophthalmia, the late pamphlet of Doctor Vetch is an extraordinary instance. That he *intended* to be severe is obvious, and that he has been betrayed into injustice (as I am willing to believe from imperfect recollection and information) will, I think, be evident from the facts which I am about to submit to the reader's judgment.

It were idle here to enter minutely into the question as to the relative merits of the modes described by Doctor Vetch, and those practised by

myself, for the treatment of the Egyptian Ophthalmia, that point having already been decided by the conclusive testimony of experience; and were it not that Doctor Vetch has ventured to question my *veracity*, as well as very materially to misrepresent the results of my practice, upon which the opinion of the Government has been founded, I should consider it unnecessary to take any notice whatever of his publication.

In order to expose the errors and misrepresentations into which Doctor Vetch has fallen in his attempts to impeach the statements in my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, I consider it necessary to bring the reader acquainted with the circumstances connected with those trials of my practice to which his publication refers.

In consequence of my success in curing the Egyptian Ophthalmia, I had the honor of receiving an invitation from the Adjutant-General towards the close of 1811, to call upon him at the Horse-Guards; where I learned from him the importance which His Royal Highness, the Commander-in-Chief, attached to the knowledge of a successful mode of curing that disease, with a view to its general adoption in the army. I proposed therefore that a given number of cases should be placed under my care, to enable me, practically to

demonstrate the efficacy of my modes of treatment, and my proposal was adopted; but circumstances having arisen during the trial of my practice, which were calculated to frustrate its object, I abandoned the experiment altogether, with the concurrence and approbation of the Adjutant General, to whom I explained my reasons for so doing.—One of those reasons, was the abrupt removal of Doctor O'Reilly, an assistant surgeon at York Hospital, who had been appointed to attend the men there under my care, and whom I had, in consequence, minutely instructed in the principles and details of my practice.

Doctor O'Reilly was transferred to the Ophthalmic Depôt at Bognor, then superintended by Doctor Vetch.

The circumstances which gave rise to and accompanied Doctor O'Reilly's unexpected removal were so severely felt by that Gentleman, that, after remaining at the Ophthalmic Depôt for a short time, he returned to London and abandoned the service altogether.

From him I learned that there were a considerable number of patients at the Bognor depôt, who were fit subjects for my practice.

It was at this time determined by the Commander-in-Chief, that a second set of patients should be placed under my care, and being unable to obtain at York hospital any subjects whose vision it was possible perfectly to restore, (as the cornea of the men selected for me there, were in a state of ulceration, or otherwise irreparably injured), I, in consequence of Doctor O'Reilly's suggestion, made application to His Royal Highness, the Commander-in-Chief, for permission to select six patients at the Bognor Dépôt. This application I felt no delicacy in making, as I had learned that Doctor Vetch had sailed for the peninsula, and that another medical officer had been appointed to succeed him in the Ophthalmic Hospital.

His Royal Highness acceded to my application, and I reached Bognor seven days after the arrival there of Doctor Vetch's successor, who had (as I was informed) frequented York hospital during the time, that my practice was undergoing trial, by the surgeons of that institution.

A number of men were drawn up in the hospital yard, for my inspection, whose cases, (with the exception of John Capel\*) were of the same unfavour-

\* This man's case was an inversion of both the upper eyelids, the conjunctiva in a granular state, the cornea of the right eye gene-

able description as those I had just before rejected at York hospital. Having inquired of the dépôt surgeon, in the hearing of the two medical officers sent down from London, to be present at the selection, where were the many suitable cases, which Doctor O'Reilly had told me were in the hospital? I was answered "they were under treatment." This answer I naturally interpreted as a refusal to let me see these cases.

I now despaired of finding even a second patient who afforded the prospect of cure; when four of the men who had been kept back "under treatment," but whose patience, as I afterwards learned from them, was exhausted by the length of their confinement, and the fruitless treatment they had undergone, having heard of my arrival, came out of the wards, into which I was not permitted to enter, and presented themselves for examination. These men who laboured under granular lids, with opaque cornea, and were nearly blind, were, by my direction, afterwards sent to London with Capel, for my treatment; but I could not find at Bognor a sixth patient, of whose cure I could entertain any hope whatever; in consequence of which, on my return to town, I determined to make

rally opaque. On the cornea of the left eye was a large cicatrix, the pupil contracted, and the iris adhering to the cornea, in consequence of that tunic having been ruptured from ulceration.



a farther experiment upon Serjeant Parsons, although his case was extremely unfavourable, and one of those I had formerly given up at York hospital.

In the course of the examination at Bognor, I was minute in my inquiries of many of the men, whose eyes excited my suspicion, whether caustic had been applied, and rejected all those who answered in the affirmative, because I had frequently known that application to have produced indelible opacities of the cornea. Notwithstanding these inquiries and the reasons I assigned for them, it was not mentioned to me that any of the men whom I selected had had such an application; and it was not until their arrival in London the following month, when I found the eyes of four of them considerably more inflamed than at the time I inspected them at Bognor, that I became acquainted with the nature of the "treatment" which they had undergone there, a few days before my arrival.

The inflammation was so severe in the eyes of Serjeant Treble of the 43d regiment and William Wells of the 52d, that I judged it due to myself to reject them as patients, the intended experiment being applicable only to men blind from granular lids and opaque cornea, and not to those whose eyes were in the highest state of inflammation, in consequence of the application to the eye-

ball (as the men asserted to me,) of lunar caustic or blue stone. I took down, their statements, in writing, and, after having them attested by a professional friend, I transmitted copies to the Adjutant-General, as well as to the Army Medical Board. The men were subsequently examined by the Army Medical Board, as to the truth of those statements; which statements, as they informed me, (for I was ignorant of their examination, until after it had taken place,) they fully and distinctly confirmed.\*

By the removal of these men, the number of my patients was reduced to four, namely, Joseph Winter, John Capel, David Grey, and Serjeant Parsons, who underwent my treatment and operations, which were commenced in November, 1812.

It happened to come to my knowledge, at the time these men were under my care, that an assertion had gone forth, in opposition to my claims of being the first to prove the "*general existence*" of the granulations of the lids, in cases of Egyptian ophthalmia, and to inculcate the necessity of their removal in the practice of the Army, that Doctor Vetch had in his work in 1806, as well as in his practice, evinced a previous know-

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\* See Appendix Nos. 1 and 2.

ledge of this subject. I therefore judged it expedient to adopt the advice of my friends, by obtaining the testimony on oath of Winter, Capel, and Parsons, (the two former of whom I had cured, in a few months, after they had been upwards of three years under Doctor Vetch's care, without being benefited;) because I conceived that their testimony would be deemed conclusive, in regard to my pretensions. The eyes of Grey, from drunkenness, various irregularities, and three attacks of ague while under my treatment, were at this period in a high state of inflammation.

Upon the authority of these affidavits, I made certain statements, in my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, declining, however, to insert the affidavits themselves in that publication, from motives which every respectable member of the profession must readily understand. But from the tone in which I have been assailed by Doctor Vetch,—from the nature of the accusations which he prefers, as well against my *veracity* as my *professional skill*, I should be chargeable with extreme fastidiousness or *morbid feeling*, if I declined any longer to give these affidavits to the public\*.

In December, 1813, my four patients were

\* For copies of these affidavits see Appendix No. 3.

finally examined at the Army Medical Board, and reported upon *without any invitation to me to be present at their inspection, or any intimation even, that such inspection was intended.* The report of these cases was sent to the Commander-in-Chief by the Board, and His Royal Highness did me the honour to have a copy of it forwarded to me; but conceiving that justice had not been done to my practice in this report, I took the patients to Greenwich Hospital, in order to have them examined by the five medical officers of that institution, who attested the then state of their eyes and vision.

The examination alluded to at the Army Medical Board, took place on the 19th of December, 1813; that at Greenwich Hospital on the 10th of January, 1814. The patients were, therefore, under my care from the middle of November, 1812, until the beginning of January, 1814; that is, about *one year and three months.* In fact, three of them were recovered at the end of eight months, as stated in their affidavits, although I delayed making a formal report upon their cases to the Army Medical Board, from an expectation of being also enabled to report the recovery of Grey, and thus to combine in one report the result of all the cases submitted to my care. But in this expectation which I continued to indulge from week to week, I was unfortunately disap-

pointed by Grey's habits of inebriety, and consequent indisposition to conform to my directions. Still, however, I succeeded ultimately in restoring this man's vision, inasmuch as to enable him to read a newspaper for two or three hours at a time.

The reports of the Army Medical Board, and of the medical officers of Greenwich Hospital, *differed so materially*, that it was judged expedient to institute another trial of my practice, to be witnessed and reported upon by Sir Henry Hallford, Doctor Baillie, Sir Everard Home, Mr. Cline, Mr. Astley Cooper and Mr. Abernethy. *Eight Chelsea pensioners were selected for this experiment, and it was upon my treatment of these patients, that the opinion of that Committee, (denominated the Ophthalmic,) was founded, with regard to my practice, and not upon the cases of the men brought from Bognor, as stated by Doctor Vetch.*

The report of this committee, together with the result of the treatment, are to be found in my letter, addressed to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital.

Such are the circumstances connected with those trials of my practice, which took place previous to the decision of Government to form an ophthalmic hospital, for the treatment of the blind pensioners; the knowledge of which cir-

cumstances was indispensably necessary, to enable the reader fully to decide, upon some of the many errors into which Doctor Vetch has fallen, in his recent pamphlet.

Doctor Vetch sets out by expressing some degree of soreness and discontent, in consequence of the recent circular of the Right Hon. the Secretary at War, upon the subject of my practice, and connects that expression with the following passage:—"In consequence of a statement made by the Right Hon. the Secretary at War in the House of Commons, in the latter end of the session of parliament of 1816, which gave me the first authentic information of the claims advanced by Sir William Adams, to a more effectual treatment of the ophthalmic cases of the army, I lost no time in submitting a detailed account of the success which had marked my treatment of the acute disease, both with a view to its cure and eradication from the army; as well as of that affection of the cornea which is liable to supervene, when the previous disease has been neglected or mismanaged. This statement I was led to submit, less in justice to my own claims, *than in behalf of those who were practically concerned in the issue of the question*; inasmuch as the pretensions of Sir William Adams led to the *temporary substitution of a severe and ineffectual operation, in the room of that treatment which I had successfully employed.*"



Of this extraordinary passage, I do not conceive it necessary to take any other notice, than to refer to the documents contained in this publication,—to the admitted and well-known fact of the much greater success which has attended the treatment of ophthalmia in the army, since the adoption of my practice, than prevailed under the system employed and recommended by Doctor Vetch;—and also to the result of my system upon the blind pensioners at present under my own immediate superintendence at York hospital\*.

\* The following notice has been just sent for insertion to the different medical Journals:—

“Sir William Adams having had the honour to be nominated by His Majesty's Government, to superintend that part of York Hospital, Chelsea, which has been appropriated to the reception of the blind pensioners belonging to the Army, Navy, and Artillery, feels it a duty to lay open to the profession at large his new modes of treating them. This duty is suggested as well by the peculiar confidence which has been reposed in him, as by the high sanction thus conferred upon his improvements in ophthalmic surgery. He therefore freely invites all medical practitioners, and students, who are interested in the advancement of this branch of surgery, to attend his operations at York hospital; which, for their convenience, will be performed in future, on Tuesdays and Fridays, between the hours of seven and nine in the morning.

“To remove all doubt, or misconception, with regard to Sir William Adams's practice, he proposes, on each of these days,

Doctor Vetch expresses a doubt whether I had ever seen a “case of real Egyptian ophthalmia in the violent and purulent stage,” and “his conviction that my conclusions are formed from the *catarrhal* form of disease, which is specifically different from that which he had to combat; or at the most, that my experience of the purulent disease, in its early stage, has been confined to its appearance at the Military Asylum, &c.” It cannot surely be necessary for me to shew the *absurdity* of the doubt Doctor Vetch has thus expressed, or the erroneousness of his “conviction” as to the data from which I have formed my conclusions. As to the latter part of his observation, I shall only remark, that I have never seen an acute case of ophthalmia of *any kind* at the Military Asylum, and consequently the information which I

to give a description of the nature of one of the diseases to be operated upon—the general modes of performing the operation—his peculiar mode—and his reasons for deviating from the usual practice, where such deviation has been found necessary.

“The records kept of each case, from the patient's admission into the hospital to his final discharge, will be open at the periods already mentioned, for the inspection of such gentlemen as attend; so that the profession will be enabled fairly to appreciate the character of the *new*, as compared with the *old* modes of practice.

“It is expected, that from *fifteen hundred to two thousand patients* will successively be placed under the care of Sir William Adams, in this Institution.

26, Albemarle-street, March 10, 1818.”

possess upon the subject could not have been derived from that source. I am ready, however, to allow, that I never have contended, nor am I ever likely to contend with the disease, under that *violent form* in which it assailed the patients under Doctor Vetch's charge; for should I fail to cure the disease at its outset, (which failure did not, however, happen in any instance at St. Pancras' workhouse either in the case of children or of *adults*) my general treatment is not calculated to injure the constitution of the patient, or to aggravate the malady, which injury and aggravation (as I shall at a future period prove to a demonstration, according to the most approved principles of pathology,) there is too much reason to fear was occasioned, by the numerous and very extensive bleedings practised by Doctor Vetch.

Doctor Vetch after admitting the difference between the nauseating and the emetic practice as laid down by me,\* adds, "No person can with

\* It will be recollected, that the medical officers of the London Eye Infirmary, in their special report to the Governors of that institution, not only asserted the identity of these practices, but preferred, and promulgated, *at the expense of those funds which were subscribed for the benevolent objects of that institution*, a specific charge of dishonourable conduct against me, for maintaining the distinctness of their character.

less justice than myself be accused of a rash and indiscriminate recourse to the lancet; and I wholly disclaim the abuse of this efficient remedy, as described by Sir William Adams." Of Doctor Vetch's practice in the acute stage of ophthalmia, I know nothing beyond what he describes in his work published in 1806; and in that book, page 98, he says, "Under such circumstances it (the bleeding) was *often repeated* to the eighth or ninth time, without the decided benefit which followed its more extensive employment." He afterwards states, that at first he seldom took away more than thirty ounces at a time, which in the more violent form of the disease was found insufficient, when he adds, "fifty or sixty ounces must be taken away to relieve the pain, or bring on syncope." Again, p. 104, when speaking of the effects of these large bleedings upon the blood, his words are, "The changes which took place in the relative proportions of the serum and the crassamentum, were such as might be expected. The serum, in those cases where the bleeding was not carried beyond *thirty ounces*, but repeated to the *tenth or twelfth* time, had its specific gravity gradually lessened to that of water, to which in its healthy state it was with some patients about 1,082 to 1,000, &c. In cases where the quantity of blood taken at a time was much greater, the serum sometimes became heavier, having a tinted and milky appearance, with a much smaller

quantity of acid than is generally required, it formed a firm coagulum, without leaving any serosity. This addition to the serum, seemed evidently to be produced at the expense of the crassamentum, to which the red globules did not adhere with their usual tenacity, but mixed with the serum on the slightest agitation."

From these quotations the reader will judge whether I was not correct, when I asserted in my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, that if the disease could be cured without the loss of any blood, which I had proved to be practicable, such a change of system was desirable.—Who, indeed, can doubt, that it was a great *desideratum* to prevent the abstraction of *three hundred and sixty ounces or thirty pounds* of blood; a practice, the injurious effects of which, upon the texture of the blood, as mentioned by Doctor Vetch himself in the note just quoted, could not fail to impair the constitution of the patient, in a very large majority of cases. If Doctor Vetch has *found it necessary* to abandon and "wholly disclaim" this practice, I am not aware of his having, ever communicated this change of opinion to the profession, until the publication of his late pamphlet.

Doctor Vetch adverts to my mode of curing opaque cornea, in the following words, "I proceed to examine the nature and the efficacy of the dis-

covery claimed by Sir William Adams, for the cure of opaque cornea. With respect to his present practice, I must presume, that he either adheres to his original plan of treatment by excision, which I have declared, and which I can now prove to be from his own evidence, (independent of many objections to its general application) incompetent of itself to cure the disease; or, that he is forced to combine with the operation, those very means which it was introduced to supersede."

Now, upon what data, I ask, has Doctor Vetch founded his examination of my practice; where has he obtained his information, that my original plan of treatment for the cure of opaque cornea was "excision uncombined with other means;" or where have I recommended the "general application" of excision in such cases? Doctor Vetch here combats creatures of his own fancy; he evidently confounds the mode of removing the granulations of the lids, with the practice of curing the opacities of the cornea, caused by these granulations, erroneously concluding that the removal of the former will occasion that of the latter.

But I have uniformly maintained, that the two forms of the disease required different modes of treatment; and have specifically stated in my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, the much greater difficulty of curing



the opacities than of removing the granulations.

With regard to the granulations, Doctor Vetch asserts, that he described them in his work in 1806, and was the first author who made use of "the term of granular surface to describe the linings of the palpebræ which supervenes on purulent ophthalmia." He certainly did describe the granulations of the lids, but it was *when they became everted* through the violence of the disease, and when of course those granulations could not be overlooked; it did not, therefore, require much acumen in Doctor Vetch to make this discovery. He also published a plate to shew the appearance of such granulations, and recommended modes for their removal, but this also was when the lids were *spontaneously everted*. His words are, page 113, "To get rid of the granulations which take place on the *everted palpebra*, different remedies have been tried. This is a symptom which has now been treated in almost every part of the kingdom, in consequence of its continuing with those men who lost their sight in Egypt."

Again, in page 117, "the *eversion of the eyelids*, after the decline of the disease, is also less frequent than was the case in the 52d regiment, previous to the adoption of blood-letting. This hypersarcosis, however, when produced, is no less trou-

blesome to remove; of its structure I remain still ignorant, further than of the granulated appearance of its structure," &c. &c. These quotations justify the conclusion, that it was in cases of spontaneously *everted palpebræ* alone that he discovered the granulations and recommended his practice; for I cannot find through his work, that Doctor Vetch ever everted the upper eyelids (where the granulations are usually the most numerous) in order to look for these granulations, or that he gives directions to his readers so to do, which surely he would not have omitted had he previously been aware of their "*general existence*." The cases of Balderson in 1809, and of Capt. Robertson in 1811, inserted in Doctor Vetch's appendix, furnish no proof that even so late as at these periods he had *generally adopted* that practice, now so universally used in the army upon my recommendation.

Doctor Vetch asserts, in page 11 of his pamphlet, "that I was permitted to *select* five men from the whole number of cases which he had left at the ophthalmic hospital, and that I, of course, selected the most favourable cases for the plan of treatment I had then in view." I have already exposed the fallacy of this assertion, shewing that I was *not* permitted to select "from the whole number of cases in the ophthalmic hospital," and that even the men whom I had taken away, could not be considered as very eligible cases to treat, in

consequence of the caustic applications which had been employed to their eyes, and the inflammation which had resulted from those applications.

I have now to notice Doctor Vetch's review of that part of my letter to the Directors of Greenwich hospital, in which I related the case of Joseph Winter; in this review he more than insinuates, that I have incorrectly asserted "that it never was his practice to evert the upper eye-lids until after his return from the York hospital in 1812, where he had been to see my new operations." He says, "I add (in a note) that I saw him there." But it must be obvious from a candid review of my letter, that the inference of Doctor Vetch is quite over-strained, for the passage to which he refers was a mere extract of Winter's affidavit as follows: "He (Doctor Vetch) never examined the internal part of my upper eye-lids until his return from the York hospital in March 1812, where it was reported he had been to see some new operations." Now as there were no other "new operations" then practising at York hospital, about which Doctor Vetch could have felt any interest, and as he immediately adopted my practice after I had explained and exhibited it there, it was perfectly natural for me to give full credit to Winter's statement. In a note, in the same page of my letter, in which this pas-

sage appeared, I mentioned (in confirmation of the "report" stated in Winter's affidavit) that "I saw" Doctor Vetch at the York hospital, but this did not amount to an assertion that Doctor Vetch had "been at York Hospital to witness my operations,"—or that "he had seen any case in which I operated for opaque cornea,"—or that I had had an interview with him upon this or any other subject. He was merely pointed out to me at a distance, and until I read his pamphlet, I was equally ignorant of his having declined an interview with me, or of such a proposition having ever been made to him. Yet I must observe, that although Doctor Vetch did not see me operate, he had very sufficient means of acquiring a knowledge of the practice I pursued upon my patients at York hospital, as I had operated upon them but a short time before his appearance there, in the presence of all the medical officers attached to that establishment, and a great many other army surgeons. The instruments indeed, with which I performed those operations, I lent to the surgeon of York Hospital as patterns, to have others made for the use of the hospital—and my subsequent treatment of the several patients was daily recorded upon the hospital books, by my assistant Doctor O'Reilly, in obedience to the order of the late Director-General. There was, consequently, no difficulty on the part of Doctor

Vetch, or of any other army surgeon, to acquire a knowledge of my practice.

In referring to my detail of the case of John Capel, Doctor Vetch affects to dispute the accuracy of my statements. But here, as in the case of Winter, my statements were founded upon the affidavit of the man himself. Doctor Vetch sets out with declaring, "that the statement which I had made that Capel's eyes were considered by him as incurable, was not only contrary to truth, but inconsistent with the regulations of the hospital, according to which all men affected by opaque cornea, no matter to what extent, were uniformly returned by him not as blind, but as recoverable for at least garrison duty, and treated accordingly."

The following passage from *Capel's affidavit*, is directly in contradiction to *Doctor Vetch's assertion*. "After undergoing various treatment under Doctor Vetch, I was told by him that my case was utterly hopeless, was turned out of the Infirmary Wards, and sent to the Incurable Wards, where I remained for two years (after Doctor Vetch had given me up as incurable) when I was selected by Mr. Adams." From this affidavit, it must be allowed, that I was warranted, in believing that Doctor Vetch considered this man as incurable, more particularly as I found him, after having been under

the Doctor's care upwards of three years, labouring under granulations of the lids and opaque cornea; with also an inversion of both upper eyelids which occasioned him *continual pain and suffering*, and which, by the irritation of the eye-lashes against the eyeball, kept up and increased the opacity of the cornea.

Doctor Vetch next notices, what he styles, "a more important error" in my narrative of this case. He affirms, "At the time this man was selected by Sir William Adams, it appears by the *evidence of the official report made to the Medical Board* of the state of his eyes; as well as by that of a *memorandum in the handwriting of Sir William*, that he was selected with the *susceptibility of vision in both eyes*." The official report to which Doctor Vetch alludes, is as follows, "Diseased conjunctiva, opaque cornea, vascularity and inversion of the eyelids." Here there is certainly no mention made of the state of the left eye; but it may be proper to state, that this report was never seen by me, until accompanied with a copy of that sent in to the Commander-in-Chief, of the state of the man's eyes after the conclusion of my treatment, from which very report drawn up by the Medical Board, it must be evident, as the following extract shews, that the left eye was lost, to the knowledge of the Medical Board, before I undertook the cure of the other.—"He, (Capel,) can but



just distinguish day-light with the left eye, *in which the disorganization continues as before;*" thus distinctly referring to the examination of the man, before he underwent my treatment.

I have obtained, within these few days, from the Army Medical Board, a copy of the "Memorandum in my own hand-writing," made at Bognor, from which it will be seen, that I made no mention whatever of the left eye. John Capel, 51st regiment, "An inversion of the upper *eye-lid* with diseased conjunctiva and opacity of the cornea." Now had I meant to refer to both eyes, it is clear, that this memorandum would have mentioned *eye-lids*.—How, then, does this memorandum justify or excuse the assertion of Doctor Vetch? At the time I examined Capel, I distinctly declared to the medical officers present at Bognor, that the left eye was incurable, the cornea being ruptured and the pupil nearly closed. Therefore, in my memorandum no notice is taken either of the ruptured cornea, or the contracted and almost obliterated pupil, which could only be relieved by the operation for artificial pupil, and this was an operation totally different from that for the trial of which the proposed experiment was to take place.

If any further evidence of the inaccuracy of Doctor Vetch's assertion be necessary, it will be

found in the record taken of Capel's case immediately on his arrival from Bognor, which record I have transcribed from the identical report to which the signatures of the medical officers of Greenwich Hospital were affixed in 1814. This record, together with Capel's affidavit, made in 1813, are conclusive—that his left eye was lost while under the care of Dr. Vetch—that I did not "*select him with the susceptibility of vision in both eyes*," and consequently that I have not been guilty of an "attempt to conceal by a subterfuge the misfortune of having destroyed one of his eyes," which Dr. Vetch has had the "hardihood" to assert.

Capel's affidavit contains the following passage: "My left eye, which became blind at Bognor, Mr. Adams considered hopeless, and therefore did not undertake its cure." The original record of the case was in the following words: "A complete turning in of the eye-lashes against the ball in both eyes. Both corneæ completely clouded by films. Considerable inflammation, thickening and roughness of the lining of the eyelids, accompanied with continued pain from the friction of the lashes. His left eye has been so much injured by ulceration, that I refused undertaking its treatment, of which circumstance I desired Mr. Warren, of the Army Medical Board, to make a memorandum before my treatment had commenced, and that owing to

the turning in of the lashes (a distinct disease from the ophthalmia, and of itself frequently occasioning blindness) I did not expect to make even this (the right eye) perfect. *I would not have selected him for treatment if I could have procured another patient in his stead.*"

I must annex one observation as to the accuracy of Doctor Vetch's hospital registers. He says, "The register of the hospital affords a minute detail of the case, the evidence from which is, that *the left eye was the best of the two.*" Again, "The state of this man is further reported by my successor at the hospital, as one of simple opaque cornea, with diseased lining of the palpebræ." Thus in opposition to the direct and circumstantial evidence I have quoted, we have here the authority of Doctor Vetch himself, with that of his successor, who kept back from me at Bognor the suitable cases represented to be there by Doctor O'Reilly, as well as the fact that caustic applications had been made, in the manner which I have already stated, to the eyes of the men whom I had selected. But let any man estimate the character of these hospital registers contrasted with the direct and circumstantial evidence which I have quoted.

Doctor Vetch concludes his "review of my

statements," by an endeavour to disprove, that part of my description respecting David Grey's case, in which I mention that he was in the ophthalmic dépôt at Bognor, for upwards of two years: he says, "In the narrative of the case of David Grey, Sir William Adams states him (Grey) to have been upwards of two years at Bognor, whereas he was admitted on the 7th of August, 1812, and selected by Sir William Adams on the 12th of October in the same year, making a period of nine weeks; and, during this short space of time, he experienced a more rapid improvement than he appears to have done, during *two years and three months* which elapsed from the time of his selection by Sir William Adams, to his final examination by the physician, the surgeon, the apothecary, the assistant surgeon, and the assistant apothecary of Greenwich Hospital, whom Sir William Adams nominated as a Board of Appeal; from the report given by Sir Henry Halford, Dr. Baillie, Sir Everard Home, Mr. Cline, Mr. Astley Cooper, and Mr. Abernethy, the Board appointed by the Commander-in-Chief."

This was evidently deemed by Doctor Vetch, a very triumphant paragraph; but it happens, unfortunately for him, that I am able not alone *fully to establish my own statements*, but also to prove, that in his eagerness to overturn them, he has been himself betrayed into the very conduct which he en-

deavours to fix upon me. In this short passage *there are three mis-statements*. From Grey himself I learned, "that he had been upwards of two years in the ophthalmic depôt." He gave me no farther particulars on this point, and my statement was made accordingly. But since the publication of Doctor Vetch's pamphlet, I have ascertained from one of the blind pensioners, Serjeant Tennecliffe \*, who is now under treatment in York hospital, and who belonged to the same regiment with Grey, before he became blind, as well as from another person, Serjeant Murphy†, who acted for two years as serjeant at the ophthalmic depôt, under Doctor Vetch, and a part of that time as his immediate assistant in the Surgery; that David Grey was twice in the ophthalmic depôt, under Doctor Vetch's care,—first about 1809—10; that he was afterwards dismissed from thence with the vision of one eye, and was transferred to the depôt of a veteran battalion, at the Isle of Wight, where he had a relapse of the complaint; in consequence of which relapse he again returned to Bognor, and was re-admitted at the depôt, a few weeks before I took him for treatment.

Surely then I may retort upon Doctor Vetch his

\* See Tennecliffe's statement, page 35.

† See Murphy's statement, page 37.

own words, and say, that his attempt "to conceal" the length of time this man was under his care "by such a subterfuge" (as his mere statement of the date of Grey's re-admission at the depôt, while his previous residence there was studiously kept out of view) "is what I could not expect." For what could be a more complete subterfuge.

It will also be seen that Doctor Vetch is betrayed into another material inaccuracy; as from the dates stated in page 8, it appears that Grey was under my care but one year and three months, not two years and three months as asserted by him.

But he is further inaccurate, for it was from the report sent in to the Commander-in-Chief by the Army Medical Board, upon the cases of Grey and the other men from Bognor, that I had made an appeal to the medical officers of Greenwich Hospital, and not upon the report of the six eminent medical gentlemen appointed as an "ophthalmic board by the Commander-in-Chief." The latter reported upon eight Chelsea pensioners under my care, and I could not feel it necessary to make any appeal from them, as their decision was so much in my own favour.

Doctor Vetch has, however, endeavoured not only to impeach the veracity of my statements as to the cases which had been under his care, but



he even questions the accuracy of the opinions of the eminent professional gentlemen alluded to as to the cases of the Chelsea pensioners, whom they had examined before my treatment commenced—whom they regularly inspected while under my care,—and whom they finally examined previous to the delivery of their opinions upon my practice. Upon these opinions His Majesty's government have since acted, by forming an establishment for the treatment of the blind pensioners belonging to the army, navy, and artillery, agreeably to the plan which I had the honour previously to propose.

Yet Doctor Vetch presumes to say that my practice "could never have been deemed an improvement by those appointed to judge, if the case had been brought fairly before them." In page 12 he has inserted a note, purporting to contain extracts from the report of the cases published in my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, and which he erroneously calls "the cases *preceding* those taken from the Bognor dépôt." To shew the want of candour and accuracy which characterizes this note, I refer to the report itself, a copy of which will be found in the Appendix, No. 4, to which I request the particular attention of my readers.

From these facts then, contrasted with Doctor

Vetch's assertions, let any dispassionate man decide upon that writer's disposition or desire, to be accurate in his attack upon me. For a very little inquiry would have enabled the Doctor to ascertain the facts, and to be satisfied of the fallacy of the assertions which he has thus deliberately written and published.

Doctor Vetch disputes my assertion that I was the first person to call the attention of the Medical Board to the importance of restoring the healthy state of the palpebral linings previous to the discharge of the patients, and insists that his exertions were "unwearied in calling attention to this particular point of practice." He adds "to prove my undeviating attention to the restoration of the healthy colour and condition of the palpebral linings, previous to the discharge of any man to his regiment, *I can call upon every individual, who ever came under my care for this disease. Not one of them was considered cured, until this point was confirmed by repeated and careful examination of the inner surface of the eyelids.*"

On this statement I shall observe that the gentlemen of the late Army Medical Board as well as

the medical officers of York hospital, to whom I must suppose Doctor Vetch would have had no difficulty in communicating his practice to the fullest extent, and whom, it is but reasonable to suppose he would not accuse either of ignorance or inattention, did publicly declare, as I have repeatedly stated (and more particularly in my letter to the Directors of Greenwich hospital; to which Doctor Vetch professes to reply), that they were not aware of the "*general existence*" of the granulations of the lids,\* until it was demonstrated to them by me. I must also refer to Parson's deposition upon oath, "my eyelids were never before examined in the manner since done by Mr. Adams†, and I have heard the surgeons declare that they had never seen the eyelids turned up (everted) before. This declaration was made when Mr. Adams was first examining them, and explaining the nature of my complaint to several medical gentlemen at the York hospital."

With regard to Doctor Vetch's "unwearied exertions" in calling attention to the treatment of the granulations, I have to repeat, that I know nothing of his practice except from his book, published in 1806, from which as I have already

\* It is the *general existence* of the granulations, which I contend to have been the first to demonstrate to military practitioners.

† This man had been previously in the York hospital for about twelve months.

shewn, it appears, that he only described the mode of curing the granulations of the lids, when they were rendered visible by becoming *spontaneously everted*. Had Doctor Vetch been aware of the important effects of the granulations, and had he been in possession of a certain mode of curing them, why did he not communicate this knowledge to the profession generally, but more especially to the Government in 1810; at which period, the ophthalmia raged so extensively in the army, as to induce the Commander-in-Chief, (Sir David Dundas,) to form a special board, consisting of eleven of the most eminent professional gentlemen in the metropolis, "to take into consideration the prevalence of the purulent ophthalmia in the army, and to determine the means of prevention, and the methods of cure, for the information of the commanding officers of regiments, and for the guidance of all medical officers belonging to the army."

If the practice pursued and recommended by Doctor Vetch had been found efficient, the unusual institution of a board of civil practitioners to form a system of treatment "for the guidance of the medical officers of the army," (in which number he was necessarily included) would surely not have been required; and it is deserving of notice, that in the report of this board, which was printed, and by general orders circulated from head-quarters, for the guidance of army surgeons, no mention whatever is made of the granulations of the lids;

while neither Doctor Vetch, nor his book, nor his practice, are once named, or referred to.

Now, as to Doctor Vetch's alledged "undeviating attention to the restoration of the healthy colour and condition of the palpebral linings, previously to the discharge of any man to his regiment, and his *call* upon every individual who ever came under his care for this disease, not one of whom was considered cured until this point was confirmed by repeated and careful examination of the inner surface of their eye-lids," I beg to recall to the reader's recollection, the relapse of David Grey. This man's eyelids could not have been effectually cured, or that relapse could not have happened. I refer, in addition to the subjoined statement of Serjeant Tennecliffe, which I have already quoted, and which is perfectly conclusive upon this point. He affirms, that during nearly two years while he was under Doctor Vetch's care at Bognor, no measures whatever were adopted to remove the granulations of his upper eyelids, and that his relapse a few months after he was dismissed the hospital (according to the Doctor's words as "cured") arose from cold, and not from an exposure to fresh contagion. Indeed, when this Tennecliffe first applied to me last September, I found him afflicted with granulations of the lids, and opacities of the cornea, in an extreme degree. I shall give his statement, as it is recorded upon

the hospital books, by my assistant Mr. Melin; to which statement the man has affixed his signature, and declared himself willing by the most solemn obligations to attest its accuracy.

"Serjeant John Tennecliffe, 52 regiment. *Ætat.* 31, admitted into York hospital 7th Dec. 1817, states that he was attacked with ophthalmia in 1808, from which he was recovered by Mr. Peach, but was again attacked with the disorder in March 1810, when he was sent to the Ophthalmic Dépôt, Selsea\*. He further states that Doctor Vetch divided the blood-vessels upon the ball twice, but did not cut the lids; that he almost daily applied blue-stone to the edges of the eyelids, and the inner-part of the lower lids.

"He is ready to attest upon oath, that Doctor Vetch never applied either caustic, or blue-stone, or any other burning application to the inner-part of the upper eyelids in the manner Sir William Adams is in the habit of doing; and that he never removed anything with a knife or scissors, from the inner surface of either eyelid. That he (Tennecliffe) never saw Doctor Vetch apply blue-stone or any application whatsoever to any other man's upper lids, in the manner practised by Sir William Adams, notwithstanding that he attended at the surgery almost daily for six or seven months, in order to have the blue-stone applied in the manner above described.

"After remaining under the care of Doctor Vetch one year and eight months, he was dismissed Feb. 12, 1812, and sent to the regimental dépôt, able to read and write, but not capable of distinguishing objects at a distance.

"Upon his joining his regiment, he was considered incapable of performing his ordinary duties, and was in consequence sent on the recruiting service to Bath, where the disease relapsed 5th November, 1812, from having caught cold. He is positively certain, that he had had no communication with any person labouring under the disease by which he could have caught it afresh. This relapse

\* Selsea dépôt was a branch of the Bognor dépôt, and was also superintended by Doctor Vetch.



rendered him so blind, that he was unable to walk without a guide, when he was relieved from this service and sent to his regiment; shortly after which he went home on sick furlough in January, 1813. In the following August 7, he went into York Hospital quite blind, where, for the first time, any thing was done to the inner part of his upper eyelids. Mr. Albert operated once with the knife, and afterwards Mr. Morel repeated it twice, from which he derived some benefit; but after remaining in York Hospital ten months, he was discharged for blindness in both eyes, with pension 22d January, 1814. His eyes again relapsed in March, 1817. During the interval of his discharge, and this relapse, his vision was so imperfect, that he was unable to follow any kind of employment.

"On the 19th September, 1817, he applied to Sir William Adams, at which period he was unable to walk without a guide, being only able to perceive light from darkness with his left eye and the shadow of objects with the other\*."

"He further states, that he knew David Grey, late of the 52d regiment, and distinctly recollects finding him at Selsea Depôt, when he (Tennecliffe) was sent there in 1810, and that Grey remained there for some time before he was sent to the Garrison Battalion. To the best of his judgment and belief, Grey was sent from his regiment to the Ophthalmic Depôt, some time in 1809 or 10."

(Signed)

TENNECLIFFE."

\* This man's eyes are rapidly approaching to a perfect cure; the granulations of all the lids being completely removed, and the natural transparency of the right eye nearly restored; with which eye, indeed, he is now able to read moderate-sized print. The cornea of the left eye, which was entirely obscured, and concealed from view by a fungus growth on the conjunctiva, is also recovering its transparency, and I entertain no doubt of being able completely to restore this man's vision.

I shall, from time to time, particularly call the attention of those gentlemen who visit York hospital to the progress and issue of this case.

But to place this point beyond doubt, as well as to prove that very material alterations took place in Doctor Vetch's treatment of the granulations, after my practice was made known at York Hospital, in 1812, I quote the following statement, made by Serjeant Murphy. This statement is recorded in the same manner as that of Tennecliffe, and Murphy has also offered to attest it on oath.

"Thomas Murphy, late serjeant of the Garrison Staff Company, was sent to do duty at Bognor Ophthalmic Depôt, 19th May, 1810. His employment until May 15, 1812, was to escort men to their different depôts; he was then appointed hospital serjeant by Dr. Vetch. Upon his arrival at Bognor Depôt in May, 1810, he was put in charge of sixty or seventy blind men at Selsea, amongst whom was David Grey, formerly of the 52d regiment; who, after remaining there for some time, (he cannot recollect for how long) was discharged nearly blind of one eye, and was sent to the Isle of Wight, to be forwarded to a garrison battalion, his eyesight not being recovered sufficiently to render him fit to be sent to his regiment. After remaining some time in the Isle of Wight, his eyes relapsed, and he was again sent back to the Ophthalmic Depôt, in the summer of 1812, in the same state of blindness as when Sir William Adams selected him for treatment in October, 1812, which he (Thomas Murphy) perfectly recollects his doing."

"He further states, that shortly after being appointed hospital serjeant, 15th May, 1812, he recollects Dr. Vetch being absent a few days, and Dr. O'Reilly joining the depôt soon after his return. Some time after his (Murphy's) above appointment, there were twenty-four men selected by Dr. Vetch, and put into a ward near the surgery under his charge as ward-master, whose upper eyelids Dr. Vetch turned out, and removed the granulations with a small knife, similar to that he has seen Sir William Adams employ. He also applied blue stone in the same manner as he has seen Sir William Adams use it."

"He cannot positively recollect whether this selection was made before or after Dr. O'Reilly's arrival; but he is positive that Dr. O'Reilly was present at some of the operations from the circumstance of his recommending warm water, to promote the bleeding after the excision. He further states, to the best of his recollection and belief, that they were selected after the absence of Dr. Vetch, which took place a short time after his appointment as hospital serjeant, in May, 1812.

"He further states, that the following men were, according to the general report and belief of the patients, under Dr. Vetch's care, in the Ophthalmic Dépôt, for the following periods, which he believes to be rather under, than over the actual time they were there.

Regt.	Name.	Period in Hospital.
Foot.		Years.
1st	Gavin Scott .....	3
..	Robert Mills .....	3
..	John Croker .....	3
9th	Isaac Walker .....	4
..	Benjamin Hutchins .....	3
20th	Charles Oakden .....	4
28th	Corporal Weeks .....	4
8th	Pat. Hughes .....	4
20th	William Clough .....	3
..	Corporal Bush .....	3
48th	Jos. Winter .....	3
51st	Anthony Capel .....	3
8th V.B	John Figg .....	3
..	Joseph Booth .....	3
52d	William Wells .....	4
..	Serjeant Hart .....	4
..	George Gibbs .....	4
..	John Musto .....	4
..	Reginal Daniells .....	8
8th V.B	Richard Humphys .....	4
51st	Dan. French .....	3

"Sir James M'Gregor, after he became Director-General, and after Dr. Vetch was a second time appointed to the Ophthalmic Dépôt, (i. e., after his return from the Peninsula), inspected the patients there, and made a memorandum in his pocket-book of Reginal Daniell's case, remarking to Dr. Vetch that he never knew a person before to have been so many years in hospital.

(Signed)

THOMAS MURPHY."

From the foregoing statements it is evident:—First, that a great number of men were kept in the ophthalmic dépôt, under Dr. Vetch's care, a most inordinate length of time, some of whom have since been cured by me in a few months.—Secondly, that Doctor Vetch did not "restore to a state of health the lining of the eyelids, previous to his sending every man to his regiment," as he has so confidently asserted; for had he done so, Grey and Tennecliffie would not have relapsed within so short a period after their dismissal from the ophthalmic dépôt.—Thirdly, that Dr. Vetch's selection of twenty-four cases, as stated by Serjeant Murphy, some time after my practice was made known at York Hospital, —his putting these men into one ward, to treat them according to my mode of practice,—as Murphy further adds, with the assistance of Dr. O'Reilly, whom I had particularly instructed in the principles of my practice, fully confirms that part of Winter's affidavit, in which he states, that "upon Doctor Vetch's return from York Hospital, he

then operated upon my lids, and those of several other men, in the same manner as Mr. Adams has since done, but quite differently from what he had ever done before." This Winter, it should be recollected, had, previously to the change of treatment, been in the ophthalmic depôt under Doctor Vetch's care, three years and five months, without being in the slightest degree benefited; yet I afterwards so perfectly restored him to sight in five months, that he made a pair of shoes for one of my servants, and continued to work at his trade during the remainder of the time that himself and his comrades were under my care.

With respect to the cases of Balderson and of Captain Robertson, the former of whom was treated by Doctor Vetch, in November, 1809, for granulations of the lids simply; and the latter in 1811, for granulations combined with opacity of the cornea, I conceive, it will be readily admitted, from the facts already advanced, and those which I am about to relate, that they in no respect affect, either my claims of priority in the improved treatment for the cure of the granulations of the lids and opacities of the cornea, or the accuracy of my assertion, that I was the first person to point out to army practitioners the "general existence" of the granulations, as well as the absolute necessity of everting the upper eyelids in every case of Egyptian ophthalmia, in order to effect this re-

moval, and thereby to prevent relapses, and the consequent propagation of the disease.

In the medical report of the West of England Infirmary at Exeter, for curing diseases of the eye, which was submitted to the committee of that institution, and published by their order in November, 1809, it is recorded, that there were seven cases of this kind cured, between the 1st of November, 1808, and the 1st of November, 1809\*. In page 10 of my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, it will be seen, that in the beginning of 1809, Frost, and other patients at the Exeter Eye Infirmary, were examined by General Thewles, the Commander of the District; by General Head, and several other officers of the 13th dragoons, including the surgeon of that regiment, at which time Frost was so entirely recovered from the blindness under which he had laboured for two years, and for which he had been dismissed the service on pension, as to apply to Mr. Russell, the treasurer of the West of England Eye Infirmary, for the situation of a clerk. Not only the surgeon of the 13th dragoons, but a great many other medical gentlemen saw my practice upon those cases, during the years 1808 and 9, and it was a pretty general topic of con-

\* See the Report in the Appendix, No. 5.



versation at the time at Exeter. Indeed, my knowledge upon this subject, as well as upon every other discovery I have had the good fortune to make, has been, at all times, very frankly and generally communicated. In page 16 of my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, is inserted my official letter to Sir David Dundas, the then Commander-in-Chief, dated March, 1810, communicating my success in the treatment of the ophthalmia, and also enclosing a description of the case of Frost who was cured in 1808.

But it may be asked, If in 1809, or even in 1811, Doctor Vetch had been fully aware of the general existence of the granulations, and possessed a certain method of cure, why did he not, before 1812, remove those granulations in the cases of Winter, Grey, and Capel, so long under his immediate care, and whom I afterwards cured; as well as in the cases of Treble and Wells, whom, for the reasons already explained, I did not treat—all of whom were affected with granulated lids and opaque cornea? The two cases adduced by Doctor Vetch tend, merely to disprove what I neither asserted nor intended to assert, namely, that he "never everted the upper eyelids, until after his return from York hospital, in 1812."

What I now repeat, and for which I have always contended, is this, that neither Doctor Vetch, nor any other army practitioner was aware of the *general existence* of the granulations of the lids, until I made my opinions and practice known; and that, consequently, Doctor Vetch was not in the habit of everting the upper eyelids, to look for these granulations, as I have uniformly done in my examination of every case of Egyptian ophthalmia, for the last ten years.

This inference indeed, must, I should think, be drawn by every person, from the facts I have detailed, and such is certainly the inference to be *wished* by every friend to Doctor Vetch; for otherwise, what excuse could he offer, on the score of humanity, for keeping so many men immured for so many years, without curing them, as is proved by the statement of his own assistant, Serjeant Murphy?—What apology could he offer for such a dereliction of public duty, as well as sacrifice of private feeling, in detaining these men so long in hospital, at a time when their services were so valuable, and thereby subjecting the country to a great and unnecessary expense, had he known the cause and nature of their disease, and possessed a certain mode of relieving them? If, indeed, Doctor Vetch had the skill which he asserts, such conduct should

subject him to universal censure and to dismissal from the army.

If Doctor Vetch (who had for so many years the charge of the general dépôt for ophthalmia, and who from thence was named the Ophthalmic Surgeon to the Army), if he, I ask, *had possessed this knowledge*, and been "unwearied in his exertions" to communicate it to the surgeons of the army, how should nearly five thousand soldiers happen to be placed upon the pension list, for blindness arising from ophthalmia? some of whom I have already cured, and a large proportion of whom I hope to cure.\* And it will be recollected that the country has been, through these persons, subjected to an annual expenditure of from 70 to 90,000*l*.

\* In proof of the prompt relief afforded by my practice, to some of the patients in York hospital, David Mearns is an extraordinary instance. He, with thirty other pensioners, who have been either cured or as much relieved as their cases admitted of, were sent back to Scotland about three weeks since. Mearns had been so blind for upwards of five years, (within which period three of his children were born), that he was incapable of seeing any of his family. At the expiration of three weeks after the commencement of my treatment, his sight was so much restored, that he accurately told the time by a watch, in the presence of Mr. W. Merry, and Mr. Marshall of the War Office, and of several

But having exposed the incorrectness of all the material assertions of Doctor Vetch, and consequently demonstrated the fallacy of his main conclusions, I shall not dwell further upon his extraordinary pamphlet. I cannot, however, dismiss it without expressing a hope, that before the Doctor again undertakes to assail the moral or professional character of any man, he may, for his own sake, use more endeavours to make himself acquainted with facts, than he appears to have done in the work which has urged me to the present publication.

In addition to the evidence already adduced in this pamphlet, and in my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, with regard to the immediate change which took place at York hospital for the cure of the Egyptian ophthalmia, after my practice and opinions had been made known to its surgeons, I think it proper to state, that I am in possession of official documents to substantiate my statements.

other gentlemen. The state of Mearns's eyes and vision continued to improve to the period of his dismissal; and I do not doubt but that he will be enabled to resume his trade as a shoemaker, if his general health can be re-established, which has been greatly impaired by continued distress of mind, caused by his inability (through the state of his vision) to contribute to the maintenance of a wife and six children.

By the evidence of Winter and of Murphy, it is proved that my practice was adopted by Doctor Vetch, at the Ophthalmic Dépôt, almost immediately after I had made it known at York hospital.

The ophthalmia was most successfully treated in the army of occupation in France, as the Director General of the Army Medical Board is aware through the communications which he received from the medical officer, who has charge of the ophthalmic cases in that army, and I am in possession of documentary evidence to shew that these cures were performed through the adoption of my practice.

In other stations, where the ophthalmia has prevailed to a considerable extent, I have also authentic information that my practice has been found equally successful in the hands of other army surgeons.

These facts, combined with the results of my practice in the institution under my immediate superintendence, establish in the strongest manner the accuracy of what I have asserted, namely, that the horrible pestilence in question might be effectually removed from the army, were my plan universally carried into effect.

Surely then, my endeavours to establish the efficacy of my practice by public experiment,

after having been officially invited so to do, ought not to have subjected me to the numerous, vexatious, and calumnious attacks, of which I have reason to complain.\*

\* Of these attacks none have been so unfounded and so virulent as those of the Officers of the London Eye Infirmary, who, as it appears from a recent advertisement in the newspapers, have again pompously combined the name of the Infirmary with their own publication, in hopes, no doubt, of more extensively circulating their personal attacks, and more completely gratifying their professional resentments.

In order to bring the Governors of that Institution acquainted with the conduct of their medical officers, and to enable them to judge of the real motives by which these officers were actuated in their attacks upon me, I addressed to them last November, a circular letter, containing an abstract of what I had published in my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, upon the subject of these attacks.—The following are extracts from that circular letter. “ It will be seen, in page 57 of my Letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, that I copied an extract from a paper which I published in 1813, announcing my discovery of an immediate cure of the acute stage of the Egyptian Ophthalmia, by the administration of emetics, long continued in their action. In this paper I minutely described the difference between this practice, and the *nauseating*,—which was that pursued by Mr. Saunders. In page 62, I observed that ‘ Dr. Gooch, actuated by the most honourable feelings, on hearing part of the contents of the Medical Report read at the meeting of this Committee, (the *Special Committee* which published charges against me, in the pamphlet, entitled, ‘ *Special Report of the London Eye Infirmary*,’) withdrew; in disgust; but to his surprise, afterwards found his name affixed to a public document, the nature of which he utterly disapproved. With these circumstances (although we were strangers to each other) he thought proper to make me ac-



quainted, through the medium of an eminent physician, our mutual friend. He afterwards called upon me, when I shewed him my letters to the Ophthalmia Committee, with their Reports on my practice, and explained to him the difference between the *emetic* and *nauseating practice*, which he fully admitted, and declared that the latter, and not the former, was the practice pursued at the London Eye Infirmary. At a subsequent visit he told me, he had informed Doctor Farre of the contents of the documents I had shewn him, and the purport of our conversation respecting the emetic practice; notwithstanding which, in a second edition of Mr. Saunders's posthumous work, just edited, Doctor Farre refers to the Special Report of the Eye Infirmary, and makes a quotation from it respecting the nauseating practice, as grounds for charges against me, although, from Doctor Gooch, (as well as from my paper, published in 1813, already adverted to,) he was fully aware of their total want of foundation!!"

Extract of a Letter dated *Homerton, February 1815*, taken from my Letter above alluded to, page 69:—

"In communicating your opinion to my family and friends, all of them concurred that it was my duty (after having submitted to five operations during two years and nine months, without deriving the least benefit from them, and scarcely receiving an encouraging hope, even if I did undergo a sixth, by Mr. Travers) to place myself under your care; you therefore accordingly performed the operation on the 20th October, 1814, (at my lodgings in Bond-street,) which was less painful, and of much shorter duration than either of Mr. Travers's, and from which not the slightest inflammation resulted.

Immediately after the operation you tried me with a glass. I told the time by a watch, and the next day I read a paragraph in a newspaper with distinctness. On the third day I took a walk in the Park, with merely a shade on my eye, and on the following day returned to my wife and family, to their great astonishment, as well as to that of all my friends in the neighbourhood.

From the kind attention paid to me by Mr. Travers, during his operations, and from being a subscriber and friend to the Eye Infirmary, (an institution which I much approve, and shall ever encourage,) I called upon Mr. Travers, three days after my return, (seventh after the operation,) in order to shew him the wonderful success of your operation, and with the intention of explaining to him the difference between your operation and instrument to his; being then convinced, as I still am, that, had he performed *five times five* operations, in the manner he had done upon me, the result would have been equally unsuccessful.

The reception, however, which I experienced from him, was such, that the object of my visit was quite frustrated, by what I considered an unprovoked and unmerited abuse, both of you and myself, unworthy of further mention; but some part, however, I think myself bound in honour and gratitude to you to state to the world, my having been, I am fully persuaded, the *chief and innocent cause of those attacks, which you have experienced from the London Eye Infirmary.* This opinion is confirmed by what has come to my knowledge from other quarters.—He, after declaring that you could not have cured me by one operation, had it not been for his previous ones, said, that other patients had left him, and gone to you, in a similar manner, before; "but, now that his mind was made up to take public notice of him, (Sir William Adams,) he should do so, and that too in a way which he little expected, and which he (Mr. Travers) would do without delay." He then requested me to call upon Dr. Farre, to state to the Doctor what I had just stated to him; but his unexpected behaviour did not merit an acquiescence on my part to comply with his wish, and I therefore declined doing so.

The *Special Report of the London Eye Infirmary* was soon afterwards sent to me. This publication brought strongly to my recollection the threat of "taking public notice of you in a way you did not expect."

Addressed by Thomas Corlett, Esq., to Sir Wm. Adams.

"Since the publication of my letter already alluded to, I have received the following Letter from your Secretary, who, in 1814,

addressed to me a Letter betraying the same spirit, and which, in page 40, I proved to be replete with calumnies and misrepresentations.

Cripplegate, 30th October, 1817.

Sir William Adams,

I have seen your bantling, of which, I imagine, you think yourself, after a painful labour of three years, well delivered.

The midwife has certainly some merit:—Will she, do you think, be able to put off the after-pains?—The book (mind I do not say your book) has not, in my mind, even whitened you. I therefore demand to be understood, Sir William, that my opinion of you, remains unchanged;—that whatever I have said of you, I fully believed, and do now believe; and to my former belief I *dare* add, without a wish to be covered by any man, *that you have made a ladder of the dead body of Mr. Saunders*, and, by which, you have ascended the giddy height on which you now stand.—A friend of mine has told me, that you want to attend the Committee. \*—I know but of one way in which this can be accomplished, viz., by your becoming a life, or an annual, Governor. Your becoming one of these will render you eligible for being on the committee of the Charity; and at the next election, which will happen soon, I will propose you for the office.

I am, Sir William,

Your humble Servant,

RICHARD BATTLY.

\* The Secretary here alludes to one of many applications which I made to different Members of the Committee of the London Eye Infirmary, to be permitted personally to explain before that Committee, some statements made in my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, in which I had proved that the charges made against me by their Medical Officers, were equally destitute of truth and justice; and also to be permitted to lay before the Committee the original documents, upon which my letter to the Directors was founded.

Upon the malignity and folly of this letter, from the obsequious ally, and active tool of your medical officers, I shall make no comment whatever, for, in appealing to men of feeling and consideration, no comment can be necessary."

I think it proper to mention, with respect to Doctor Gooch, that soon after the publication of this circular, I received a note from that gentleman, in which he states, "That he had never said that he disapproved of the proceedings of the Committee. But that he had said, that he knew nothing about the question, and cared nothing about it, and therefore did not wish to be considered as one of the authors of the report."

I shall leave it to the reader's judgment to determine from Doctor Gooch's conduct, and from his own statement, whether the information given me was correct or not. Doctor Gooch withdrew from the Committee—"he did not wish to be considered as one of the authors of the Report,"—he has not, indeed, contradicted any part of my statement, in respect to Doctor Farre's conduct—and he has not taken any part in the recent proceedings of the medical officers of the London Eye Infirmary.

#### POSTSCRIPT.

I WAS engaged in the correction of the foregoing sheets for the printer, when the Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal, made its appearance, in which my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, and Doctor Vetch's pamphlet are reviewed together. Any one who has perused the appendix to my letter to the Directors, must be aware of the feelings of the editor of that journal towards me. Those feelings, indeed, he displays at the very outset of what he would have his readers, I presume, regard as fair and impartial criticism. For he thus expresses himself in the first paragraph of his critique: "Both authors claim the merit of having deserved well of the army and the country, by their professional skill in the treatment of certain forms of the Egyptian Ophthalmia; but Doctor Vetch's statement is concise, perspicuous, and convincing, while Sir William's is prolix, confused, and inconclusive. The former, keeping one object steadily in view, has no explanation to make, *no unfavourable impressions* to remove—the latter, instead of going straight forward, turns to the right and left, to re-



pel attacks real or *imaginary*, which his pretensions have provoked, or to dispute the claims of rival oculists."

This passage presents a pregnant omen of the Reviewer's disposition—but what will the reader think of the principles of a writer who charges me with digression to remove "*unfavourable impressions*, and to repel *imaginary attacks*," when informed, that this writer has himself made most unqualified attacks upon me, and has for some years laboured most assiduously, to produce unfavourable impressions with regard to my professional character. His conduct has, indeed, been such as to extort from me such observations in my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital as he has deemed it prudent to overlook. He exaggerates the character of my complaint, while he studiously suppresses every cause that gave rise to that complaint. He reprobates the retaliation, while conceals the aggression—he would have me considered wrong, because I have ventured to assert my own rights—he would have imputed to me a sort of morbid irritability, by treating with levity the injuries which I have experienced.

For the first time I learn from this reviewer that Doctor Vetch, as he states, "published at Chichester on the 30th of March, 1812, a pamphlet on opaque cornea, consisting of only sixteen duodecimo pages," and which he alledges "contains

much more valuable information on the subject than Sir William Adams has ever communicated."

This panegyric upon Doctor Vetch, and this denunciation of my pretensions, is followed by extracts from Doctor Vetch's pamphlet, which are, *primâ facie*, calculated to induce the belief, that that gentleman had anticipated me in my peculiar opinions and treatment with regard to certain forms of the Egyptian Ophthalmia, and thus had established the claim of priority. But a little examination will explain the point.

There is really something very marvellous about this pamphlet of sixteen pages. The reviewer states that it was "*published at Chichester*." But after the most minute inquiry both by myself and others, I cannot find that any such pamphlet was ever published, either in town or country—it was never advertised, and the medical booksellers in London, profess to have been totally ignorant of the existence of such a pamphlet, until it was mentioned by the reviewer, to whom I allude. Such is the declaration of Callow, by whom Doctor Vetch's late pamphlet was published. Messrs. Longman also, by whom his work in 1806, was printed, can give no information whatever, upon the subject. I have not met with or been able to learn of *any army surgeon*, or civil practitioner, who has ever before heard of this pamphlet—and it seems

very extraordinary, that when Doctor Vetch, in his late publication, dwelt so emphatically upon his unwearied endeavours to call the attention of "army surgeons to the necessity of restoring the palpebral linings to a state of health," he never mentioned this pamphlet, though he referred frequently to his work in 1806; but to the Chichester pamphlet, he made no allusion either directly or indirectly.

Surely Doctor Vetch could find no difficulty in forwarding such a production to the Army Medical Board, and to the Military Surgeons at large, from whom he could not apprehend an ungracious reception; had he not been restrained by the knowledge, that the opinions contained in it had been previously acted upon, as well as promulgated by me.

My opinions and practice, indeed, were made known at Exeter in 1808, and the results published through the report of the West of England Eye Infirmary in 1809. My system was officially communicated to the Commander-in-Chief, and to the Adjutant-General in March 1810, to a great number of medical practitioners in Bath and in Dublin in 1811, also to the Army Medical Board the latter end of January or the beginning of February 1812, when the late Director General, notwithstanding the prejudices then

existing against me, frankly admitted that I was the first person to demonstrate the general existence of the granulations of the lids, and to explain the necessity of their removal.

Had this pamphlet of Doctor Vetch's, therefore, been published on the 30th of March, 1812, as the Edinburgh Reviewer states, I could at once have demonstrated the plagiarism of the author, and of that he must have been well aware.

This knowledge, no doubt, prevented its publication, if such a thing was ever printed. Doctor Vetch, however, might perhaps calculate upon obtaining credit with his immediate friends for certain discoveries, by privately circulating that, the publication of which must have stamped him as a plagiarist.

Either this pamphlet was printed, or it was not, —if the latter, I need not characterize those who at present make the assertion; and if the former, Doctor Vetch's motive for preventing its publication is quite obvious.\*

\* Anxious to see a copy of this pamphlet, and finding my search in London quite ineffectual, I wrote to a gentleman at Chichester, requesting him to make inquiries about it. The following is an extract of his answer which I have just received.

The Edinburgh Reviewer has, I think, acted most inconsiderately towards Doctor Vetch, by bringing forward this production (which the Doctor had too much prudence to mention in his late pamphlet) in order to make it an instrument of attack against me. But possibly Doctor Vetch himself may have been reconciled to this sort of self-devotion, in order to achieve some temporary triumph over one, who for having established

“Chichester, April 10th, 1818.

“A second conversation with the printer brought to his recollection the circumstance of having printed for Doctor Vetch, about fifty copies of a report (or statement) of cases of the men at Aldwick, and amongst other things he recollects that the different stages of the disease on the patients were mentioned, &c. but cannot give any opinion whether opaque cornea was particularly mentioned. Doctor ——— has no doubt, that it was one of these copies that Doctor Vetch put into his hands at Bognor, but is not able to find it any where, or it would have been at my service.

“The printer states that from what he recollects at the time it was printed, it was intended merely for circulation amongst *General Officers &c. and others at the Depot*, and was despatched very quickly, and paid for without going through his account book even, which was the cause of his not recollecting it when I first spoke to him. *The tract in question was never published or advertised*, so says the printer.” “The printer is of opinion that the above took place early in 1812, as Doctor Vetch paid him his small half-yearly bill, at the end of 1811—and discharged this job immediately.” “*I have inquired of the principal surgeons here, but none of them have seen any other work of Doctor Vetch's but that published by Longman.*”

by public experiment a mode of cure for the most painful and dangerous disease to which the human eye is subject, is accused by the Edinburgh Reviewer, of a “pertinacious interference with the regular servants of the department.” Such is this reviewer's notion of candour and humanity.



## APPENDIX.

### STATEMENT, No. 1.

WILLIAM WELLS, a private of the 52d regiment, states, that he was attacked with ophthalmia, Nov. 6th, 1807, in the voyage from Sicily. On his arrival in England, he was sent to the Ophthalmic Depot at Bognor, where he became a patient, Jan. 8th, 1808, and remained under the treatment of Doctor Vetch, until I selected him in Oct. 1812, a period of four years and ten months. He further states, that he underwent 23 operations during this period. The result of this treatment is, that (when examined by me, Nov. 1812, to make this record) he can see with the right eye to make his way by himself; with the left eye he is only able to see light, as he states since the application of caustic to the eye-ball four days before my arrival at Bognor; previous to which application he could discover with it objects at two yards' distance. The pain occasioned by the caustic he declares to have been so severe that he could not get any sleep for the whole of the succeeding night. That he inquired of the orderly man, who was in the habit of bringing round the applications, what had been applied to his eye? To which question the orderly answered, *Caustic*. The surgeon while performing the operation said to him, "If he could not stand caustic he would cut him with a knife, but that he would cure him in ten days with the caustic." Two

men, Corporal Ramsay, 74th regiment, and John Carr, 9th veteran battalion, stood by and saw the caustic applied, and Thomas Jones, of the 23d regiment, examined the eye after it was done, and reported "that there was a lump upon the sight of the eye as large as a pea."

This eye (the left) was very much inflamed on his arrival in London a month after the application had been made, which he declared had not been the case for upwards of twelve months before the caustic was applied.

This man's case was thus officially recorded at his examination at Bognor, when I selected him. "Conjunctiva of the left eye diseased, and opacity of the cornea—right eye good."

#### STATEMENT, No. 2.

SERGEANT TREBLE, 2d battalion 43d regiment, states, that he was attacked with ophthalmia in Portugal, two years and six months before I saw him at Bognor. Two years of that time he spent in the Ophthalmic Depot, under the care of Doctor Vetch. This man also states that caustic was applied to his eyes two days successively. The first application being made three days, the second two days before my arrival at Bognor.

A most violent degree of inflammation had come on by the time of his arrival in London, which during six weeks that he remained under my care I was unable to subdue. I was subsequently informed by him that he was several months in York hospital before the inflammation could be subdued, when it left him completely blind in both eyes, for which he was discharged the service on the highest rate of pension.

The following is the official memorandum taken of Treble's case at his examination at Bognor:—"Opaque cornea of the right eye, and diseased conjunctiva; cornea of the left eye doubtful, whether in a state of ulceration.

#### No. 3.

#### *Affidavits of the three men brought from the Ophthalmic Depot at Bognor.*

I, JOSEPH WINTER, do voluntarily declare and make oath, that I was attacked with the ophthalmia at Gibraltar, in December, 1807, for which I was kept in the military hospital there for several months, but not experiencing any relief from the various modes of cure employed, was sent home to the ophthalmic depot at Bognor. I remained there for three years and five months, without being in the least degree benefited, by the varied treatment I underwent, immediately directed and witnessed by Doctor Vetch. He never examined the internal part of my upper eyelids, until his return from the York Hospital in March 1812, where it was reported he had been to see some new operations performed. He then operated on my lids, and those of several other men, in the same manner as Mr. Adams has since done, but quite differently from what he had ever done before. From this, however, I received no advantage, as I was as blind when Mr. Adams selected me for the trial of his practice, as I had ever been.

I further do testify on oath, that for six months after the first attack at Gibraltar, I was unable to bear the light without experiencing great pain, and the inflammation having then subsided considerably, I found myself unable to see even the nails on my fingers, or to walk any where without a guide. With difficulty I could perceive the difference between the dress of a woman, and that of a man, when close to them. In this state I remained, without any improvement, until about eight or ten weeks after Mr. Adams first operated on my eyelids, when I could perceive large letters. My sight got better daily, and in the beginning of May (five months after his first operation) my eyes were pronounced cured, being able to read print one half smaller

than that of a newspaper, see the minute marks on a watch dial, thread a small needle, &c. &c.

JOSEPH WINTER.

Sworn at the Mansion-House,  
London, 30th July, 1813.

G. SCHOLEY, Mayor.

I, *John Parsons*, do voluntarily declare and make oath, that I was attacked with the ophthalmia at Camp near Badajoz in June, 1811, when, after a fortnight's delay, I was sent blind to the Francisco Hospital at Lisbon. After undergoing repeated bleedings, blisterings, &c., during two months, without receiving any benefit, I was sent to the Isle of Wight, and from thence was removed to the York Hospital at Chelsea. In this last hospital I remained for twelve months, and was then selected by Mr. Adams, to try his practice upon. Various modes of treatment had been adopted during that period, but to no purpose, as within a fortnight after I was first attacked, until after I was operated upon by Mr. Adams, I could only see light from darkness, without being able to perceive the largest objects, or go any where unless led by a guide.

I experienced some benefit from Mr. Adams's operations, last April twelve-months; but soon after, he discontinued his attendance on me, I gradually got worse, and when I again became his patient in December, I was nearly as blind as ever, being scarcely able to see the light of a window. Two months after Mr. Adams had operated on my eyes, I could see sufficiently with one eye to walk without a guide, and the other has gradually improved ever since, so as now to enable me to see nearly the same with both. For these last three months I have distinguished letters, and the minute marks on a watch-dial, with the greatest clearness. I walk every where without the least difficulty, by myself.

I further declare and make oath, that my eyelids were never before examined in the manner since done by Mr. Adams, and that I have heard the surgeons declare, that they had "never seen the eyelids turned up (everted) before." This declaration was

made when Mr. Adams was first examining them, and explaining the nature of my complaint to several medical gentlemen at the York Hospital. After Mr. Adams had fixed upon me, I heard different surgeons say as they were going through the wards, that they thought I could not be cured.

his

Sworn at the Mansion-House, JOHN + PARSONS  
London, 30th July, 1813, Mark.

G. SCHOLEY, Mayor.

I, *John Capel*, do voluntarily declare and make oath, that my right eye (that on which Mr. Adams has operated) was attacked with ophthalmia in Spain in November, 1809, while in the retreat with Sir John Moore, and that on my arrival in England, I was only capable of perceiving with it light from darkness. On my return from Spain, I was sent to Walcheren, and on my return from thence to the Bognor ophthalmic dépôt, where I became also blind in the left eye. After undergoing various treatment under Doctor Vetch, I was told by him that my case was utterly hopeless, was turned out of the Infirmary wards, and sent to the incurable wards, where I remained for two years, (after Doctor Vetch had given me up as incurable) when I was selected by Mr. Adams. I further declare, that within a fortnight after Mr. Adams had operated on my right eye, I could with it read print, and thread a middle-sized needle. The sight has continued to improve, and I am now able to see the minute and seconds marks on a watch-dial, and am still mending, from the use of an application only lately adopted, but which has cleared my eyes more than any thing I had previously made use of. My left eye, which became blind in the ophthalmic dépôt at Bognor, Mr. Adams considered hopeless, and therefore did not undertake its cure.

his

Sworn at the Mansion-House, JOHN + CAPEL  
London, 30th July, 1813, Mark.

G. SCHOLEY, Mayor.



*Medical Report of the West of England Infirmary  
for curing Diseases of the Eye.*

Admitted from the 1st Nov. 1808, to the 1st Nov. 1809, 815 patients, of whom 22 are incurable; included in this number are eight persons whose eyes were entirely destroyed when they applied—43 have absented themselves—2 were dismissed for irregularity—20 received benefit—86 are still under the care of the charity, and 642 have been cured, as specified under the following heads of disease:—

Acute inflammation .....	140
Acute ditto, with thickened discharge approaching the state of lippitudo, (sometimes erroneously called Egyptian ophthalmia) .....	79
Acute Egyptian ophthalmia .....	17
Acute scrophulous inflammation .....	38
Acute inflammation with purulent discharge in infants .....	11
Acute ditto, with pustules of the cornea .....	34
Acute ditto, with ulcers of the cornea .....	70
Acute inflammation, with ulcers of the cornea, and crustae lactea in an extreme degree .....	3
Acute inflammation of the iris .....	3
Syphilitic inflammation of the iris .....	4
Protrusion of the iris through openings in the cornea, caused by the process of ulceration .....	5
Chronic inflammation of the eye-ball .....	12
Chronic ditto of the eye-lids .....	24
Chronic ditto, with puriform discharge from the internal membrane of the eye-lid .....	9
<i>The effects of the Egyptian ophthalmia</i> * .....	7

\* It will be recollected that this report was published Nov. 1st 1809. One of these cases (Frost) occurred in the latter end of 1808 and was cured in the beginning of 1809, when he applied to Mr. Russell for a situation as clerk. The first case of this kind

Nebula of the cornea .....	5
Partial opacities of the cornea .....	8
Total opacities of the cornea .....	7
Excision of the whole of the transparent cornea in a case of staphyloma .....	1
Excision of a part of the cornea in a similar case .....	1
Wounds of the cornea .....	1
Gutta serena .....	2
Hemeralopia, or night-blindness .....	1
Imperfection of sight, from debility of the retina from various causes .....	2
Strabismus, with double vision .....	1
Tinea of the eye-lashes .....	50
Lippitudo .....	26
Styes .....	14
Eversion of the eye-lid .....	3
Inversion of the eye-lid .....	4
Encysted Tumors in the eye-lid .....	8
Abscess of the eye-lid .....	1
Extraction of shot from the eye-lid .....	1
Syphilitic ulcer of the eye-lid .....	1
Wounds of the eye-lid .....	2
Excrescences of the conjunctiva .....	3
A burn of the conjunctiva from metal, in a state of fusion ..	1
A burn of the conjunctiva from hot-iron .....	1
Removing extraneous substances adhering to the eye-ball ..	7
Abscess and fungus of the lachrymal sac .....	2
Fistula lachrymalis, (or obstruction of the lachrymal passages)	6
Closed pupil complicated with cataract .....	1
Capsular cataracts (after the operation of extraction had completely failed elsewhere) .....	2

adduced by Doctor Vetch was not put under treatment until Nov. 20th 1809, nor sent to his regiment cured until July 24 1810.

Restored to sight by the operation for cataract in persons of different ages .....	14
Cases of cataract in persons born blind .....	11
Total cured.....	642

Total cured..... 642

*The Report of the Cases upon which the opinion of the Ophthalmic Committee in 1814 was founded.*

The state of the Eyes, blind from Ophthalmia, when the Patients were first placed under my care.	The present state of the Patients' Eyes.
<p><b>CORPORAL HILL</b>, aged 35, was attacked with ophthalmia in 1807, and discharged the service blind in both eyes in 1809.</p> <p>I cured one eye two years since, with which he sees perfectly.</p> <p>In the other the granulations were very large and numerous; the cornea very opaque, and full of large vessels running over it.</p> <p><b>VISION.</b>—Could see light from darkness, but no object however large.</p>	<p>The granulations are quite removed, and the natural transparency of both eyes restored.</p> <p><b>VISION.</b>—Can see to read, with the most perfect fluency, the smallest print of a newspaper.</p>
<p><b>JOHN SCATTENBURGH</b>, aged 47, was attacked with ophthalmia in 1810, and discharged the service blind in both eyes in 1813.</p> <p>The eyes much inflamed. The lids also much inflamed and granulated. Cornea completely opaque, with very large vessels running over them. An extreme bad case.</p> <p><b>VISION.</b>—Could walk no where without being led, and was unable even to distinguish a man from a woman.</p>	<p>All inflammation perfectly removed, also the granulations, and the opacity of the cornea in one eye. In the other a little film remains, but does not much impede the passage of light, being on one side of the pupil.</p> <p><b>VISION.</b>—Is able to see the seconds marks on a watch dial, and read a newspaper.</p>
<p><b>JOSEPH SPARROW</b>, aged 28, was attacked in Egypt in 1801, and discharged the service in 1810, blind of one eye, which was also inflamed.</p> <p>Lids highly granulated. Cornea opaque, with large vessels running over it.</p> <p><b>VISION.</b>—Could see the outlines of an object very indistinctly, but without knowing what it was. Did not see sufficiently to guide himself with this eye in walking.</p>	<p>Inflammation perfectly removed, as also all disease of the lids.</p> <p>A very slight cloudiness remains, which is daily getting better *. The enlarged vessels have wholly disappeared.</p> <p><b>VISION.</b>—Can read the smallest print of a newspaper with fluency, and perceive the second-marks on a watch-dial.</p>

\* The health of the patients was much injured by the unhealthy and confined situation in which they were lodged, which very much affected the improving state

The state of the Eyes, blind from Ophthalmia, when the Patients were first placed under my care.

The present state of the Patients' Eyes.

GEORGE BIRD, aged 40, was attacked in Egypt in 1801, and had repeated relapses until the year 1809, when he was discharged, blind in both eyes.

Both lower lids everted. Lids granulated and inflamed. Cornea opaque with large vessels running over it.

VISION.—For nine months in the year he was so blind as to be led about the streets. During the summer, mild weather enabled his eyes to recover from inflammation, when he could see a little better.

JOHN FREESTONE, aged 37, was attacked in 1809, and discharged blind in both eyes in 1810.

Lids inflamed and granulated. Cornea opaque, with vascularity. A cicatrix existed in one cornea, as apprehended from the use of caustic.

VISION.—By day he could avoid running against people in the streets, but at night was led every where. He could not at any time see the ground on which he stood, or discriminate any object sufficiently distinct, to know what it was.

Both eye-lids cured of eversion. The lids cured, and the transparency of one eye perfectly restored. In the other, there is a cicatrix or scar, which exists on one side of the pupil.

VISION.—Is able to read the smallest print of a newspaper with fluency, and to perceive the second-marks on a watch-dial.

All inflammation and disease of the lids removed. The scar necessarily remains, and a very slight haziness in the other eye, which is supposed to be the effect of the caustic which had been employed while he was in the army.

VISION.—Can read the smallest print of a newspaper, and perceives the second-marks on a watch-dial.

of their eyes; after remedying this unpleasant consequence by a change of situation, their eyes again became irritated and weakened, from the violent purgative effects of some bad cascarrilla bark; on which subject I reported officially to the Army Medical Board and sent samples of the bark for their inspection. The men had not entirely recovered from the effects of this bark, when they were finally reported upon by the Ophthalmic Committee, Dec. 6, 1814. I then stated to the Committee these circumstances, and requested, if they were not perfectly satisfied with my success, they would give me further time, as the men's eyes were now improving equally with their health.

The state of the Eyes, blind from Ophthalmia, when the Patients were first placed under my care.

The present state of the Patients' Eyes.

GEORGE BICKLEY, aged 32, was attacked in 1812, and discharged blind in both eyes.—In one eye, there was a scar before the pupil, which eye was rejected as incurable.—In the other, he was affected like the other patients.

VISION.—Was able to walk without a guide, but not to distinguish any small object.

All inflammation removed from the eye and lids.

The scar in the eye most afflicted lessened. While under treatment was attacked with a relapse of the Walcheren fever from which violent inflammation and an ulcer of the cornea ensued. I was fearful he would have lost the eye altogether.

VISION.—Both eyes much improved. With the eye which ulcerated, can see moderate-sized print, and the second-marks on a watch-dial.

JOHN SMITH, aged 40, was attacked in 1810, and discharged in 1812. Was operated upon four or five times in the York Hospital, after I had demonstrated my practice there, but with no benefit. His eyes were diseased like the others, only worse; and, having caught cold after he came under my care, they remained violently inflamed for upwards of six weeks.

VISION.—Having been previously under my treatment for some time, he was able to see to walk without a guide, but not to perceive one person from another, or any small object.

He has suffered very much in his health: first, by the unhealthiness of his former lodgings; and secondly, from being severely purged for six or eight weeks by the bad cascarrilla bark, and from the effects of which he has not long recovered. His eyes much benefited, but are not yet well. They are daily getting better.

VISION.—Can see large letters, and tell the hour by a watch.

JOHN MILLER. Is not benefited in consequence of having been dreadfully purged for eight weeks by some of the same bark, from which Smith and three or four of the others also suffered severely. During this period I operated upon one eye, which is entirely lost I fear, by the violent inflammation and fungus which resulted. His treatment, was in every respect, the same as the others who are cured; hence the failure must be attributed to the effects of this medicine, and the constitution of the patient, and not to any fault in the practice.

THE END.

Printed by W. CLOWES, Northumberland-court, Strand.



Tom D. Fane

**REPORT**  
OF  
**THE COMMITTEE**  
OF THE  
**LONDON INFIRMARY**

FOR CURING

**Diseases of the Eye,**

OCCASIONED BY

**THE FALSE AND CALUMNIOUS STATEMENTS**

CONTAINED IN A LETTER

ADDRESSED BY SIR WILLIAM ADAMS

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE AND HONOURABLE THE  
DIRECTORS OF GREENWICH HOSPITAL.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, & BROWN,  
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1818.

# LONDON INFIRMARY FOR CURING DISEASES OF THE EYE.

A Special Meeting of the General Committee, held at the Infirmary, on the 21st November, 1817.

SIR CHARLES PRICE, BART. President,  
AND SUBSEQUENTLY,  
HARRY SEDGWICK, Esq. Vice-President.

IN THE CHAIR;

PRESENT,

JOHN ANSLEY, Esq. Ald.  
JOHN BAINBRIDGE, Esq.  
RICHARD BATTLE, Esq.  
WILLIAM BENNETT, Esq.  
MICHAEL BLAND, Esq.  
BRAILSFORD BRIGHT, Esq.  
JOHN BUMSTED, Esq.  
GEORGE BYNG, Esq. M.P.  
JOHN CLARKE, Esq.  
WILLIAM CRAWLEY, Esq.  
JOHN DEAN, Esq.  
JOHN RICHARD FARRE, M.D.

A pamphlet, entitled, "A Letter to the Right Honourable and Honourable the Directors of

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Greenwich Hospital," &c., signed "William Adams," in which the Infirmary and its Officers are held forth to public censure, having been considered; it was unanimously resolved,—

That the publication in question be referred to the further consideration of a Committee, to consist of the following gentlemen, whose names stand affixed to the Special Report which was published in 1814; viz.—

JOHN ANSLEY, Esq. Ald.	D. D. DAVIS, M. D.
JOHN BAINBRIDGE, Esq.	ROBERT GOOCH, M. D.
RICHARD BATTLE, Esq.	JOHN HODGKINSON, Esq.
MICHAEL BLAND, Esq.	SOLOMON HOUGHAM, Esq.
WILLIAM BRYDON, Esq.	S. S. HUNT, Esq.
JOHN CAZENOVE, Esq.	RALPH PRICE, Esq.
THOS. CHURCHYARD, Esq.	HARRY SEDGWICK, Esq.
GEORGE CLARK, Esq.	JOHN SMITH, Esq.
WILLIAM CRAWLEY, Esq.	JOHN TWEMLOW, Esq.
J. D. CROSEY, Esq.	RICHARD WACE, Esq.

and of the following, who were members of the Committee in 1810; viz.—

THOS. AMSINCK, Esq.	JOHN MACKIE, Esq.
MATTW. HEATHFIELD, Esq.	JEREMIAH OLIVE, Esq.
RICHD. HEATHFIELD, Esq.	ROBERT PITCHES, Esq.
JOHN HORNER, Esq.	R. H. SPARKS, Esq.

And at a Meeting of the General Committee, held at the Infirmary, on the 11th March, 1818,

convened to receive the Report of the Special Committee;

SOLOMON HOUGHAM, Esq. IN THE CHAIR;

## PRESENT,

JOHN BAINBRIDGE, Esq.	RICHD. HEATHFIELD, Esq.
RICHARD BATTLE, Esq.	JOHN HODGKINSON, Esq.
WILLIAM BRYDON, Esq.	JOHN HORNER, Esq.
THOS. CHURCHYARD, Esq.	ROBERT PITCHES, Esq.
JOHN CLARK, Esq.	RALPH PRICE, Esq.
WILLIAM CRAWLEY, Esq.	RICHARD REDMAN, Esq.
J. D. CROSEY, Esq.	HARRY SEDGWICK, Esq.
JOHN DEAN, Esq.	THOMAS SPARKS, Esq.
J. R. FARRE, M. D.	BENJ. TRAVERS, Esq. F.R.S.
MATTW. HEATHFIELD, Esq.	FREDERICK TYRRELL, Esq.

A Letter addressed by Dr. Farre to the Chairman of the Special Committee;

A second Letter, addressed by the same to Sir Charles Price, Bart., President; or to the Chairman of the General Committee;

And the Report of the Special Committee, were read;—

Upon which, the following Resolutions were passed unanimously:—

That the Report of the Special Committee, and the Letters of Dr. Farre of the 3rd and 10th



instant, which have now been read, be published, and that a copy be delivered to every Governor of the Infirmary.

That this Committee entertain the highest sense of the talents, integrity and zeal, of Dr. Farre, which, whether called into exertion by motives of public benevolence, of private friendship or of professional duty, have, alike, advanced the interests of this Institution.

That this Committee acknowledge with great satisfaction the important services derived to this Charity, from the able and upright professional conduct of Benjamin Travers, Esq. F.R.S., and William Lawrence, Esq. F.R.S.

That the acknowledgments of this Committee are also eminently due to Richard Battley, Esq. Honorary Secretary, who, during the course of thirteen years, has, on every occasion, manifested an anxious zeal for and who has contributed extensively to the advancement of, the interests of this Institution.

That this Committee cannot conclude the subject which has recently engaged their attention, without the deep and pointed expression of their regret, that the duty of a

public appeal in explanation of the management of the Infirmary, and of the conduct of the Officers of the Charity, should have become necessary; nor, without expressing a hope, *that a plain and simple regard to truth*, will prevent the necessity of any further similar proceeding.

That the Resolutions of this Meeting be published in the Morning and Evening Papers.

S. HOUGHAM, Chairman.

S. Hougham, Esq. having left the Chair, the Thanks of the Meeting were unanimously voted to him for his able conduct therein.

R. BATTLE, Hon. Sec.

## REPORT

### SPECIAL COMMITTEE

The Committee, in the investigation of the pamphlet of Sir William Adams, have endeavoured to limit their inquiry to the object of submitting to you such explanation as may be necessary to convey just views of the character of the Infirmary. They do not consider it consistent with the nature and principles of the Institution, to enter into contest with any individual; and it will not be expected that they should undertake the work of medical controversy. They purpose to produce a clear and faithful statement, and to express their sense, of the several matters noticed by Sir William Adams, which fall level to general apprehension—further your Committee are persuaded you do not desire their observations to extend.

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Your Committee have more especially directed their attention to the following considerations ; namely :—

The general direction and management of the Infirmary.

The merits of the late John Cunningham Saunders, Esq., the Founder of the Infirmary.

The conduct of the Committee towards the late Mrs. Colkett, the widow of Mr. Saunders.

And the conduct of the Medical Directors and Officers of the Infirmary.

On the first head ; your Committee are enabled to demonstrate the fallacy of the attempt of Sir William Adams, to show, that the exertions for the public good, on the part of the Infirmary, have been so languid, or so narrowed by selfish views ; as to have left open, particularly to him, the duty, which he assumes, of introducing to public notice and of applying to the public service, the practice which he was taught at the Infirmary.

On the 1st October, 1804, the late Mr. Saunders published a proposal for instituting a Dispensary for the Relief of the Poor afflicted with Diseases of the Eye and Ear. This proposal was sanctioned by the testimonials of the physicians and surgeons of St. Thomas's and

Guy's Hospitals, where he had then been engaged in professional studies, ten years, during eight of which he acted as Teacher of Practical Anatomy.

The plan was immediately encouraged : the Dispensary was instituted under the name of the London Dispensary for curing Diseases of the Eye and Ear, and was opened for the reception of patients on the 25th March, 1805. On the 26th January, 1808, the treatment of diseases of the ear was relinquished, and the name of the Institution altered to its present designation.

The views which were entertained by Mr. Saunders, in offering that proposal to public attention, with respect to diseases of the eye, and which have been adopted and acted upon, invariably, by the Governors, appear to your Committee, to have been original and comprehensive, corresponding to his genius, and as liberal as the motives which have supplied the funds of the Institution. Mr. Saunders desired to be the instrument of establishing an Ophthalmic Hospital, worthy of the name of this great city, at which he should at once have the gratification of applying the science which he cultivated and improved, to the relief of the afflicted poor, and the instruction of the medical student.

In pursuance of those views, the Infirmary



has, from its foundation to this day, been open to patients, without the restrictive condition even of a recommendatory ticket: disease and poverty have been sufficient passports to a participation in the benefits which the Infirmary dispenses.

In the year 1811, the Infirmary was opened to students to attend and observe the practice of the Medical Directors; by which measure, the best means were provided for the universal diffusion of the modes of cure practised within its walls, the excellence of which *then* stood confirmed by sufficient experience. Since the 1st of February of that year, *four hundred and twelve pupils* have been instructed under the Medical Directors, in a knowledge of the nature and treatment of diseases of the eye—of this number, fifty were physicians—the rest surgeons; consisting not only of natives of the three divisions of the United Kingdom, many of whom held important stations in the army and navy; but also of natives of the West Indies, America, Germany, Portugal, and other parts of the globe—previous to that time, Mr. now Sir William Adams, and other gentlemen, had been instructed at the Infirmary.

In the year 1808, a Charity, on the model of your Institution, was established at Exeter, under the professional direction of Mr. Adams; similar Institutions have since been estab-

lished in the Metropolis, and in different parts of the United Kingdom, under the professional direction of gentlemen who have received instruction at the London Infirmary, and your Committee have the satisfaction to learn, that Infirmaries for the Eye, are at this time contemplated in two principal Towns, to be conducted, as your Committee have reason to believe, by pupils of your Medical Directors.

Early in the year 1812, the General Committee assiduously promoted the sale of the posthumous work of Mr. Saunders, on Diseases of the Eye, in which, the Committee felt a lively and anxious interest, because it served to extend the knowledge of the valuable practice of the Infirmary; as well as for other reasons, which will be noticed hereafter. At the same time, a copy of the work was presented to the Army Medical Board, by order of the Committee.

In the year 1815, your respected President and a deputation from the General Committee prayed the assistance of his Majesty's Government, in furtherance of the comprehensive views of the Committee—by memorial and by personal application, to his Royal Highness the Duke of York, and to Lords Viscount Melville and Sidmouth; on which occasion, his Royal Highness graciously condescended to become Patron of the Infirmary. See Appendix [A].

In the year 1816, your President and a deputation from the Committee, applied to the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's Treasury, for the aid of a sum of money in support of a building fund; but no pecuniary assistance has yet been received from the public Treasury, notwithstanding the forcible claims arising from the number of soldiers and sailors who have been cured at the Infirmary. See *Appendix* [B].

By the Infirmary Reports, it appears, that between the 25th March, 1805, and the 25th March, 1808, were discharged, cured . . . 3332 patients

In the year ending 25th March, 1809 . . . . .	1970
From the 25th March, 1809, to the 31st December, 1809 . . . . .	1942
In the year 1810 . . . . .	2464
In the year 1811 . . . . .	2455
In the year 1812 . . . . .	2585
In the year 1813 . . . . .	2954
In the year 1814 . . . . .	2539
In the year 1815 . . . . .	2876
In the year 1816 . . . . .	2611

Total . . . . . 25728\*

Of these, 327 were cases of blindness from

\* The whole amount of the disbursements of the Institution to the 31st December, 1816, does not exceed £8000.

cataract, 79 being cases of blindness from the birth; some in the condition of infancy.

Your Committee, on the review of the plan of the Infirmary, as originally designed, with respect to diseases of the eye, and of the system and perseverance by which that plan has been brought into action, cannot withhold the expression of their applause from the Conductors of the Institution, nor of their congratulations from the Governors. In what instance has a charitable institution, founded on the genius and science of a single individual, and depending exclusively on its public character for pecuniary support, advanced in the short period of thirteen years, to the first importance and consideration? In what instance have the satisfactions of the benevolent mind been more heightened?

In the sixth year of the Institution, the ultimate object of the Founder was accomplished. The Infirmary was opened as a Medical School, the importance of which is attested by the number and rank of the pupils: the publication of Mr. Saunders' posthumous work, has given the widest circulation to his knowledge: the science which distinguished its first period, has been ably upheld and administered by his friend and colleague—and by the able surgeons who have succeeded to the office of Surgeon: the

cures performed have been, to a considerable extent, of a novel and most interesting description, and in number, have exceeded all anticipation.

To this brief statement your Committee appeal—on this basis they rest the character of the Institution with the Governors and with the public.

With reference to the merits of the late Mr. Saunders, your Committee have compared other and copious evidence, with the recent publication of Sir William Adams, and are forcibly struck with the contrast of adulatory compliment on the part of Mr. Adams which prevails in the former, and of depressing allusion and statement, which characterise the latter.

In page 5, Sir William Adams speaks thus of his friend and benefactor:—"On my arrival in London to complete my professional education at St. Thomas's and Guy's Hospitals, I found Mr. Saunders the Anatomical Demonstrator at the former. At the expiration of the first year of my studies, he invited me to witness his practice at the London Dispensary (over which he presided) for the treatment of Diseases of the Eye and Ear, when I made myself so useful to him, that in a short time he almost wholly con-

fided the management of the ear cases to my care, and when circumstances obliged him to be absent from town, those of the eye also. From the commencement of my attendance on his Dispensary in May, 1807, to August, 1808, when I quitted London (with one exception of several weeks that I was confined to my room by the Egyptian ophthalmia, and was subsequently obliged to go to the country for the re-establishment of my health, which had been seriously injured by the necessary treatment during that confinement), I not only assisted him in all his operations, both public and private, but subjected a large portion of that time, which would otherwise have been devoted to my studies at the above Hospitals, to comply with his wishes, and promote his accommodation."

The tone of this passage does not accord with the language of Mr. Adams soon after he quitted London (not in August, 1808, but some time in May or June, 1807), he *then* expressed himself as being indebted to Mr. Saunders for by far the most valuable part of his medical education; he *then* ascribed his prospect of success in the city of Exeter, to the candour and generosity of Mr. Saunders, in having made him acquainted with the principles of his art; he *then* described Mr. Saunders as combining a mind unbiassed by prejudice, and replete with talent for observation,



with the fervent wish to render benefit to his fellow-creatures, and who could not fail to attain to a high pitch of eminence and fame; he *then* expressed his confident expectation, that Mr. Saunders would be acknowledged to be as eminent in his pursuit, as Mr. John Hunter was in general surgery. He *now* places himself by the side of Mr. Saunders, leaving a doubt upon the reader's mind, as to the party most obliged in a reciprocity of service.

In page 11, in a letter under the signature, "Robert Russell," dated at Exeter, 5th January, 1815, addressed to Sir William Adams, your Committee read as follows:—

"I perfectly recollect lamenting to you, that so fatal a disease as the ophthalmia should be suffered to go on in so great a degree unchecked in the army, because an individual thought it his interest to keep the mode of cure a secret for the time being.

"With respect to yourself, I can solemnly aver, that your conduct, as far as it has come within my knowledge, has been honourable and grateful to your deceased preceptor, and that you have uniformly attributed the merit of the discovery in question to him. At the same time I cannot close my letter, without venturing an opinion, that no *disinterested* person can read the facts on each side, without acknowledging

that a great degree of credit is due to you, not only for your improvement on the late Mr. Saunders' discoveries, but for your indefatigable and *gratuitous* exertions, in so widely extending the benefits resulting from them to society."

The contrast presented by these passages in Mr. Russell's letter, between the imputed cold and selfish conduct of Mr. Saunders, and the animated and disinterested conduct ascribed to Sir William Adams, very sensibly affects your Committee, as an instance of complicated injustice and cruelty; alike devoid of truth and feeling—they can only consider the letter of Mr. Russell, as conveying, in a covert manner, the language of the person who has published it; and they lament that the worthy and respectable person whose name is introduced as the writer, should have allowed himself to become instrumental to any purpose so base, as that of destroying the good name of the honoured dead. They conclude, that that worthy and respectable person will deeply regret that he has been thus brought into public notice.

It is imputed in Mr. Russell's letter, and also directly and indirectly in other parts of Sir William Adams' publication, in the way of censure on the name of Mr. Saunders, that he withheld the communication of his knowledge,

to the prejudice of the public, and particularly to the prejudice of the army.

In that imputation, your Committee remark the absence, not only of the tenderness and delicacy due to departed worth and genius, but, also, of the respect and gratitude due to great service and obligation conferred. Your Committee deem it fortunate, that they possess evidence, which enables them to place the subject in its true light.

It is in evidence before your Committee, that Mr. Saunders did not consider it consistent with the strict and honourable rule of professional conduct, which he prescribed to himself, to make any particular or exclusive communication, on the subject of his professional practice, to his Majesty's Government. The ambition which he indulged, was the chaste and honourable ambition, of becoming, in proper season, the head of a medical school, in which, he should instruct the medical student in all that he knew; and so convey to his Majesty's service, and to every service; to this country, and to all countries, the benefit of his science and practice. He would not permit himself to approach the heads of his Majesty's service, with a view to pecuniary advantage; an invitation to that line of conduct having been made and pressed upon him by Mr. Adams, who even ventured to re-

commend, that his intended work on Diseases of the Eye, should not be published without previous communication to Government, *with a view to reward*; the suggestion was met, instantly, in a spirit of indignation to which the equanimity of his mind was seldom subjected—he wholly rejected the idea.

In the year 1806, Mr. Saunders published "The Anatomy of the Human Ear," and in the same year he also published, in the Medical Journal, an Essay on "Inflammation of the Iris," &c. since re-published in his posthumous work.

Under the confidence which his integrity and great abilities inspired, he had seen the Infirmary established in public opinion and favour—his remaining immediate objects were, the publication of an intended work on Diseases of the Eye, and the extension of the Infirmary to the purposes of a Medical School.—The accomplishment of these objects depended on the definitive judgment of his own mind, on important considerations, which occupied his attention to the hour of his death.

In the Fourth Annual Report of the Infirmary, he addresses the General Committee, under date the 25th of March, 1809, in the following words:—

"In addition to the remarks on the last Medical Report which I had the honour of sub-

mitting to your consideration, permit me to add, that my process for curing the cataract in children, together with other observations relative to the eye, which I am about to publish as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made, has already been freely communicated to an individual, and the ample scene of experience which the Infirmary affords, opened to his view, from a disinterested wish to promote his professional object. Mr. Adams has since settled in Exeter, and there established a Charity on the model of this Institution. This event I could not refrain from noticing, because it must excite in your minds, and the minds of the Governors, the grateful reflection, that your benevolence has given life and activity to an Institution, which has benefited society, not only in its own operation, but by giving direct origin to an establishment producing its contingent of good in another part of the kingdom. That which was so liberally given in the spirit of private friendship, has been so long withheld from the public, in the hope of making it more worthy of their acceptance, and not through a mercenary motive, as some have malignantly observed, or an inclination to *boast* the possession of a secret. A conscientious discharge of my duty is all my merit, and all my boast, the reward which has been bestowed upon it,

your applause, and the approbation of the Governors."

Scientific minds proceed by gradual and well-ordered steps, by a system which never unnecessarily exposes to failure the object of proposed attainment. The Infirmary was a new foundation: he had not completed his course of observation, and he deferred the more general communication of his ideas, that he might render them more certain, more safe in application, more valuable when communicated; but he lived not to complete his purpose; at an early age, he fell a victim to the severity of his duties and the ardour of his research.

Your Committee deem it unnecessary, at present, to occupy your attention more in detail in respect of the extensive body of evidence submitted to them on this head. The Governors respected Mr. Saunders in his life—they honoured him in his death—and will join with your Committee, in holding in severe reprehension, the ungenerous and unmanly conduct of him, who, having derived most advantage from his friendship, his genius and exertions, alone renders necessary the vindication of his memory.

Your Committee conclude this part of their Report in the words of the General Committee, in their Address to the Governors on the death of Mr. Saunders:—



"In Mr. Saunders the members of the Committee have lost a friend, with whom they were proud to act—the Governors, a scientific and humane dispenser of their bounty—the Public, a man in whom great force of genius, integrity and diligence, were directed with eminent success to a great public object; and whose actual progress, was, by himself, only valued, as an earnest of future public good."

The conduct of the Committee towards the late Mrs. Colkett, the widow of Mr. Saunders, is the next particular which your Committee purpose to examine.

Mr. Saunders did not realize any property from his professional pursuits. The only property which he derived from that source, consisted in the elements of a Treatise on Diseases of the Eye—these valuable remains are the foundation of the work since edited by his friend and colleague, Dr. Farre, entitled "A Treatise on some Points relating to Diseases of the Eye, by the late John Cunningham Saunders."

His lamented death happened on the 10th of February, 1810; and having died intestate, his widow, the Rev. O. S. Saunders and Mrs. Owen, of Barnstaple, his brother and sister, became

co-interested in his estate. On the 26th of the same month, Mrs. Saunders and the Rev. O. S. Saunders, requested Dr. Farre, by letter, to take charge of the unfinished manuscript, and to exercise his discretion and judgment in the mode and time of publication. See Appendix [C].

On the following day, at a Special General Meeting of Governors, to take into consideration the manner in which they could best show the sense they entertained of the character and talents of Mr. Saunders, the following resolutions were passed, unanimously:—

"That the work intended to be entitled 'A Treatise on some practical Points relating to Diseases of the Eye, and particularly on the cure of Cataract in Persons born blind,' which was in preparation for publication by Mr. Saunders, be published at the expense of this Institution for the benefit of his widow."

Dr. Farre, Physician to the Charity, being present, and having kindly undertaken to be the editor of the work, it was further resolved—

"That the thanks of this Meeting be given to Dr. Farre for his liberal offer, and that his able services be accepted."

"That a subscription to the work will be an appropriate mark of the respect entertained by the Governors for the memory of the late Mr. Saunders; as every Governor will thus have an

opportunity of associating his name with that of Mr. Saunders, and of possessing himself of a memorial of that estimable man."

"That in the opinion of this Meeting, the publication of the work will not only be an appropriate manner of conferring a mark of respect upon the memory of Mr. Saunders, but will also promote the object of this Institution, by extending to the world that knowledge which he so successfully applied to the poor under its care."

"That the produce of the work be appropriated to the sole use and benefit of Mrs. Saunders, without any deduction whatsoever."

"That a book be opened to receive the names of gentlemen, and the number of copies for which they may wish to subscribe."

These resolutions were founded on the conception, that the Rev. Mr. Saunders and Mrs. Owen would relinquish their right in their deceased brother's estate in favour of Mrs. Saunders; but not having, after the expiration of six months, so relinquished their legal right, the Governors, on the 9th of October following, determined to decline the publication of the posthumous work, at the expense of the Infirmary.

Although induced by the consideration now stated, to forego the satisfaction which they had

anticipated to themselves from the publication of the work, the Governors did not less earnestly desire to manifest their sense of public obligation to Mr. Saunders, by the adoption of some other mode of pecuniary assistance to his widow.

It was therefore proposed at the same Meeting, that an immediate gratuity of fifty pounds should be paid to Mrs. Saunders, and that an annuity of forty pounds should be voted *for the term of her natural life*. The opinion of the Meeting was unanimous with regard to the gratuity, but on the question of the annuity, objections of a forcible nature were urged. It was argued, that respect to the memory of Mr. Saunders, was the only ground upon which the Governors could justify the application of the funds of the Institution, to the benefit of Mrs. Saunders—that the alienation of the annual sum contemplated, from the immediate purposes for which the contributions of the public were obtained, could not be justified upon any other ground, and that the annuity ought therefore to be limited to the term of Mrs. Saunders' widowhood: that the annuity ought to be understood to be accorded *to the widow of Mr. Saunders*, and that a change in that relation by marriage, should determine its duration. These reasons were strongly

pressed, and after some conversation, in which Jeremiah Olive, Esq. trustee for Mrs. Saunders, on her first marriage, now one of your Vice-Presidents, took part; it was agreed, that the annuity should be limited to the term of widowhood; and it was admitted, as being more respectful, and considering that by a standing law of the Infirmary, "The right of appointing and electing Medical and all other Officers and Servants of this Charity, together with the whole of its internal management and regulations, in their largest amplitude," were "absolutely and permanently vested in the Committee," it was deemed sufficient, that the words, "under the direction of the Committee," should be used as words of control, with reference to that limitation, instead of words more clearly expressive of the purpose and intention of the Meeting.—The following resolutions were then passed:—

"That this Meeting continue the anxious regard and earnest respect for the memory of Mr. Saunders, which were expressed by the Governors at the Meeting of the 27th February."

"That in the opinion of this Meeting, it is, notwithstanding, inexpedient to proceed in the publication of the work at the charge of the Charity, and that the resolutions of the 27th February, having reference to that object, be rescinded."

"That in lieu thereof, Mrs. Saunders be requested to accept, at present, from this Charity a gratuity of fifty pounds; and from January, 1811, an annuity of forty pounds net, for the term of her natural life, to be paid half-yearly by the Treasurer, under the direction of the Committee—the first payment to be made in January, 1811."

Your Committee are permitted by Mr. Olive to state, that he, in common with Mr. Battley, expressed a wish that the words—"for her natural life," should stand as part of the resolution—that these words were strongly opposed by Mr. Hougham and others, and were only allowed to remain, in connexion with the words, "under the direction of the Committee," who (your Committee use the language of Mr. Olive) would of course, have the power of rescinding the resolution, in the event of her second marriage.

At some time after the grant of the annuity, the Rev. Mr. Saunders and Mrs. Owen, in the spirit of generosity and with the feeling of affection which had been ascribed to them, renounced their interest in their deceased brother's estate in favour of Mrs. Saunders.

Dr. Farre, also, continued his able and zealous exertions to produce the posthumous work.—He, alone, was capable of adequately conveying to



the public, the mind of his deceased friend—he had, during five years, been his professional colleague—he was his intimate personal friend—his talents, experience and judgment, his zeal for the interest of Mrs. Saunders; every consideration combined to designate *him* for the office of editor.

The first edition of the work consisted of 43 pages of introductory matter, and 216 pages of the work itself, illustrated by eight plates—only 48 pages were printed from the manuscript—the rest were composed by the editor from 8788 Infirmary cases noted by the author, and from actual observation on the modes of practice and operation performed by him. Of the engravings, drawings for only a part of the first plate were left by the author. The book was published the latter end of the year 1811, and upwards of 170 copies were taken by the Governors and their friends; the greater part by members of the Committee. *See Appendix [D].*

In the summer of the year 1812, Mrs. Saunders married Mr. Joseph Colkett, a cousin. By means of the anxious exertions of her late husband's friends in the management of his estate—the kindness of his kindred—the liberality of the Governors—the able and indefatigable exertions of Dr. Farre, in his office of editor—and the exercise of parental affection,

her property and income, at that time, were as follows:—

From funded property and money	123 17 4
on bond	
Annuity from the Infirmary	40 0 0
Annuity from Mr. Colkett, her	
father, during his pleasure, and	50 0 0
also dependant upon his life:	

per Annum. . . £213 17 4  
and the full copyright in the valuable posthumous work.

On her second marriage, it became, as your Committee submit, a duty of indispensable obligation on the part of the General Committee, at their Quarterly Meeting next ensuing, to direct the discontinuance of the annuity; and at a Quarterly Meeting of the General Committee on the 2d September, 1812, a resolution to that effect was passed accordingly.

As this Committee is the subject of much observation by Sir William Adams, your Committee call your attention particularly to it's constitution and character. The Committee was, "General."\* Six gentlemen attended. Harry Sedgwick, Esq. Chairman of the Committee,

\* Seventy-six gentlemen are summoned on all General Committees.

Mr. Crawley, Mr. Elgie, Dr. Farre, Mr. Travers, and Mr. Battley. Mr. Sedgwick was one of Mrs. Colkett's trustees on her first marriage—he is the largest individual Subscriber to the Institution. Mr. Crawley advanced a large sum of money for the first purposes of the Institution. Mr. Crawley and Mr. Elgie were in the small number of its earliest friends, and they have been its constant and powerful supporters. The merits of Dr. Farre, Mr. Travers, and Mr. Battley, are the subject of notice in other parts of this Report—the six gentlemen, collectively, combined the character, in an eminent degree, of supporters of the Institution—friends of the late Mr. Saunders, and friends of his widow—a Committee less disposed or less likely to compromise the interests of either could not have been constituted.

At a Meeting of the General Committee on the 30th August, 1813, an application from Mrs. Colkett for the continuance of the annuity, which was granted to her when the widow of the late Mr. Saunders, was fully considered, and it was then resolved,—That the Governors by the discontinuance of the payment of the annuity, since her second marriage, had acted agreeably to the intention which prevailed when the grant was made, and that that Committee did not deem it proper to interfere in the matter after

the proceedings taken on the 2d. September, 1812, when the grant was rescinded.

On the 15th Feb. 1814, an appeal was made by Mrs. Colkett to the Governors, by a circular letter, in which are the following passages:—

“The annuity of 40l. per year was granted to me expressly *for and during the term of my natural life*.” And after having noticed the first intention of the Governors, as to the publication of the posthumous work—“The Committee afterwards altered their original plan, and thought it better to allow me the annuity of 40l. per year from their own funds; this was regularly agreed to and confirmed by a General Meeting of Governors, and inserted in the journals of the establishment in these words,—‘To the widow of Mr. Saunders, for and during the term of her natural life,’” &c. &c.

The whole of this letter your Committee pronounce to be of a highly improper description—it entirely suppresses the effect of the deliberation of the Governors when the annuity was granted—the controlling words, *under the direction of the Committee*, are omitted—the words, *for and during*, are introduced, instead of the simple word, *for*, as if to give the air of legal precision, where, from motives of respect, general expressions had been preferred: This letter is, otherwise, grossly incorrect;

it's object, evidently, by misrepresentation, to excite the sympathy of the general body of Governors, at the entire sacrifice, in point of character, of honourable men who were the intimate friends of Mr. Saunders, who were her own tried and faithful friends—and of some other of the most efficient supporters of the Infirmary.

On the 18th of the same month, at the Annual Meeting, the appeal was heard by the largest assembly of Governors ever witnessed at the Institution, with the advantage to Mrs. Colkett, as appears to your Committee, of a numerous attendance of persons, particularly prepared to hear and redress the case to be submitted to them. After ample discussion, it was moved, that the annuity should be renewed—this motion not being seconded, was, necessarily, withdrawn: it was then moved, that forty pounds should be presented to Mrs. Colkett, to be continued or not by the Governors, at their Annual Meeting, as they should direct: to this an amendment was moved, namely, that the words having for their object the grant of money to Mrs. Colkett, should be omitted, and that words approbatory of the conduct of the Committee, in respect of the annuity to Mrs. Colkett, should be substituted; upon which, the gentleman, who took the part of leading advocate for Mrs. Saunders, dis-

vowed all intention of reflecting blame on the gentlemen who rescinded the grant: a second amendment was then moved, namely, that the meeting should proceed to the current business of the day, which amendment was carried on a division of upwards of 70 to 7.\* The minutes of the preceding Annual Meeting, by which the minutes of the General Committee of the 2d September, 1812, had been confirmed, were then read and confirmed. See Appendix [E].

Sir William Adams, five years after the revocation of the grant of annuity, and more than three years after the full and final confirmation of the proceedings of the General Committee, has revived this train of refuted assertion: he has stated that the annuity was “for and during her natural life,”—he has suppressed the controlling words of the resolution—he has republished the whole of Mrs. Colkett's letter, not only without correcting the mis-statements which

\* At the latter part of these proceedings, a person who attended as the avowed supporter of Mrs. Colkett's claim, produced a paper, purporting to be a copy of the resolution by which the annuity was granted, in which, as well as in Mrs. Colkett's circular, the words, ‘under the direction of the Committee,’ were omitted.—In answer to a question why these restrictive or controlling words were omitted, it was replied, that it was not thought necessary to notice them!



it contains, but with the aggravation of a mass of matter of the most objectionable description.

Sir William Adams states, page 95, that—

“Mrs. Saunders, after receiving this annuity of 40l. for two years, thought proper to marry her own first cousin, to which step the utmost opposition was (as Mrs. Saunders informed me) previously offered by Dr. Farre and Mr. Battley, who authoritatively threatened, that the annuity should be taken from her, if she executed her intention. These gentlemen, however justified they might be in advising, had certainly no right to *dictate* upon this occasion: there was no injunction in Mr. Saunders' will, to prevent her marrying again; and, as I have been informed, they were not even executors to that will. She acted contrary to their advice, and that of her other friends, and did marry Mr. Colkett. Dr. Farre and Mr. Battley carried their threat into execution; they formed a *Special Committee*, consisting of themselves and four of their friends, and, without taking the sense of the *General Committee*, which had granted Mrs. Saunders the annuity of 40l.—‘for and during her natural life’—they took upon themselves to rescind that resolution, which had been officially recorded on the journals of the Institution.”

It is difficult for your Committee to imagine

what purpose could be intended by a statement so entirely devoid of truth. Your Committee are enabled to state, that Dr. Farre and Mr. Battley, on the application of the late Mr. Colkett, the father of Mrs. Saunders, accompanied by him and her kind and liberal friend and trustee, Mr. Olive, saw Mrs. Saunders once and only once, with a view to prevent her imprudent marriage with Mr. Joseph Colkett; that they, Dr. Farre and Mr. Battley, used their earnest endeavours at this meeting of Mrs. Saunders, Mr. Colkett, Mr. Olive and themselves, by representation and by persuasion, to induce Mrs. Saunders to consent at least to postpone her marriage; that such arguments as tender fathers, such as brothers use, were urged, but urged in vain; that Mrs. Saunders promised not to marry in less than one month, and married the next day: that the annuity was paid to her under the following written explanation from her trustee—“during the pleasure of the Committee”; that Mrs. Saunders had previously been informed, and that it was then repeated to her, that the Committee could not continue the payment of the annuity in the event of her second marriage. See *Appendix* [F]. Your Committee have already shown, that Mr. Saunders *died intestate*; that “for and during her natural life” are *not* the words of the grant

of the annuity; that the Committee which disallowed the annuity, was a Quarterly Meeting of the General Committee, and *not* a Special Committee; and they have to repeat, that the minutes of that Committee were confirmed by the following Annual Meeting, held on the 4th February, 1813; and finally, after ample discussion, by the Annual Meeting on the 18th February, 1814.

Sir William Adams states, further, page 100,—

“As Mrs. Saunders’ advocate, I should place her case in the following point of view—I mean upon the basis of *legal right*. It will be recollected, that the annuity was taken from her at first without the knowledge or sanction of the General Committee. The great body of Subscribers are thus entirely exonerated from the act. Secondly, the annuity was not a *disinterested* gift of the Subscribers of the London Eye Infirmary. It was an equivalent for the sale of her husband’s work, *which was her own property*, as his only representative, and over which the managers of that Institution possessed no control; although the General Committee thought proper to order the publication of the manuscript, in such a manner and attended with such expenses as their Physician should please to incur.”

Your Committee are again called upon to

state and to remind you, that the annuity was disallowed at a *Quarterly Meeting* of the *General Committee*; that the proceedings of that Committee were confirmed by the *two following Annual Meetings*; that the annuity was granted to compensate for the inability of the Governors to give effect to the benevolent intention which they had entertained, of publishing the posthumous work at the expense of the Infirmary, for the benefit of Mrs. Saunders, and that the whole proceeding was entirely disinterested and purely benevolent. That the Members of the Committee purchased a considerable number of copies of the first edition, upon which Mrs. Saunders had the benefit of the publishers’ profit, as well as half the net profit of sale; that the Committee did not exercise any power of control whatsoever in the publication of the work; and that the consideration of the *time and manner* of publication were confided, under letter, from Mrs. Saunders and the Rev. O. S. Saunders, implicitly to Dr. Farre.

It is also insinuated or alleged by Sir William Adams (pages 100, 101), that this work has been published in a manner disadvantageous to the interest of Mrs. Colkett; your Committee, in explanation, refer to the Appendix [G].

Your Committee have been led in the course of their labours, to the knowledge of many

particulars, which, from their intimate connexion with the matter immediately referred to them, could not be concealed. Your Committee are informed of the personal and individual conduct of the Officers of the Infirmary towards the late Mrs. Colkett, particularly in regard to the gentlemen who were the intimate and attached friends of Mr. Saunders—as well after, as before, her second marriage—as well after, as before, her appeal to the Governors. Those excellent persons ought to receive the most ample testimony to their liberality and constancy—to their active and persevering benevolence, in all that has respect to the late Mrs. Colkett; their earnest endeavours to prevent the errors into which she unfortunately declined—their generous sympathy for her distresses when they occurred, through disregard of their advice, could not be repressed, even by the injurious treatment which they experienced—their cares extended to the last hour of her life.

With what indignation, then, must your Committee have read a circular letter, addressed to the Governors of the Infirmary, signed “William Adams,” dated 26th November last, in which it is asserted, that the Officers of the Infirmary exposed the late Mrs. Saunders (Colkett) “to all the pressure of absolute want”? Your Committee do not hesitate to declare, that that

statement stands directly opposed to the truth—words more grossly false could not be uttered.

Mrs. Colkett died in the month of June, 1817, leaving one child, heir to about eighty pounds per annum, which is understood to remain of her trust property; the annuity of fifty pounds is also understood to have been continued, by her father, to the time of her death.

Your Committee have now to consider the pamphlet of Sir William Adams, with reference to the Medical Directors and Honorary Secretary of the Infirmary.

By the title page of his publication, Sir William Adams proposes “to expose the measures resorted to by the Medical Officers of the London Eye Infirmary for the purpose of retarding the adoption and execution of plans for the extermination of the Egyptian ophthalmia from the army and from the kingdom.”

And it appears to your Committee, that Sir William Adams attempts to support the charge, chiefly, by instancing four successive attacks upon himself from the Infirmary.

The first is a Letter from Mr. Battley.

The second—A Special Report of the General Committee, published in the Year 1814.

The third and fourth—Applications to the



Higher Departments of State, to solicit protection and pecuniary support for the Infirmary.

Your Committee will examine these several particulars in their order.

Mr. Battley's claims to the respect and acknowledgment of the Governors, surpass any encomium in the power of your Committee to confer. He has been one of the most zealous supporters of the Institution from its origin. He has not only gratuitously served the Charity, through the whole term of its duration, in the important office of Secretary, but has been the means of sustaining its funds, by his individual contribution, and by the interest which he has excited in its favour, in an extensive and highly respectable commercial connexion. If the Institution be of high public value and importance, Mr. Battley is entitled to public respect, for the essential support and assistance which have been derived from his unceasing zeal and exertions.

Sir William Adams states, that in the month of December, 1814, he received a printed circular, under the signature of Mr. Battley, Secretary of the London Eye Infirmary, upon which he comments at some length.

Your Committee are aware that a printed letter was circulated by Mr. Battley at the time mentioned by Sir William Adams, but they

cannot admit that any letter not written by order of the Governors or of the Committee, or expressed to be written in the character of Secretary of the Infirmary, can be fairly treated as a letter written by the Secretary of the London Eye Infirmary. The letter alluded to was written by Mr. Battley in his individual and private character; without doubt, under strong excitement, from the persuasion, that the honours and the credit which he considered due to the name of Mr. Saunders and to the Infirmary, were unduly assumed by Sir William Adams—but whatever the motives, neither the Committee nor the Governors, are in any respect answerable for Mr. Battley's individual act. Nor does Sir William Adams, in any respect, establish the charge he has ventured to bring against your Medical Directors by confounding Mr. Battley's different situations—by treating that as proceeding from the Infirmary, which bears no official mark—which was not an official act.

The second ground upon which Sir William Adams relies, is the Special Report of the General Committee, which Report was occasioned by the publication of "An Abridgement of the Official Papers relating to operations performed by order of the Directors of the Royal Hospital for Seamen at Greenwich, on several of the Pensioners belonging thereto, for the purpose of

ascertaining the general efficacy of the new mode of treatment practised by Mr. Adams for the cure of the various species of Cataract and the Egyptian Ophthalmia."—Published by order of the Directors. These papers consist of,—

The Minutes of the Board of Directors of the 28th August, 1813, and 10th January, 1814.

A Letter addressed by the Medical Officers of Greenwich Hospital to John Dyer, Esq. Secretary of that Establishment—Dated 27th December, 1813.

A Letter addressed by Mr. Adams to the Honourable the Directors of Greenwich Hospital—Dated 9th January, 1814.

To which an Advertisement is prefixed.

The Advertisement states "That in the autumn of 1812, the Directors of Greenwich Hospital were informed, that great improvements had been recently made by Mr. Adams, late Oculist to the West of England Eye Infirmary at Exeter, in the modes of operating on the different kinds of cataract," &c.

The Minutes of the Board are highly commendatory of the practice of Mr. Adams, but are silent as to the late Mr. Saunders and the London Infirmary.

The Letter of the Medical Officers, ascribes the improved mode of curing cataract to Mr. Adams, and also ascribes the discovery of a

mode of curing the Egyptian ophthalmia to the same person, and expresses the expectation of the Medical Officers, that the promulgation by Mr. Adams of this important discovery, will be considered as a great *national desideratum*.

The Letter of Mr. Adams speaks much of his own inventions and improvements, but mentions the name of his deceased friend and preceptor, only to connect with it the observation, that he had long since found it necessary to abandon his modes of operation for the cataract.

Your Committee are fully sensible of the humane and liberal motives which occasioned the publication of the Official Papers, but they cannot refrain from observing upon the singular want of information of the Medical Officers of Greenwich Hospital, regarding improved modes of treating diseases of the eye, and your Committee ascribe solely to want of information, the absence of all recognition, by the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, of the merits of the late Mr. Saunders, and of the pretensions of the London Infirmary, to public favour and support.

In the autumn of 1812, the Noble and Honourable Directors appear to have been first informed of Mr. Adams' practice on the Eye. At that time, great public exertions had been made through a course of seven years, to establish the London Infirmary as an Institution

of public importance; a cure for cataract in infants born blind, had been discovered, and performed, in the first instance, by Mr. Saunders, at the Infirmary; other species of cataract had also been treated by Mr. Saunders, with eminent success, and your Committee are enabled to state, that the disease called the Egyptian ophthalmia, had been cured, in all its stages, in numerous cases, at the Infirmary.

At that time, the Infirmary had been open, as a Medical School, upwards of eighteen months; one hundred and one gentlemen had then been admitted as pupils—Mr. Saunders' posthumous work had been published upwards of six months; a copy of that work had been delivered to the Army Medical Board—yet, under these circumstances, the name of Mr. Saunders and the practice of the Infirmary, pass, not only without acknowledgment, but under disrespectful notice, in the publication of the Directors of Greenwich Hospital.

But, however uninformed the Noble and Honourable Directors might be on the subject, Mr. Adams knew, and in several parts of his pamphlet, he lays claim to praise for the acknowledgment of the fact—Mr. Adams knew, that the great and interesting improvements in the modes of treating diseases of the eye, originated from the late Mr. Saunders, and were first prac-

tised and taught at the London Infirmary, where he was himself taught.

Sir William Adams admits in the pamphlet now under the consideration of your Committee, amidst much unworthy reflection on his memory, "that Mr. Saunders afforded to him, the kindness of unreserved instruction," and after speaking of the West of England Eye Infirmary, as if treated as a rival institution, an insinuation, as your Committee conceive, wholly devoid of truth, Sir William Adams proceeds to state, with reference to Mr. Saunders; "nor in the performance of my duties there\* or elsewhere, did any person ever hear me mention his name but in terms of gratitude for his disinterested friendship, in affording me the almost exclusive participation in that extensive experience which he possessed, and to which I am, and ever shall consider myself so much indebted."

In the first Report of the West of England Eye Infirmary, dated 1st November, 1809, Mr. Adams expresses himself as follows:—

"To Mr. Saunders, however, I feel more particularly grateful, for having, in the most disinterested and friendly manner, not only allowed me to witness the practice at the London Infirmary for curing Diseases of the Eye, over which he presides, but also for having instructed me

\* At Exeter.



in his method of curing cataract, the only one which has been shown to be applicable, at an early age, to children born blind with that disease. Mr. Saunders has likewise the originality of having first marked the character of inflammation of the iris, and of having pointed out its appropriate method of cure. The discovery of a successful mode of treating those most inveterate and distressing consequences produced by the Egyptian ophthalmia, has further been the result of his scientific and unwearied investigations. Upon these highly important subjects and some others, he has been hitherto prevented by ill health and numerous professional avocations, from making known to the world, the success of his labours; but these I confidently anticipate will shortly be published."

"The only merit I feel myself entitled to claim, is for a conscientious discharge of my duty, and a strict adherence to those scientific principles, of which I have so extensively witnessed the validity and importance in the very successful practice of my friend, Mr. Saunders. Reward I expect none, but the honour of your approbation."

Mr. Adams, elsewhere, as your Committee have shown, ascribes every hope of his professional success, to the candour and generosity of Mr. Saunders, in having taught him the prin-

ciples of his art. He commends Mr. Saunders as a man combining the highest professional talents, with the fervent wish to render benefit to his fellow-creatures; and at times, expresses his sense of obligation and respect for him in terms too extravagant for your Committee to repeat.

In the *Official Papers*, published in the year 1814, Mr. Adams leaves the name of Mr. Saunders to survive in the record of his (Mr. Adams) having long since found it necessary to abandon his modes of operation; and in the same papers, the practice of the Infirmary is brought into comparison with the practice of Mr. Adams, in a manner which, in the opinion of your Committee, reflects upon him severe censure.

A pensioner of Greenwich Hospital, a patient of the London Infirmary, having been withdrawn from the care of your Medical Officers, when in the last stage of cure for cataract, to be placed under the care of Mr. Adams; Mr. Adams, in illustration of his own superiority in practice, states, that the patient had undergone thirteen operations, during six months, at the Infirmary; \* that *he* had perfected the cure by a single operation on each eye, and consequently, that if the patient had been originally treated according to his mode of practice, one, or at most, *two* opera-

\* The accuracy of this statement is not admitted.

tions would have effected the removal of the cataracts in the space of five or six weeks.

Passing over the consideration of the logical force of the reasoning, which dismisses the effect of thirteen causes in favour of the fourteenth, your Committee cannot sufficiently deprecate the manner in which Sir William Adams has submitted a comparative statement of medical practice to public notice—a practice peculiar, as your Committee believe, in a popular form, to the lower and irregular practitioners in medicine, and to which your Committee are entirely persuaded, the Directors of Greenwich Hospital would not have lent their sanction, had they been made duly acquainted with particulars, of which the knowledge was essential to correctness of judgment on the subject.

The extraordinary character and injurious tendency of these papers, their tendency to deprive the late Mr. Saunders of his fair fame, and the Infirmary of that portion of public favour which it enjoyed, rendered it necessary, in the conception and judgment of the acting or Sub-Committee, soon after the appearance of the Official Papers, to appoint the Medical Officers of the Infirmary, a Committee, to examine and report to the General Committee, the evidence which supports the rights of the Infirmary and the merits of the late Mr. Saunders, its Founder

and Surgeon, in respect of the treatment of the Egyptian ophthalmia, against the claims of Sir William Adams, &c.

The Report of the Medical Officers, together with the proceedings of the General Committee thereon, and some letters serving to elucidate and support the Report, were then published, under the title of "A Special Report of the General Committee of the London Infirmary for curing Diseases of the Eye," &c. *See Appendix [H]*. This Report asserts the rights of the Infirmary and the merits of the late Mr. Saunders; and, in the judgment of your Committee, became indispensably necessary, to correct the unfair and improper tendency of the Official Papers. This is the second attack which Sir William Adams alleges in proof of his charge against your Medical Officers.

Your Committee will simply observe upon the "Special Report," that the facts and reasoning of your Medical Directors, rest upon authority, on which your Committee entirely rely; and that the Report has conduced to the development of truth, if only by eliciting from Sir William Adams, a declaration of the merits of Mr. Saunders, however partial, and however shaded by matter of a contrary character, in a form co-extensive in circulation with the Official Papers.

For the explanation of the third and fourth attacks alleged by Sir William Adams, your Com-

mittee again refer to the Appendix [A][B] for copies of Memorials to His Royal Highness the Duke of York, and to Viscounts Melville and Sidmouth, and to the Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's Treasury.

Your Committee, having noticed the four several attacks alleged by Sir William Adams, proceed with great reluctance to notice another attempt upon his character, with which Sir William Adams charges the Medical Officers of the Infirmary.

On this unpleasant topic he sets out by stating,—

That it has been proved by him, in the course of his pamphlet, that Mr. Saunders regarded him to the last with respect and affection; that he was the legitimate successor of Mr. Saunders; that none of those practising as oculists had ever seen Mr. Saunders operate on cataract; and that by adding in notes the result of his own experience, he should have been enabled materially to increase the value and public utility of Mr. Saunders' posthumous work, of which, for such and other reasons, he was desirous, on the death of Mr. Saunders, of becoming the editor. Sir William Adams then introduces a letter addressed to him by John Milford, Esq. dated the 15th March, 1815, in which letter Mr. Milford states, that, upon the arrival of

Mr. Adams in London, *for the purpose of attending the funeral of Mr. Saunders*, he was requested by Mr. Adams to communicate to the Committee or friends of Mr. Saunders, his desire to become the editor of the posthumous work, and to state, that for such permission, he would pay one hundred pounds to Mr. Saunders' widow or executors. That he soon afterwards accidentally met a gentleman who had taken an active part in the Charity, from whom he learnt, that the Officers of the Infirmary, who had undertaken the entire direction of the concerns of Mr. Saunders, had so much resentment or prejudice against Mr. Adams, that any such proposal would, on their part, meet with the most violent opposition; and that Mr. Milford does not recollect having taken any further measures on the subject. Sir William Adams then states, that he, in consequence, endeavoured to see Dr. Farre, himself, to repeat his proposal in person, and to explain away, if possible, the prejudices he, Dr. Farre, entertained against him; that on his way, "*some days afterwards*," to his house, for that purpose, he accidentally met, at Mr. Saunders' house, with an acquaintance, a young man who had succeeded him in acting as assistant to Mr. Saunders, to whom "*he mentioned the above circumstance.*"



That he failed in his attempt to see Dr. Farre, but left at his house a message intimating, that he had commissioned Mr. Milford to propose his editing Mr. Saunders' work.

That shortly after that communication, Sir William Adams heard from several quarters, that reports were circulated "that he had endeavoured to get at Mr. Saunders' notes, in order to rob him of his posthumous fame." That to prevent further misrepresentation, he addressed an explanatory letter to Dr. Farre, dated 28th February, 1810. That about ten days afterwards, on his return to Exeter, he received from the Secretary of the Infirmary, a communication stated to have been made, before a Select Committee, by the young man already alluded to. That immediately upon receiving the Secretary's letter, he wrote a reply to it, which he requested Mr. Milford to deliver to Dr. Farre, and personally to acquaint him with the proposals he had deputed him to make, but that Mr. Milford, seeing in the whole of this attack, the hostile spirit which had prevented his applying to Dr. Farre on the former occasion, did not think it worthy his interference, and therefore simply forwarded the letter without a comment.

Your Committee have attentively investigated this statement, and they report to you as follows:—

That so far from Mr. Saunders, at the period

of his decease, having continued to entertain sentiments of respect and regard for Mr. Adams, it is established to the entire conviction of your Committee, that Mr. Saunders had withdrawn his confidence from Mr. Adams for a considerable time previous to his lamented death—that the conduct of Mr. Adams in the use which he made of the advantages which he had derived from the friendship of Mr. Saunders, produced extreme embarrassment and mortification to the mind of Mr. Saunders, and continued to agitate his spirits to the day of his death. *See Appendix [1].*

That your Committee can find no trace of evidence of Mr. Saunders having corresponded with Mr. Adams later than May, 1809.

That Sir William Adams, in lieu of having any pretension to the title of legitimate successor to Mr. Saunders, does not appear to have been made acquainted, by Mr. Saunders, with his improvements in practice after the month of May, 1807, when the Institution had existed but little more than two years: whereas, Mr. Saunders had freely communicated his latter practice to other gentlemen.

That the professional mind and views, the entire practice of Mr. Saunders, were, in particular, intimately known to Dr. Farre, his friend and colleague in practice.

That the professional education of Mr. Adams did not sufficiently qualify him, in the judgment and opinion of the electoral body of Governors, to justify their confiding to Mr. Adams the great and important trust of developing the views and of applying the science of a man estimated as the Governors estimated Mr. Saunders. That the General Committee, in looking for a successor to Mr. Saunders, directed their attention to the metropolitan Hospitals, particularly to St. Thomas's, and Guy's Hospitals, where Mr. Saunders had taught practical anatomy with so much honour to himself, and were fortunate in the appointment of Mr. Travers to the office of Surgeon.

That your Committee consider it not less fortunate for the character of Mr. Saunders, for the Infirmary and for society, that the work was edited with the advantage of the patient research and sound professional judgment of Dr. Farre.

That it does not appear that Mr. Adams came to London to attend the funeral of Mr. Saunders, as he has permitted Mr. Milford, of course unconscious of the real truth, to assert; but as appears by a letter addressed by Mr. Adams to Mr. Saunders, bearing the London post-mark, 14th February, 1810, from which the following is an extract, to be admitted to the appointment of

Oculist extraordinary to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent.

"At last I hope to put my long intended journey to London into execution, as it is my plan to set off for Bath on Tuesday morning, and get into town on Wednesday; in addition to the getting of some needles made for operating on closed pupil, I have another great object in view—namely, being appointed Oculist extraordinary to the Prince of Wales—this the Committee have applied for, and it has been promised."

That it does not appear to your Committee, that any other than the plain and simple truth was imparted to Mr. Milford, on his application on behalf of Mr. Adams; namely, that the more active guardians of the Charity did not so respect the pretensions of Mr. Adams, as to justify any encouragement of his views relative to the Infirmary.

That a letter, of which the following is a copy, was on Sunday, the 18th February, 1810, laid before a Committee of Governors appointed to conduct the funeral of Mr. Saunders.

"SIR,

"In compliance with your request you will here receive a plain statement of a conversation which passed between Mr. Adams and myself.

"On the evening of Friday, the 16th February, I

accidentally met Mr. Adams in Ely Place, when he gave me to understand, he had a subject of importance to communicate to me—we left the house together, and he commenced the conversation, by saying that Mr. Johnson of Exeter (with whom our late friend corresponded) had informed him Mr. Saunders' work on the Eye, was in a state of great forwardness, if not already in the press, and that he (Mr. Adams) considered it would be most advantageous for him to have the credit of it, to have his name inserted in lieu of that of Mr. Saunders, and to be considered the author.

"If these desirable points could be obtained, he would readily pay Mrs. Saunders one hundred guineas, or whatever sum her friends might consider an equivalent, together with all the profits arising from the publication; he proceeded to state, should the work be unfinished, and Dr. Farre would assist him in its completion, the remuneration to Mrs. Saunders should be the same; but if that gentleman rejected the proposition, he (Mr. Adams) was convinced the above-mentioned Mr. Johnson would undertake it.

"These propositions I was requested to communicate to a relative of mine, and the most intimate friend of the family, for the information of Mrs. Saunders. So far I heard him with silent astonishment, but could no longer restrain my in-

dignation, which I expressed in strong terms, and left him.

"I immediately went home, where, to my surprise, I was soon followed by Mr. Adams, who, I imagine, conscious of the unfavourable impressions his conversation had made on my mind, endeavoured in vain to do away their effect.

"In giving you the above statement, I feel that I am only performing a duty I owe to the sacred memory of my revered friend, and should this simple narrative of facts be deemed insufficient, I am willing to give any further testimony that may be required. I beg to add you have my free permission to make whatever use of this you may judge proper.

"I am, Sir, with the utmost respect,

"Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) "JOHN WOOD DEANE.

"To Mr. Battley, Secretary to the London Infirmary for Curing Diseases of the Eye."

And that a copy of Mr. Deane's letter was transmitted, by the Secretary, to Mr. Adams, on or about the 10th March, 1810, as he admits, but that Dr. Farre disavows the receipt of the letter which Mr. Adams represents himself to have written to him in immediate reply.

Your Committee do not discover, that the letter of Mr. Deane was noticed in any man-



ner by Mr. Adams, until nearly five years after the date of the Secretary's letter.—The subject is then alluded to by Mr. Adams, in coarse and offensive language, by letter to Dr. Farre. The next instance in which your Committee find it the object of Sir William Adams' attention, is the pamphlet now before your Committee; that is, after seven years had elapsed—not by communication with the President, or with the Committee, or with the Governors, at their Annual Meeting; or with Mr. Deane; but in a printed address, widely circulated, for the perusal, chiefly, of persons who could have no immediate means of judging on the subject, but through the medium of the pamphlet itself.

Mr. Saunders died on Saturday, the 10th of February, 1810.—On Wednesday, the 14th, a letter, as already stated, was received from Mr. Adams, announcing his immediate intention of visiting London. On Sunday, the 18th, the Committee for directing the funeral, received Mr. Deane's letter, stating, that on Friday, the 16th, Mr. Adams had made the obnoxious overture for the publication of Mr. Saunders' posthumous work. How, then, your Committee inquire, can Mr. Adams' statement be true?—He says, he requested Mr. Milford to interest himself for him—that Mr. Milford did so, and reported to him the unfavourable issue; and that "*some*

*days afterwards*," he met with the young man, &c. Mr. Deane certainly attended the Committee on the 18th, on the subject of a communication from Mr. Adams—had Mr. Milford, *between the 14th and 18th*, seen Mr. Adams—executed his commission—reported the result—in addition to, and after this, on the 18th, had "*some days*" elapsed? Either these discrepancies are to be reconciled, or Sir William Adams' statement is incorrect. In the latter conclusion, your Committee are compelled to rest, not by this consideration only, but by the force of positive testimony which they do not feel at liberty to resist. Your Committee deem it incumbent on them to add, that Mr. Deane was held in great respect and esteem by Mr. Saunders, whom he assisted for some time in his duties at the Infirmary, and that he now fills a highly respectable situation in the Bank of England.

How truly this is designated an attack of the Medical Officers, will be decided by these simple considerations:—

The death of Mr. Saunders left the Infirmary without a Surgeon—Mr. Travers was at that time unconnected with the Institution—Dr. Farre was then the only Medical Officer, and he does not appear to have been in any respect a party to Mr. Deane's communication. Mr. Lawrence

was not appointed to the office of Surgeon until four years afterwards.

Such are the grounds on which gentlemen, distinguished by their public and private worth, by the liberal and extensive application of their eminent scientific attainments, and by their private benevolence, are held forth to severe public censure, on a charge of preventing the cure of that very class of diseases, to teach the means of curing which, they have, during many years, presided, with unblemished reputation, over a public school of the first value and importance—at which they have instructed all who have applied for instruction, and have actually taught upwards of four hundred professional gentlemen of the highest class; whose testimonials, as your Committee are informed, are indispensable, under the able direction of the Army Medical Board, to the qualification of gentlemen for the situation of Surgeon in the Army, and who have diffused a knowledge of their practice in every other way consistent with their rank and station in the medical profession. Such, in fine, are the grounds on which Sir William Adams undertakes with the British Government, and with the British public, to “expose measures resorted to by the Medical Officers of the London Eye Infirmary, for the purpose of retarding the adoption and execution of plans for the extermination of the

Egyptian ophthalmia from the Army, and from the United Kingdom.”

Your Committee cannot conclude this Report without expressing the deep and decided feeling of indignation and disgust, which the conduct of Sir William Adams has excited, in every particular, throughout the investigation, which you have directed.—It appears to your Committee, that the claims of private friendship, the pretensions of public service, the regard due to individual and the respect due to general, benevolence; the sanctity of truth, the honour of the living, and the merits of the dead; are, alike, violated in the publications of Sir William Adams. Your Committee, acting for a public body, lament that the duty of animadversion and stricture should have become necessary; but they are relieved and consoled by reflecting on the excellence of your Institution, on the purity of the principles on which it is conducted, on the comprehensive benevolence by which it is distinguished, and on the great extent of public service which it performs.

## APPENDIX

[A] page 13.

## APPENDIX.

[A] page 13.

*At the Annual General Meeting of the Governors, held  
at the Infirmary, on the 20th of March, 1815,—*

SIR CHARLES PRICE, BART. PRESIDENT,  
IN THE CHAIR;

THE President reported, that the Deputation, appointed by the General Committee to wait on His Royal Highness the Duke of York, the Commander-in-Chief, had been graciously received by his Royal Highness, to whom he had had the honour to present a Memorial, and a series of the Annual Reports, setting forth the nature and services of this Infirmary.

That His Royal Highness had graciously condescended to become the Patron of the Infirmary, and was pleased to promise that he would give his particular attention to the subject of the Memorial.

The President further reported, that the Deputation had been very favourably received by two of His Majesty's Ministers, on whom its Members had been permitted to wait; namely, the Right Honourable



Viscount Melville, First Lord of the Admiralty, and the Right Honourable Viscount Sidmouth, Secretary for the Home Department.

That he had had the honour to present to those Noble Lords the subjoined Memorial, together with a copy of the Memorial addressed to His Royal Highness the Duke of York, and a series of the Reports of the Infirmary.

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TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE DUKE OF YORK,

THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF.

*The humble Memorial of a Deputation from the General Committee of the London Infirmary for curing Diseases of the Eye.*

Your Memorialists offer to Your Royal Highness their profound respect and gratitude, for the condescension with which Your Royal Highness has received the Special Report of the General Committee of the London Infirmary.

In approaching Your Royal Highness, your Memorialists are encouraged to set forth the benefits which this Infirmary has rendered, not only to the community, but to His Majesty's service in particular, from the universally acknowledged regard which Your

Royal Highness bears, for whatever preserves or restores to His Majesty, the services of the soldier.

Amidst the accidents and diseases, various in their kind, which disable the soldier from fulfilling the most honourable of all duties, that of serving his country; your Memorialists are persuaded, that there is none which Your Royal Highness more feelingly deploras, than the dreadful consequences of the ophthalmia.

It cannot fail to surprise your Royal Highness, that, even to the end of the eighteenth century, no public provision had been made against so great a calamity, by an establishment, which would at once serve as a Hospital for the prevention and cure of blindness, and as a Medical School, for instructing students in the treatment of the Diseases of the Eye. The accomplishment of both these important ends has been eminently promoted by establishing the London Infirmary; and your Memorialists, in presenting a series of the Annual Reports of this Charity, further entreat, that Your Royal Highness will condescend to receive the following general statement of the benefits which it has conferred:—

1st. During nine years only, upwards of seventeen thousand persons, suffering under diseases of the eye, many of whom had been deprived of sight, have been cured: viz.—

Of cataracts and closed pupils, of tumours, diseases of the lachrymal passages, and wounds of the eye:—one thousand three hundred and twenty-four.

Of amaurosis in its several forms:—one hundred and fifty-six.

Of ophthalmia in its various acute forms:—ten thousand seven hundred and fourteen.

Of ophthalmia, in its various chronic forms, including diseases of the eyelids:—five thousand five hundred and eight.

2nd. Within the walls of this Charity, the successful treatment of cataract in children born blind, originated at the very commencement of the Institution.

3rd. At this Infirmary also, originated the successful treatment of the ophthalmia in its most dangerous forms; and especially of the Egyptian or purulent ophthalmia, both in its acute and chronic stages.

4th. Numerous Ophthalmic Institutions have been established in various parts of the United Kingdom, on the model of this Infirmary; and thus, to use the words of its Founder, "the benevolence which has given life and activity to this Institution, has benefited society, not only in its own operation, but by giving direct origin to establishments, producing their contingent of good in other parts of the Kingdom."

5th. The general practice of the Infirmary has been so satisfactory, as to have caused a progressive increase of patients, the extremes of which are: in the first year, 1805, six hundred. In the last year, 1814,\* three thousand three hundred and ninety-two.

6th. The doors of this Infirmary, founded and supported entirely by private benevolence, have been constantly open to soldiers and sailors, who have been cured of the ophthalmia without any expense to Government.

7th. This Infirmary, the first and only Medical School for the Diseases of the Eye, is attended by a considerable number of pupils; and whilst some of

\* The Memorial of which this is a copy, was presented before the present Annual Report was drawn up.

these diffuse its benefits by settling in various parts of His Majesty's dominions, others more immediately benefit His Majesty's service, by becoming Surgeons in the Army and Navy.

In reviewing so large a sum of good, conferred in so short a period, Your Royal Highness will readily discern, in the very modes of conferring it, the increasing capacities of the Infirmary to benefit the public in general, and His Majesty's service in particular; and your Memorialists humbly solicit the powerful patronage of Your Royal Highness, to accomplish objects so truly national and philanthropic.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
VISCOUNT MELVILLE,

FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY,

AND

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH,  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT.

*The Humble Memorial of a Deputation from the General Committee of the London Infirmary for curing Diseases of the Eye.*

Your Memorialists have had the honour to present to His Royal Highness the Duke of York, the Commander-in-Chief, a general statement of the services

which have been rendered to the community, and to His Majesty's service in particular, by this Infirmary.

In inviting your Lordships' attention to this Memorial, of which a copy is annexed, your Memorialists have been encouraged by the solicitude which His Majesty's Government has manifested for the preservation of soldiers and seamen from the dreadful effects of the ophthalmia, by appointing a Committee of the most distinguished medical men to observe and report on Sir William Adams' treatment of certain patients in the chronic or last stage of the Egyptian ophthalmia.

The Special Report, which the Secretary of the London Infirmary, under the direction of the General Committee, has had the honour to transmit to your Lordships, contains the proof that Sir William Adams, when a pupil of this Infirmary, was instructed by its late Founder and Surgeon, in that successful treatment of the ophthalmia which he has submitted to the attention of the Committee appointed by His Majesty's Government.

Great as are the benefits which this Infirmary has already conferred in the modes set forth, in a general manner, in the annexed Memorial, and more in detail in the annual printed Reports herewith submitted to your Lordships' observation, your Memorialists beg to state, that even those benefits are small in comparison of the capacities of this Infirmary to serve the public. Influenced by this conviction, the General Committee had already appealed to private benevolence, to enlarge the establishment for the reception of in-patients, that want of domestic care, in those who are afflicted with the ophthalmia in its most dangerous forms, and

stages, might not render unavailing that treatment which would have rescued them from loss of vision.

The Governors of this Infirmary have answered the appeal by opening a fund for this purpose, in addition to that which their bounty has provided for its annual support.

Impressed with a due sense of the importance of their object, and feeling that such an establishment was calculated to reflect honour on that national munificence which could at once call into being all its powers of doing good, the General Committee intended humbly to move Government towards so benevolent a purpose; when His Majesty's Ministers invited the application by the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry, to ascertain the merits of a practice which issued from this Infirmary; but which had been unfairly submitted to their notice by one of its numerous students.

Your Memorialists beg to state, that the house in the present occupation of the Infirmary, is held on a short and expiring lease; and that the General Committee are anxiously engaged in an endeavour to provide permanent and more adequate accommodation, by the purchase or erection of a suitable freehold building. The sum required for the purpose is considerable, and they earnestly entreat the favourable regard of His Majesty's Ministers, and the benevolent assistance of Government, to enable them to carry that measure into effect. In return, the General Committee, tender this enlarged establishment, as an Ophthalmic Institution, which will be capable of serving the purposes of Government, as a Hospital for soldiers or seamen affected with the ophthalmia. It will moreover, in



proportion to its extension, still further benefit His Majesty's service, by the greater advantages which it will afford, as a medical school for perfecting, in the knowledge and treatment of the Diseases of the Eye, Surgeons who are educating for the Army or Navy.

[B] page 14.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS

OF HIS MAJESTY'S TREASURY.

*The Memorial of a Deputation from the General Committee of the London Infirmary for curing Diseases of the Eye,*

HUMBLY SHOWETH,

THAT your Memorialists had the honour of an interview, in January, 1815, with His Royal Highness the Duke of York, Lord Viscount Sidmouth, and Lord Viscount Melville, for the purpose of laying before them the various Reports of the Infirmary since its establishment; of pointing out the various advantages rendered to the Public, and to His Majesty's service in particular, by the Institution; and of soliciting the pecuniary aid of Government towards the purchase or erection of a Building, fit and proper for the reception of objects afflicted with diseases of the eye.

In 1804, the late John Cunningham Saunders, who had many years filled the important office of Demonstrator of Anatomy to St. Thomas's Hospital, proposed an Institution to the public for the purpose of relieving persons suffering under Diseases of the Eye, which was carried into effect on the 25th March, 1805, by voluntary contributions, and was in full operation at the time of his death in 1810. The philanthropic plan of Mr. Saunders has been acted upon by the General Committee, aided by the Medical Directors of the Infirmary, and by the liberal contributions of individuals, so that the Institution has become of infinite importance to the Public, by preventing or curing blindness amongst the labouring poor, but more especially to the Army and Navy, by teaching to the pupils who are destined for those important services, the scientific treatment of diseases of the eye.

In soliciting the assistance of Government, the General Committee have in view the relief of numbers of His Majesty's subjects who daily apply, but who cannot be accommodated by reason of the want of a proper situation or Hospital sufficiently large to admit a greater number of patients; and they beg leave to state, for your Lordships' information, that the Institution has admitted\* 27,946 patients since its opening in 1805. Of which number, 23,117 chiefly out-patients, afflicted with every variety and degree of ophthalmic disease, have been cured.

71 Persons actually born blind, have received their sight by an operation adapted to the congenital cataract by Mr. Saunders; and

\* See Medical Report of Jan. 1st, 1816.

219 Cases of cataract, which have occurred after birth, have also been cured.

Your Memorialists lament to state to your Lordships, that as the exertions of the Committee increase, applications become more numerous. The persons admitted as new patients, from 1st January, 1815, to 1st January, 1816, being 3445, as stated in the Reports, your Memorialists have the honour to inclose.

The great objects of the Committee are—1st, to provide proper accommodation for in-patients, that a still greater proportion of the industrious poor, and their helpless offspring, may be rescued from the miseries of blindness.

2dly. To diffuse amongst the profession a knowledge of the nature and treatment of the Diseases of the Eye, through the medium of this Institution, which is the only school for the instruction of pupils in ophthalmic complaints. And hence your Memorialists trust they will be enabled to prove to the satisfaction of your Lordships, that, independently of the primary object for which this Institution was established, the relief which it will afford to the Army and Navy, by educating Military and Naval Surgeons in the proper treatment of the Diseases of the Eye, and especially in the methods of curing the acute and chronic stages of the Egyptian Ophthalmia, will justify your Memorialists in claiming the consideration of your Lordships to recommend to Parliament a grant, in aid of the Building Fund of this Institution.

Your Memorialists therefore most humbly pray that your Lordships will be pleased to take the case stated into your consideration, and that you will be pleased to recommend to Parliament such sum of money as

your Lordships may deem proper, in aid of the fund already subscribed by the Public, for the purpose of purchasing or erecting a commodious building for the reception of persons afflicted with Diseases of the Eye.

And your Memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c.

(Signed)

CHARLES PRICE.  
BENJAMIN SHAW.  
JOHN BAINBRIDGE.  
JOHN RICHARD FARRE.  
BENJAMIN TRAVERS.  
WILLIAM LAWRENCE.  
RICHARD BATTLE.

London, 8th August, 1816.

[C] page 25.

24, Ely Place, 26 Feb. 1810.

DEAR FARRE,

As the brother of the late J. C. Saunders, I particularly request you to take charge of the manuscript and papers which relate to a work on the eye, left by him unfinished. The time and mode of publication I leave entirely to your own discretion. For various reasons, I am convinced that you are the man who ought to be selected from the numerous list of his honourable friends, as the most capable, in this instance, to do justice to his memory.

I am, dear Farre,

Yours, sincerely,

O. S. SAUNDERS.

DEAR SIR,

I perfectly coincide in opinion with my brother; and as the widow of my lamented husband, solicit you to comply with his request.

Believe me, dear sir,

Your obliged friend,

J. L. SAUNDERS.

24, Ely Place, 26th Feb. 1810.

DEAR FARRE,

I send you my brother's manuscript and papers, accompanied by two notes, one from myself, and the other from Mrs. Saunders, and expressed in terms, which I trust will prove perfectly satisfactory to your honourable feelings. With best wishes for your domestic happiness, and for your success in professional exertions,

I am, dear Farre,

Yours, sincerely,

O. S. SAUNDERS.

[D] page 30.

*Copy of a Letter from Mrs. Saunders, addressed to Dr. Farre, (post mark) 24th Dec. 1811.*

If it were possible I could find words adequate to my feelings, I should in the most forcible language offer you my acknowledgments for your marked kindness in so immediately forwarding a copy of the work

you have done me the honour to finish, as a mark of particular esteem to the memory of my late ever-to-be-lamented husband—also for your kind prompt attention in sending the copies to Barnstaple, in my name. To Mr. Olive, Mr. Battley, Mr. Crawley, Mr. Sedgwick, and Committee in general, I am also most deeply indebted; in short, I can neither write nor speak, but do indeed feel what I owe to them; and if I knew in what manner to address those gentlemen, who have so liberally subscribed their time and purse to my benefit, it would be a source of comfort to me to write them all my thanks. On this point your advice will be most acceptable, or your presenting my grateful respects to all parties, will be considered an additional kindness, since I am uneasy, lest by my silence I may seem less grateful than really I am. I am aware that you must have experienced many inconveniences, in relinquishing greatly your own pursuits, for the express purpose of finishing a manuscript left in the state I know it was. I am also aware, that your zeal to serve the widow of your friend, caused you cheerfully to endure the fatigue of writing, when from the many avocations of your own, you would gladly have laid aside the pen, had it been otherwise employed. Yes, indeed, my dear sir, all your goodness is deeply impressed on my mind, and I would to my heart I had a better return to offer you than the simple, but most grateful thanks of

J. L. SAUNDERS.

The elegance of the printing of the plates, also the striking likeness of the portrait, I cannot pass unnoticed—they claim the highest praise.



Names of Vice-Presidents and Governors, who subscribed for copies of Mr. Saunders' posthumous work, on the publication of the first edition.

Copies.		Copies.	
J. Anstey, Ald. ....	5	T. F. Foster ..... 1	
W. Babington, M.D. 1		H. Kensington ..... 3	
G. Bainbridge ..... 1		R. Heathfield ..... 5	
H. Cline, F.R.S. .... 1		J. Olive ..... 5	
A. Cooper, F.R.S. .... 10		H. Sedgwick ..... 2	
Copies.		Copies.	
T. Atkinson ..... 1	W. Elgie ..... 2	R. Price ..... 1	
T. B. Aveling ..... 1	J. Evans ..... 1	W. Row ..... 1	
J. Bainbridge ..... 1	J. R. Farre ..... 10	E. G. Smith ..... 1	
R. Battley ..... 10	H. Goldingham ..... 1	R. H. Sparks ..... 1	
J. Blades ..... 1	S. Hougham ..... 1	H. P. Spurling ..... 1	
T. Brown ..... 1	J. Horner ..... 1	J. Sharp ..... 1	
M. Bland ..... 1	S. Hunt ..... 1	B. Travers ..... 3	
T. E. Brown ..... 1	W. Lewis ..... 1	J. Thomas ..... 1	
J. Belloncle ..... 5	D. Leighton ..... 1	W. Venning ..... 1	
W. Crawley ..... 2	Z. Macaulay ..... 1	R. Wace ..... 2	
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N. Birch ..... 1	J. F. D. Jones, M.D. 2	G. L. Reed ..... 1	
Mrs. P. Birch ..... 1	T. Keating ..... 1	J. Taylor ..... 2	
J. Curry, M.D. .... 1	J. Laird, M.D. .... 1	A. T. Thomson ..... 1	
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A. Bell ..... 2	H. Heuted ..... 1	G. Richards, M.D. 1	
— Brougham ..... 2	Jarvis ..... 1	Ryal ..... 1	
— Bravo ..... 1	T. Leighton ..... 1	— Smith ..... 2	
J. H. Cutting, M.D. 1	Luscombe ..... 1	— Spry ..... 1	
— Cutcliffe ..... 1	J. Morris ..... 1	J. Ware ..... 1	
T. Daniel ..... 1	J. Ord ..... 4	J. Williams ..... 1	
J. G. Foderingham ..... 1	B. F. Outram, M.D. 2	— Wildash ..... 1	
T. Fynmore ..... 1	— Pearce ..... 1	J. Yelley, M.D. .... 1	
— Fusch ..... 1			

Total, 174 copies.

[E] page 35.

Sir William Adams states (Note, page 98), that "it can be no matter of surprise, that there should have been a majority at this Meeting in favour of the six Committee gentlemen. One of them, to my certain knowledge, went about canvassing the Governors of the Infirmary, to attend the Meeting (which had been convened to consider Mrs. Saunders' appeal), urging the same arguments which the head of the Committee was afterwards driven to the necessity of abandoning. One of my patients, upon whose veracity I can rely, informed me, that he was so canvassed by a zealous, and at all times, ready instrument to the wishes of the Medical Officers of the London Eye Infirmary. This same gentleman was prevailed upon to write a note to Mrs. Colkett (Mrs. Saunders), two years since, immediately after the attacks made upon me from the London Eye Infirmary, and when their authors expected from my letter to Dr. Farre (in which I threatened to expose his conduct to Mrs. Saunders), that I should make a reply to them. Both Mr. and Mrs. Colkett informed me, that it was insinuated in this note, if she withheld from me any papers for which I applied, the Infirmary might do something for her."

The allegations set forth in this note are unreservedly and wholly denied by the gentleman who is understood to be alluded to. Proceedings of the description mentioned by Sir William Adams, are not in any instance discovered by the Committee, nor can it be within the conception of their minds, that the Infirmary

has ever been disgraced by the conduct of any of its Officers.

The Committee are enabled to deny that Dr. Farre abandoned any argument which he advanced at the General Meeting in question—they have perused the letter alluded to, the subject matter of which is fully explained and refuted in this Report.

[F] page 37.

*Extract from a Letter from the Rev. O. S. Saunders to Dr. Farre.*

*Barnstable, 17th Oct. 1812.*

“DEAR FARRE,

“Your last letter clearly shows how severely you feel the conduct of my brother’s widow. Mr. Olive, in his letter to me on the same subject, speaks in high terms both of you and Mr. Battley, for your friendly efforts to prevent that imprudent marriage. I am sorry these were not crowned with success. Mr. Olive, from motives of delicacy, did not include himself, but I am indebted to a friend for the intelligence, that he also was one of her unsuccessful friends. His subsequent conduct, in availing himself of a favourable circumstance to secure to her a suitable provision, meets with my highest approbation. Mrs. C. has informed me of her marriage, but I have not condescended to answer her letter.”

[G] page 39.

*Copy of Inquiry made by Letter addressed by Dr. Farre to Messrs. Longman and Co. who published Mr. Saunders’ posthumous work.*

Mr. Saunders’ posthumous work consists of 8 plates, and 216 pages of letter-press, besides 43 pages of introductory matter. Of this work Mr. Saunders had prepared for publication three figures, constituting a part only of one plate, and 48 pages of letter-press.—

1st. What, then, gentlemen, would you have given for that part of the work which the author had prepared?

2dly. Of that work, as completed by the editor, 750 copies were published, and all the expenses were defrayed by your house.

At the end of eighteen months, 631 out of the 750 copies were sold, and a profit of £134 was paid to Mrs. Colkett, besides £50 for the copyright.

Is the above sale in respect to the number sold, to the actual produce of £184, a favourable or unfavourable one?

Was it possible to have made this work more productive?

3dly. The work was published both in a cheap and an expensive form—with plain and with coloured plates.

Do me the favour to state which of the two was preferred by the profession, and which afforded the greatest profit to Mrs. Colkett?

*Copy of Messrs. Longman and Co.'s Reply to the above,  
addressed to Dr. Farre.*

*London, 17th February, 1814.*

DEAR SIR,

In compliance with your request, we herewith transmit the following answers to your queries respecting the publication of Mr. Saunders on the Eye.

Mr. Saunders' posthumous work, &c. &c.

1st. We would not have purchased, and it is doubtful if we would have taken the expenses on ourselves. Of the work as it was completed, &c.

2dly. The above is doubtless a handsome return, and without the exertions of the Committee, we consider it improbable that any profits would have arisen from the speculation.

The work was published, &c. &c.

3dly. The sales prove that the coloured was preferred by the profession. The coloured was also more profitable than the plain, as there was a handsome profit on the expense of colouring.

Mrs. Saunders having received £134. 5s. 2d. profit from the work, without consulting the editor, improvidently sold her right and interest in 119 remaining copies on which all the expenses had been paid, except on the plates for 50 copies; together with her right and interest in all future editions of the work, for the sum of fifty pounds. Messrs. Longman and Co. who were the purchasers, have since acted in the most handsome and liberal manner, and had Mrs. Saunders survived,

an effort would have been made to direct the liberality of that respectable house to her advantage.

[H] page 51.

Sir William Adams states (Note, page 62), that Dr. Gooch, "actuated by the most honourable feelings, on hearing part of the contents of the Medical Report read at the Meeting of this Committee, withdrew in disgust, but, to his surprise, afterwards, found his name affixed to a public document, the nature of which he utterly disapproved," &c.

The Committee are authorized to state, that Dr. Gooch did not retire from the Committee-room in disgust, as represented by Sir William Adams, and that he has not said, that he disapproved of the Report; although not pleased, for reasons of which he is himself to judge, on finding that his name was published in connexion therewith: that feeling, on the part of Dr. Gooch, does not, however, in any manner, bring into question the conduct of the Committee who ordered the publication of the Special Report, the whole of whose proceedings were perfectly regular.

Dr. Gooch has not taken any part in the proceedings of the present Committee.

[I] page 55.

Sir William Adams, in his pamphlet, page 5, states, that he attended the London Infirmary from May, 1807, to August, 1808.



His own letters show, that he had returned into the country, from London, in June, 1807, and in his Address to the Four Western Counties, dated at Exeter, July 1808, containing proposals for the Institution of the Infirmary for curing Diseases of the Eye, since established at Exeter, Mr. Adams states, that he had *then* practised on such diseases *ten months* in that city.

In the same Address he states, that he had attended the London Infirmary, as *assistant* to Mr. Saunders, two years, and that during his attendance, fourteen children, born blind, were cured of cataract by a novel operation, for the invention of which, the world was indebted to Mr. Saunders.

By the Register of the Infirmary it appears, that three children born blind, *only*, had been cured at the Infirmary, at the end of May, 1807, and that on the 25th March, 1808, eleven more, similar cures, had been performed. Consequently, if Mr. Adams *had* attended at the London Infirmary, from May, 1807, to August, 1808, as stated in his pamphlet, he *would* have witnessed most of the fourteen cases; but as that *cannot be true*; as the middle of June, 1807, is the utmost limit of Mr. Adams' attendance at the Infirmary; he has, in his Address and in his pamphlet, published untrue and *contradictory* statements, which it is quite certain he must have known and did really know, to be untrue, as appears, further, by the following extract from a letter from Mr. Adams to Mr. Saunders, dated at Exeter, 28th July, 1808:—"Zeal, when not managed with prudence, often does irremediable harm; it was solely with a wish to do my preceptor that credit I considered him entitled to, I was induced to state the cure of the fourteen children, which ———, who dic-

tated the greater part of my Address, would not admit under any other form, because he said the public would argue, 'why should I so much build on the success of another man;' but when I state (which by the by is not strictly correct), that I witnessed those cures, I must consequently benefit by your success and practice. He also substituted my being 'an assistant,' instead of 'having attended,' which trifling digression I trust you will not be displeased at."

In designating himself assistant to Mr. Saunders, he acted in face of the refusal of his permission to allow him so to designate himself.

These circumstances, and the omission of Mr. Adams to acknowledge, in the Address to the Four Western Counties, which was his first public Address, Mr. Saunders' friendship and disinterestedness towards him, displeased and disgusted Mr. Saunders, and were the early causes of his alienation from Mr. Adams.

Mr. Adams, in a letter to Mr. Saunders, dated 28th April, no date of year, but which your Committee assign to the year 1809, observes upon the neglect and inattention of Mr. Saunders, and, on the 25th of May, 1809, he expresses himself as follows:—"Your apparent neglect and inattention cut me to the soul. I at first most acutely felt the fancied disrespect, which being unmerited, ultimately excited the sensations which gave rise to the letter you last received. Do not, therefore, without having a sufficient reason, again trifle with my morbid sensibility, because, as the frogs said to the boys, 'what is play to you, is death to me;' —but to business."

Mr. Saunders replied to the letter of the 25th May, and your Committee cannot learn that he ever again wrote

to Mr. Adams: the passage last quoted is the introductory part of Mr. Adams' letter; the remainder was published in the "Special Report," and no doubt furnishes one of the instances of "garbled extracts," of which Sir William Adams complains (pamphlet, page 50). The passage was omitted in the "Special Report," from consideration to Sir William Adams.

*Copy of a Letter addressed by Dr. Farre to the Chairman of the Special Committee.*

*London, March 3, 1818.*

SIR,

THE Report which the Medical Directors of the London Infirmary for curing Diseases of the Eye laid before the General Committee of 1814, in obedience to the wishes of the Sub-Committee of the same year, was drawn up from evidence submitted to their examination respecting certain claims of Sir William Adams to *new* modes of treatment, by *operation*, for the cure of the Egyptian ophthalmia. The title-page of the Official Papers, published by order of the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, distinctly set forth, that his method of cure was by *operation*. This mode of curing was attested by the *three Medical Officers* of the Hospital, who declared it to be an *important discovery*, and considered that its promulgation would be a *great national desideratum*. Your Medical Officers proved, from his written and printed declarations, that he had obtained his knowledge of the seat, the nature, and the treatment of that stage of the Egyptian ophthalmia, which required an *operation*, from Mr. Saunders. The obligations of Sir William Adams to Mr. Saunders were of no ordinary kind—in his *first* letter to Mr. Saunders, after he *settled* at Exeter, dated *July 8, 1807*, he thus expressed himself, "Do not, my dear sir, allow

yourself to think I wish to disgust your feelings with language of that sort—(of adulation), no, most respected sir, it arises from the *warmth of gratitude and friendship* I feel towards you; for, except my father, you are the *best friend* I ever had, and when I cease to be grateful, may I cease to exist." If I could have given him credit for having desired, from an honourable motive, to be possessed of the posthumous papers of Mr. Saunders, his conduct, as disclosed in the "Official Papers," would have led me to form an unfavourable estimate of the manner in which he would have used them. His preceptor was now no more; and he had been denied by his nearest relatives the care of his papers, which he had even offered to purchase: surely, then, this opportunity at Greenwich was the most favourable one that could have been presented to him of doing justice to the memory of Mr. Saunders, and of acknowledging his obligations to him, particularly for instruction on this method of curing *by an operation* the granulations which occur in the chronic stage of the Egyptian ophthalmia. A studied silence, however, is observed on this subject, throughout the Official Papers, in which the name of Mr. Saunders is only once mentioned—not in respect to his method of treating the chronic stage of the Egyptian ophthalmia, to which there is not the most distant allusion; but in the rejection of his *excellent* operation for the cataract, which his grateful pupil has treated with a contempt, that the courtesy of a gentleman should not have permitted him to use even to an enemy.

To the Special Report of the General Committee, which exposed this proceeding, Sir William Adams

has, after three years' consideration, vouchsafed a reply, in the form of a Letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital. It consists of feeble and evasive attempts at self-justification, and of recriminations which outrage truth and decorum. His self-justification proceeds, first, on the supposition that he had done every possible justice to Mr. Saunders, because he had previously, and has since admitted, *that he had first learned of him the treatment of the granulations of the eyelids*; but these prior and subsequent acknowledgments, instead of justifying the conduct of Sir William Adams, serve only to aggravate his offence; and he stands condemned by his own admissions, for his silence before the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, respecting the merits of Mr. Saunders.

But, secondly, he rests his justification chiefly on his assertion, that the Medical Officers of Greenwich Hospital, in what they had stated, alluded to his practice of removing opacities of the cornea. Is, then, the promulgation of this *important discovery*—this *great national desideratum*, reduced to nothing but the cure of opacities of the cornea? Was this the wonderful discovery which moved the Ministers of the British Empire, to convene distinguished Members of the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons; which the Right Honourable the Secretary at War deemed of sufficient importance to be announced to the army, in a circular dated August 27, 1817; which has set at naught the Medical Staff, making little in the eyes of the world, surgeons both of the army and navy; and which, finally, whilst it has hurt the feelings of British surgeons, has afforded food for derision to the foreign members of the profession? Did Sir William Adams



himself think so, when, in 1810, he acquainted "the Commander-in-Chief with his success in the treatment of the third or *granular* stage of the ophthalmia?"—when he "called the attention of the Adjutant-General to a particular form of the ophthalmia, which he could perfectly cure by pursuing a mode of operation first suggested by his late friend and preceptor Mr. Saunders?"—when he explained that particular form of the disease to be "the third or *granular* state," and asserted it to be "the *chief* cause of the extensive propagation of the ophthalmia;" and that it was "*this form* of the disease which he undertook to cure," and by which "the farther propagation of the Egyptian ophthalmia could *alone* be arrested?" In the same proportion that these assertions, *magnified* as they are, accord with the notion of a *national desideratum*, the subterfuge of explaining this lofty expression of the Medical Officers of Greenwich Hospital, as referring only to the cure of opacities of the cornea, is exposed. At *one time*, the granulations form his perpetual theme—these are the Egyptian ophthalmia—these the cause of blindness. At *another*, the opacities of the cornea are all in all. Now *these* constitute the Egyptian ophthalmia—these are the cause of blindness.

The truth is, that both these conditions of the conjunctiva or connecting membrane of the eyelids and eyeball, which are expressed by the words, granulations and opacities, result from the same stage of inflammation, and are, with a very few exceptions, combined in the chronic form of the Egyptian ophthalmia; thus, in describing the cases of the pensioners who submitted to the trial of his operation, Sir William

Adams reports the conjunctiva to have been granulated, and the cornea completely opaque, with very large vessels running over it. But the following citation (see his letter, at page 80), will show to which of the two conditions of the conjunctiva, in the way of treatment, he himself attached the notion of a *national desideratum*.—"To the circumstance of the general existence of the *granulations* of the lids having been unknown, many thousands of the general population of the country, may doubtless ascribe incurable blindness arising from this disease; and the mischief so far from decreasing, is daily increasing. The seeds of the pestilence have been too widely disseminated to expect its natural eradication, and nothing but legislative interference can effectually put a stop to what threatens to become a *national calamity*." All this is indeed *exceedingly exaggerated*; but it nevertheless proves, that if he deemed the existence of *granulations* of the eyelids to be a *national calamity*, he must apply to the method of curing them the expression of a *national desideratum*.

Let us however suppose for a moment, that the Medical Officers of Greenwich Hospital allude to the practice of removing opacities of the cornea when they declare that the promulgation by Sir William Adams of this important discovery, is to be considered as a great *national desideratum*, and then I do not hesitate to assert, that there is not the slightest proof published, that Sir William Adams has *discovered* any method of curing opacities of the cornea. But that he had the opportunity of seeing these cases cured at the Infirmary is certain; for Mr. Saunders, in his first Medical Report, published in 1806, returned cases of opacities of the

cornea amongst the cured, under the two distinct heads of "partial" and "total opacities of the cornea;" and under the latter head, the cases of blindness, occasioned by opacities of the cornea in the chronic stage of the Egyptian ophthalmia, were classed, and continued to be so classed during the succeeding Reports of 1807-8-9 and 10, until Mr. Travers, in 1811, in making up the first Medical Report after his election, being dissatisfied with this classification, expunged, with my consent, the head of "total opacities of the cornea," substituting for it the title of "chronic inflammation with vascular cornea"—under which head, the returns of the cured of the chronic stage of the Egyptian ophthalmia, have ever since been made in the Annual Reports of the Infirmary.

Descending somewhat into particulars, I intend to address a letter to the General Committee, in which I shall contrast the evidence on which the claims of Sir William Adams to an *improvement* on the practice of Mr. Saunders rest, with the testimony of surgeons who have brought the operations in question to a comparative trial. But I shall reserve for the third edition of his posthumous work, now called for by the profession, the consideration of certain other points, in which I have also to contrast the merit of Mr. Saunders with the pretensions of Sir William Adams, especially in the use of emetics as one of the means of curing the acute stage of the Egyptian ophthalmia.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your faithful and obedient servant,

JOHN RICHARD FARRE.

*Copy of a Letter addressed by Dr. Farre to Sir Charles Price, Bart. President; or to the Chairman of the General Committee.*

London, March 10, 1818.

SIR,

Permit me to refer you for a more general view of the question, respecting certain claims of Sir William Adams to new modes of treatment by operation, for the cure of the Egyptian ophthalmia, to the Report which your Medical Officers laid before the General Committee of 1814, and to a letter which I had the honour to address to your Special Committee on the 3d inst.; and allow me on this occasion, to examine how far his claims to an *improvement* on the operation of Mr. Saunders, are supported by truth, by reason and experience.

Mr. Saunders taught his pupil, Mr. now Sir William Adams, the seat, the nature, and the treatment of the third stage of the Egyptian ophthalmia. Its seat is the mucous membrane, called the tunica conjunctiva, which lines the eyelids, and connects them to the eyeball—its nature is a chronic inflammation of that membrane, protracted by the growth of granulations from its surface; and its cure consists partly in the excision of those granulations, and the prevention of their subsequent growth by astringent and escharotic applications. Mr. Saunders cured a great number of patients by the method which he pursued, and had not failed in any instance where his practice had been fairly tried. He intended to have made the management of this state of the eye, a very important part of the work which he

had announced for publication. He had actually written his Essay on the Acute Form of the Disease in Infants; but referred the consideration of the granular state of the conjunctiva to a succeeding part of his treatise, which he did not live to compose. (See the first edition of his posthumous work, page 20.) In the fourth chapter of that work, the editor described some of the more important terminations of ophthalmia, and annexed, at page 94, the following note,—“In this essay (viz. On the Acute Form of the Ophthalmia in the Adult), the granular state of the conjunctiva, a change of structure, which is occasionally produced by this acute inflammation, and which protracts the disease in its *chronic* form, would have been further considered. He noticed it at the conclusion of the first chapter, and the treatment which he intended to recommend in the inveterate form of the disease, after having long practised it with success, was *excision of the granular portions of the conjunctiva*. For this operation he preferred the scissors to the knife, and *he prevented the subsequent morbid growth of the conjunctiva* by frequently injecting on it a *solution of alum, or of the nitrate of silver*.”

If Mr. Saunders had lived, it is probable this communication would have been made to the profession in 1810. His posthumous work, however, was published in December, 1811, and transmitted to the Army Medical Board, by a vote of the General Committee, in January, 1812. This was the only correct mode of proceeding. If Sir William Adams had acquired his information on this subject by his own observation, instead of by instruction from Mr. Saunders, an appeal to the usage of the profession, in respect to the mode

of communicating the practice, would decide the point against him; but what shall we say, when he deviates from the high and open way, which the honourable members of the profession have uniformly followed, to communicate a mode of treatment, the same in principle as that which Mr. Saunders had taught him; which had already been published to the profession in general, and officially transmitted to the Army Medical Board. Upwards of seven years after the death of Mr. Saunders, and nearly six years after his method of treating the granulations produced on the conjunctiva by the Egyptian ophthalmia had been published, Sir William Adams publicly announces, for the first time, at page 23 of his Letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, his method of treating this stage of the disease in the following words:—“Whether the *conjunctiva* is diseased in a greater or less degree, with a knife peculiarly constructed for that purpose, *I can always slice the whole of it off*, and lay the tarsus bare. The re-growth may always be prevented by a strong solution of alum, or the application of the sulphate of copper.” His operation, then, consists in slicing off the *whole* of the conjunctiva, so as to *lay bare the tarsus*—or, to repeat his words to Mr. Saunders, “*he shaves off the granulations down home to the tarsus*.” He shaves off not only the granulations, but the conjunctiva also. His preceptor, Mr. Saunders, was a surgeon whose science was founded on anatomy, and he taught his pupil the correct lesson of excising the morbid and adventitious growth—the granulations; but of leaving uninjured the original texture—the conjunctiva, for the purpose of restoring it to its natural function. But Sir William Adams performs this ope-



ration with a knife peculiarly constructed for that purpose, and of his own invention too—there lies the merit! Mr. Saunders only taught him the application of the principle of excision to this particular case; but was so unostentatious as to carry it into effect with an instrument in common use, calculated to preserve the conjunctiva.

It appears that the medical gentlemen, who composed the Committee appointed by Government "to examine the merits of Sir William Adams' treatment of the third stage of a violent and purulent form of ophthalmia, commonly called the Egyptian ophthalmia," are not agreed on the question of improvement on the operation of Mr. Saunders, in substituting the knife for the scissors. Sir Henry Hallford says—"I give Sir William Adams credit, but not the merit of originality, for, in the last stage, his practice is an improvement only in the operation suggested, and performed with success, by the late Mr. Saunders." Now although the improvement is here actually asserted, we are to consider the words as expressing, not the fact, but his opinion, which was evidently formed from the few cases on which *only* Sir William Adams' operation had been tried; the benefits resulting from which, even in Sir Henry Hallford's estimation, had not sufficed to restore the men as soldiers. Dr. Baillie does not go the same length, but says that his mode of operating, by a knife of his own invention, *promises* to be much more efficient; and Mr. Astley Cooper, instead of asserting that it is an improvement, simply says, that the knife *appears* to be the preferable instrument. But in a case in which merit is actually detracted from another, we cannot be satisfied with the *promise* or *appearance* of

improvement; but require the more positive declaration of the fact, that it is an improvement. What then shall we say, when the other three members of the Committee do not even notice the improvement? Sir Everard Home observes—"The *only* part of Sir William Adams' practice upon the patients submitted to the inspection of the Committee, which appears to me deserving of commendation, is the free removal of the *granulated surface* formed on the inner membrane of the eyelids;" and he concludes with declaring, that the men thus treated, were not fit for any kind of military duty. But Mr. Cline still more expressly says, "the successful treatment of these cases appears to have principally depended on the removal of the *granular projections* of the conjunctiva by excision,—a practice which originated from the late Mr. Saunders, Surgeon to the LONDON INFIRMARY FOR CURING DISEASES OF THE EYE." Finally, Mr. Abernethy, far from giving Sir William Adams either the merit of originality or improvement, is simply of opinion, that his practice is meritorious, and deserving of a fair and prudent trial. That trial has been given to it by Mr. Travers, your late Surgeon, and Mr. Lawrence, your present senior Surgeon, who say that they find nothing in this alleged improvement, but a *slight variation* in the mode of carrying into effect the principle of treatment pointed out by Mr. Saunders. That trial has been given to it, in the army, by Dr. Vetch, who entitles it a *severe and ineffectual operation*. Although the Committee did not determine whether the method pursued by Mr. Saunders, or that which Sir William Adams says he invented, is best adapted to the army, *which appeared to Sir William to be the question for their*

consideration; yet Dr. Vetch has followed out the evidence of the cases recently published by Sir William Adams, to show not only how *inexpedient* the operation has proved to be; but even how *completely he has failed in his application of it*. Thus, Dr. Vetch, whom Sir William Adams, in his Letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, most highly commends as an eminent and *candid* physician, and whose practice, contained in his excellent Treatise on the *Egyptian Ophthalmia*, he asserts, has, in a great degree, heretofore regulated that of the army, goes much farther than your Medical Officers in condemning the practice of Sir William Adams; and instead of admitting his operation by the knife to be an improvement, adds, "I beg to say, that both these instruments have been repeatedly employed; and I do not scruple to assert, that where the operation is required, the scissors are the better instrument of the two; that the surface which follows excision by them is less irritable, and less disposed to a reproduction of fungus; that there is also less risk of wounding the semilunar cartilage of the palpebræ, an accident very likely to occur in the mode of operating performed by Sir William Adams, and which I apprehend to have happened in some cases where the operation has led to a termination fatal to the organ." See Dr. Vetch's Observations relative to the Treatment by Sir William Adams of the Ophthalmic Cases of the Army.

Although Mr. Saunders and Dr. Vetch were engaged at the same time in investigating the changes induced on the conjunctiva by the Egyptian ophthalmia; yet their inquiries were conducted in different modes, and independently of each other, as I propose to prove at a

future opportunity, when I shall show the attention which Mr. Saunders paid to the early formation of the granulations, and the very different practical results to which his observations led. In the mean time, as I have so much extended my inquiry respecting the operation for their cure, I shall briefly reply to the assertion of Sir William Adams, respecting his having first suggested to Mr. Saunders the use of the solution of alum, in preference to the nitrate of silver, to prevent the reproduction of the granulations—that the word alum is not mentioned in any of his letters to Mr. Saunders, and that the latter constantly used this remedy through every stage of the disease, *before* Mr. Adams was admitted at the Infirmary, *whilst* he attended the practice of it, and *after* that period. The records of the Infirmary attest the same fact. Has Sir William Adams then proposed any thing that is really effectual for the cure of the granulations, except the mode of treatment by excision and astringents, which had been previously published in the posthumous work of Mr. Saunders, and officially transmitted from the General Committee of the Infirmary to the Army Medical Board?—Although Sir William Adams notices this *present* from the Infirmary to the Medical Department of the Army, merely for the purpose of asserting that *some time afterwards* he was treated with ridicule and even insult by the late Director-General, for venturing to assert the practicability of curing the granulations of the eyelids, yet he must excuse me for being incredulous respecting the necessity of *proving the fact by his own practice*, as he maintains, instead of simply communicating to surgeons of the army and navy, *through the medium of the press*, what he deemed to be an improve-

ment on the method of cure, in which he had been instructed by Mr. Saunders, and which had been already made public. Such prejudice and neglect of duty cannot fairly be imputed to this distinguished class of surgeons, even on points of practice the most difficult and dangerous; but it is as insulting to this body, as it is to the common sense of the public, to assert, that this necessity of proving his practice actually existed in a trivial point of this kind, in which your Medical Officers have stated (and Sir William Adams coincides in the statement) that the treatment of the chronic stage of the Egyptian ophthalmia is *simple* in its principle, and *easy* in its execution; so that *any* surgeon, who has received an *ordinary* education in the treatment of diseases of the eye, may be considered as competent to *understand and manage* the complaint, when its nature has been explained.

In concluding, I may be allowed to say of my late and present distinguished colleagues, Mr. Travers and Mr. Lawrence, that they are gentlemen too highly educated, and placed in too commanding a situation in the profession to be open even to the suspicion of being influenced by the motives which Sir William Adams has imputed to them. It was their acknowledged merit which induced you to *invite* them to the situation which they have filled with honour to themselves and benefit to the public—it was in testimony of that merit which you had rightly estimated, that on the resignation of Mr. Travers, to discharge his more extended duties of Surgeon to St. Thomas's Hospital, you were pleased to express your sense of the important services which he had rendered to this Infirmary, by appointing him one of its Vice-Presidents. I feel plea-

sure in thus publicly declaring, that without being bound to Mr. Saunders by a single tie, Mr. Travers has done the strictest justice to the merit of his excellent operation for the cataract; and that after the most extensive trial of it, he has arrived at the very conclusion (included in that of your Medical Officers, stated below) which I believe that Mr. Saunders himself would have drawn, if he had lived to carry on his experience to the same extent. I feel most indignant, that in return for this liberal service, two cases, forming an inconsiderable part of the whole—the case of Turner, a Greenwich pensioner, and of Mr. Corlett, of Homerton, should have been published under gross misrepresentation by Sir William Adams. In both cases, the operations were conducted in strict conformity to the rules of Mr. Saunders—both were delicately and accurately performed—both had arrived at that stage at which the danger was past, and which required only the final operation for their cure, and both had that happy issue, which, I have been led by direct observation to conclude, would not with equal certainty have resulted, if the more violent methods of operating proposed by Sir William Adams had in the first instance been performed. I shall pursue this subject in detail in the third edition of Mr. Saunders' posthumous work. The following conclusion of your Medical Officers, published in the Special Report, gave the result of the important comparative trial of the operations for the solution and extraction of the cataract, which was conducted at the Infirmary on a large scale: viz.—That the operation of Mr. Saunders puts the cataract in a condition to be absorbed with the least possible violence to the eye, and succeeds in restoring perfect



vision in every variety of the soft cataract; but that as Mr. Saunders himself anticipated, it has been proved by further trial to be less perfectly adapted to the varieties of hard cataract than the operation of extraction; whilst their final conclusion conveyed their opinion of the relative merits of Mr. Saunders' operation as compared with that *modification* of it which is practised by Sir William Adams: viz.—That the *modification* of Mr. Saunders' operation, practised by Sir William Adams, also puts the cataract in a condition to be absorbed; but, by inflicting *greater violence* on the eye, exposes the patient to the risk of an acute inflammation, imminently hazarding the safety of the organ.

It was not even left for Sir William Adams to originate the complex method of combining the operations of the needle and the knife, which he entitles, his "new and improved operation for the cataract." Mr. Travers first published this method, and his progressive steps towards the completion of this operation may be traced in the records of the Infirmary, previous to the date of Sir William Adams' operation at Greenwich. A departure, however, from simplicity, either in mental or manual exercises, will not ultimately stand the test of experience. Mr. Travers subsequently, and in my opinion, judiciously, rejected this complex operation. Mr. Travers and Mr. Lawrence adhere to the old operation of extraction in cases of hard cataract, and so will Sir William Adams, as soon as further experience shall have enabled him to perform it well. These gentlemen have only rendered strict justice to the memory of Mr. Saunders, and no where more feelingly or truly than in concluding their examination of

the claims of Sir William Adams to the merit of discovery or improvement in the treatment of the chronic stage of the Egyptian ophthalmia:—"And here your Medical Officers must be allowed to express their high respect for the honourable feelings, and perfect approbation of the professional conduct of Mr. Saunders, in the transactions which they have just reviewed. Possessing, through the public confidence in his character and talents, an unrivalled field of observation, it was his first object to convert this to the public benefit, by adding to the stock of professional knowledge; and he trusted for his recompense to that rank in public opinion, which is the just reward of such exertions. The temptation of private emolument was in vain held out to him. His unalterable purpose was to communicate his knowledge to the profession, as soon as he deemed it sufficiently matured by experience to be worthy of their acceptance. The proposal of selling to the public the improvements, which their liberal patronage had enabled him to make, was therefore rejected by him with a degree of indignation, which must endear his memory in the estimation of all honourable minds."—They did not express, as Sir William Adams has asserted, any solicitude for the pecuniary benefit of Mrs. Saunders, whom they had never seen; and it is impossible to conceive a more wanton violation of truth than that which he committed, when he intimated, in his letter addressed to each member of the General Committee, on the 18th of November, 1817, that instead of allowing her to accept what he terms his original proposition of editing the posthumous work of Mr. Saunders, *they* consigned the conduct of that publication to one of themselves. Those gentlemen were not

Officers of the Infirmary at the period in question, and had not the slightest knowledge of the transaction.

Sir William Adams is known to me only as a pupil of the Infirmary, from which, after having been liberally admitted to the ample field of instruction which it affords, he was kindly furnished with letters testimonial by Mr. Saunders and myself, highly calculated to serve him, and which really did essentially serve him. From 1807, when he ceased to attend the Institution, I have had no communication with him. Mr. Saunders seldom mentioned his name to me. I did not even know that he had ceased to confide in him, nor that he had withheld from him his latter improvements. A very active member of the early Committees of this Infirmary, has informed you by letter, that he was expressly invited to the house of Mr. Saunders, for the purpose of consulting with him and a common friend or two, what course he ought to take, in consequence of the inroad, as he felt it, of his then late pupil. Of this meeting I had not the slightest knowledge. If Sir William Adams interested me no farther than I have stated before the death of Mr. Saunders, he ceased altogether to be an object of my notice after that lamented event. I did not interfere with the views of Sir William Adams; for if delicacy toward me had restrained the relatives of Mr. Saunders from complying with his wishes, in respect to the posthumous papers, I left them perfectly at liberty, by refusing the charge of those papers when they were first sent to me; but as they were immediately returned to me, accompanied by the letters which I have transmitted to the Special Committee, I no longer refused to do justice to the memory of my friend. When the Official Papers

of the Honourable Directors of Greenwich Hospital drew attention to Sir William Adams, to the entire exclusion of the merits of Mr. Saunders; and even his Majesty's Government was induced to appoint a Committee to inquire into that method of treating the chronic stage of the Egyptian ophthalmia, which has already been fully considered; then Mr. Battley wrote his Appeal, and the Committee published their Special Report—each discharged a duty, in respect to which, it is *falsely* asserted, that I influenced that gentleman, or was instrumental in forming the Committee. Every insinuation that I influenced Mr. Battley to write letters to Sir William Adams, to Mrs. Colkett (Saunders), or to any other person, or to take any step that has been rudely attributed to him, as an instrument, I assert to be entirely false. Mr. Battley possesses a mind too independent to be subservient to any man. His conduct to Mr. Saunders, in life and in death, has afforded an example of the most devoted friendship, which originated in, and was cemented by, professional pursuits and habits. And with regard to the Committee, I appeal to you, Sir Charles Price, whose zeal to serve this Infirmary has been manifested in such various ways—not merely by your benefactions; but by actively presiding over its Meetings and Anniversaries, by introducing its Deputations to Government, and by pleading its cause to his Majesty's Ministers: I appeal to you, Sir, as the President, not only of this excellent Charity, but also of that greater Institution from which it sprang, St. Thomas's Hospital, whether your name, inscribed on its minutes, and sanctioning the proceedings of this and every other Committee, whose measures have been called in question by Sir William

Adams, could have been affixed to any acts which compromised its dignity or interests. If turning from you, Sir, I speak of Mr. Sedgwick, the Chairman of the Committee, known to every member of the General Committee, as a Vice-President, who has most freely devoted his time and his purse to the Institution, I must be allowed to say, that he is as incapable of being influenced, as I am of attempting to influence him, by any motives except those of public spirit, and private benevolence; and, finally, of the Committee, as a body, I should deem it offensive to say more, than that it was composed of gentlemen too honourable and independent to be governed by any consideration not calculated to sustain the character of the Infirmary.

The circumstances to which I have just briefly alluded, have induced Sir William Adams thrice to intrude himself and his concerns on my notice—twice in disrespectful letters, once at an intermediate period in a complimentary note—they have all been treated with the neglect which they merited; but they have not been withheld from the observation either of your first or second Special Committees, convened to examine into his pretensions and recriminations. If they contain any thing that can serve him or disserve me, I request that you will freely publish it.

On all the points which relate to the posthumous work of Mr. Saunders, or to the granting and rescinding of the annuity to his relict, I appeal from the calumnies of Sir William Adams, to the matter of fact recorded in your proceedings from 1810 to the present moment, and to the body of evidence submitted to your Special Committee. In relation to the book, a laborious service

was freely rendered at a considerable cost of time, to the injury of those pursuits in morbid anatomy, to which as a physician, I have earnestly desired to devote my chief attention. It is a sufficient recompense to me, that the profession has been benefited; that a monument has been raised to the memory of my friend, out of his own materials; and that his widow has been served, if not to the extent that I intended, at least to that which she permitted. I rendered to this lady every service, consistent with my duty, that could be suggested by the feelings belonging to a friend of her husband, to the editor of his posthumous work, and to a Medical Director of the Infirmary.—Friendship neither exacts praise, nor will submit to calumnious censure, for services rendered. Reserving to myself the right of making any further observations on the points at issue, which may serve to elucidate the truth;

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your faithful and obedient Servant,

JOHN RICHARD FARRE.

FINIS.



For

Lie James Mc Geigh  
with the Authors Comp

A

REPLY,

Sc. Sc.

8

REPLY

SIR WILLIAM ADAMS

RECENT PUBLICATION AGAINST HIM,

PURPORTING TO BE THE

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

OF

The London Infirmary,

FOR

CURING DISEASES OF THE EYE.

Printed by W. Clowes, Northumberland-court, Strand:  
PUBLISHED BY BALDWIN, CRADDOCK, AND JOY,  
PATERNOSTER-ROW.  
1818.

8

A

REPLY

BY

SIR WILLIAM ADAMS

TO A

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# REPLY

SIR WILLIAM ADAMS

RECENT PUBLICATION AGAINST HIM

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

OF THE LONDON INFIRMARY

CURING DISEASES OF THE EYE

BY THE LONDON INFIRMARY

PUBLISHED BY D. DALRYMPLE, LONDON

1817

# REPLY, &c.

AGAIN I am attacked in the name of the London Eye Infirmary—again the same hostile spirit, which appears to have increased in venomous activity, as I have had the good fortune to advance in professional success, has endeavoured to annoy my feelings, and to depreciate my character. But the patronage with which I have been honored by the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, and by His Majesty's Government, has, it seems, given great umbrage to Doctor Farre, Mr. Travers, and Mr. Battley; and the Circular Letter of the Secretary at War, announcing the establishment of an Ophthalmic Hospital at Chelsea, under my superintendence, has evidently aggravated that umbrage, because they themselves sought in vain for the latter patronage.

To have obtained this patronage, notwithstanding a tissue of indefatigable slander and insidious opposition, is, indeed, a sin which my calumniators are not likely to forgive. Those individuals who sought to crush my efforts, and to destroy my fame, are mortified by their defeat; but still they seem determined to persevere, and hence I am again under the necessity of replying to their publication, or perhaps I should speak more correctly, to the production of Doctor Farre, assisted by Mr. Travers; for these gentlemen are, I am assured, the authors of the publication which has just issued from the press, with the imposing title of the "Report of the Committee of the London Eye Infirmary, occasioned by the false and calumnious statements con-



"tained in a Letter by Sir William Adams to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital." That Doctor Farre and Mr. Travers are the authors, managers, and prompters of this renewed attack—that the plot and composition originated with them, will, I think, become manifest from the sequel.

But the pamphlet itself proclaims the basis upon which it is founded. Two letters from Doctor Farre, which are dated the 3d and 10th of March, form the groundwork of the slanderous advertisements which have appeared in several of the public journals, and are evidently the cause and main-spring of the Report of the Special Committee. One of these letters is addressed to Sir C. Price, who still was not induced to give the sanction of his name to the Report which it precedes; nay, who, as I have been assured, has expressed his disapprobation of any further proceedings against me through the Infirmary.

The Committee assembled on the 11th of March, to receive the Report of the Special Committee, and to pass Resolutions thereon; so that Doctor Farre's letters would appear to have been delivered only a day or two before the Special Report was presented to this General Committee; but that the letters excited and occasioned the Report, or rather, that both were drawn up by the same pen, is the impression which circumstances induce me to entertain; especially as I have been informed, it was some months since pompously and publicly announced by Doctor Farre, that he intended to reply to me "*through the Infirmary*." This must be, indeed, I should think the impression of every man of ordinary discernment, who takes the trouble of reading and considering the whole of this pamphlet; more particularly when told, that it has been declared to me, by a most respectable member, and seceder from the Committee of 1814, that the unfounded statement and resolutions against me, published in the Special Report of that year, were drawn up

by the Medical Officers themselves, and signed by that Committee, through their confidence in the integrity and ability of those Officers.

What then is to be thought of a writer, who sets out with a false pretence—who seeks to confer a fictitious authority upon his work—who declares that to be the "Report of the London Eye Infirmary," which was actually the production of his own pen? Will Doctor Farre deny that he is really the author of the Report to which I refer? But having said so much upon the author and origin of this extraordinary production, I now proceed to animadvert upon the description of persons employed to give it currency.

Irk some and unpleasant as controversy is to my feelings, and injurious as it must be to my pursuits, from the time and attention which it necessarily occupies, I am still compelled to engage in it; but rather with a view to expose systematic misrepresentation, to which the character of any man is liable, than from any apprehension of professional competition, which no fair mind would interrupt. Before, however, I enter into the particulars of the elaborate publication to which I advert, I shall shew that it cannot be considered as the emanation of the General Committee of the London Eye Infirmary, as its title purports.

The General Committee, consisting of *seventy members*, besides the Officers of the Institution, is composed of two descriptions of persons:—the first are gentlemen, whose names and influence, from their high respectability and fortune, are calculated to advance the consequence and interests of the establishment, but who very rarely attend to, or interfere with its immediate management. The other class of persons may be termed the Acting Committee, who regulate, who have, in fact, the whole management of the Institution, and consists principally of the Medical and

4  
other Officers of the Infirmary, their immediate relations, and connexions.

The Special Report published in 1814, containing charges against me, to which my Letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital was a reply, was signed by twenty-six Members of the General Committee, including not only the Medical Officers of the institution and their different connexions, but also some highly-respectable individuals.

I have now, however, peculiar satisfaction in stating, that although I published the names of these gentlemen in my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, declaring that they had ventured to pronounce upon the merits of my moral as well as my professional character, upon the *ex parte* statement of their medical officers, contrary to every principle of justice—without affording me an opportunity of bringing them acquainted with the real circumstances of the case—that they had also, through their confidence in those medical officers, published their opinions upon medical subjects, in regard to which a large majority of them must necessarily be ignorant, thereby unconsciously becoming the instruments of medical intrigue and professional jealousy; still so convinced have these respectable individuals become of the injustice done me, that two names only, out of the twenty-six composing that committee, are prefixed to the present Report; excepting those of Doctor Farre, Messrs. Travers, Battley, and their relations or immediate connexions.

And here I cannot pass over in silence the high sense I entertain of the candour evinced by the respectable seceders from that committee, who have thus unequivocally marked their conviction of the truth of the observations contained in my letter to the Directors. Even Mr. Lawrence, who on the former occasion was one of the three professional officers who signed the Medical Report, Doctor Gooch, Mr.

5  
Travers's brother-in-law, and Mr. Olive, Mrs. Saunders's friend and trustee, have withdrawn from the junto who assume the title of "The Committee of the London Eye Infirmary!"

Hearing from various quarters that Doctor Farre intended to reply to my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, "through the infirmary"—and observing by the newspapers that a meeting of the General Committee of that Institution, was convened for the 21st of last November, (to many of the members of which, I was informed, private notes had been sent), I addressed a circular letter to the General Committee, containing a condensed view of the nature of the controversy and the character of those to whom I was opposed. This letter induced some gentlemen to attend who are not in the habit of frequenting those meetings, and in particular, one of the members for Middlesex, who was sharply attacked by Doctor Farre for coming there "as the advocate of Sir W. Adams." In reply Mr. Byng declared "that he did not come as an advocate for Sir W. Adams, but to express his decided opinion that the controversy in question was of a professional nature; that any interference on the part of the infirmary could not fail to injure the interests and character of the institution, and that therefore, it would be better to leave the medical gentlemen to settle the controversy between themselves."

Against another gentleman, from whom the medical officers had been apprized some resistance of their unjust persecution of me was to be apprehended, the door was at first closed; but this gentleman being a vice-president, he was at length permitted to appear among the committee, who were convened to witness the concerted proceedings of the Medical Officers.\* The arguments, however, of those two gentlemen seemed to prevail so strongly, that the in-

\* As Mr. Lawrence's name is not prefixed to this Report, I am not to be understood to include him among "the Medical Officers."



tention of replying to me, "through the infirmary" was at that time prevented.

The Medical Officers had still, however, sufficient influence to obtain the formation of a committee, composed exclusively of members who had signed the Special Report against me in 1814, to which were added eight members of the committee, before whom Mr. Deane had made his extraordinary declaration in 1810, thus calculating that I should experience no particular degree of favour from minds conceived to entertain a prejudice against me. This Special Committee was directed to take into consideration my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, and to report to the General Committee.

After an interval of four months, during which almost the whole of the independent and more respectable part of the committee altogether seceded, namely, Sir C. Price the president, Alderman Ansley, Michael Bland, John Cazenove, George Clarke, S. S. Hunt, John Smith, John Twemlow, Richard Wace, Thomas Amsinck, John Mackie, Jeremiah Olive, R. H. Sparks, William Lawrence, esqrs., with Doctors Davis, Gooch, and the Rev. Mr. Crowther. The Report was signed by the remaining members, and a General Committee was convened. But contrary to the plan pursued by the Medical Officers in November, no circular letter, as I am informed, was sent to the members to apprise them of this meeting; at least not to those who had expressed any disapprobation of further proceedings against me in the name of the Infirmary, and who had declared their wish to attend the next General Meeting.

Such was the conduct of men who wish to be accredited for impartiality, and to procure currency for their representations. In a Note to the Report, on which I am remarking, (p. 81.) it is stated, that "seventy-six gentlemen are summoned on all General Committees,"—Were so many summoned to receive this Report?—If so, how comes it that twenty-one

names only, appear as the Committee which sanctioned and authorized its publication? Fourteen even of this number are of the Special Committee, the supposed framers of the Report itself!! Thus it appears that while more than one-half the Committee, appointed to examine and report upon my letter to the Directors, (and those the more independent and respectable part) have altogether withdrawn from it,—four additional signatures alone could be obtained to sanction any further hostile proceedings against me. The inference from these facts is so obvious as to render any comment unnecessary, and the public will judge what degree of attention is due to the Report signed by

Mr. Solomon Hougham, Silversmith, in the Chair—vacated by Sir Charles Price, Bart.

{ Doctor Farre—Physician of the Infirmary.  
 { Mr. William Crawley—his father-in-law, Druggist.  
 { Mr. Harry Sedgewick—Dr. Farre's intimate friend.  
 { Mr. Travers—late Surgeon of the Infirmary.  
 { Mr. Tyrrel—one of the present Surgeons.  
 { Mr. Pitches—Solicitor of the Infirmary.  
 { Mr. Mathew Heathfield—present Secretary of the Infirmary.  
 { Mr. Richard Heathfield—his brother.  
 { Mr. Rich. Battley—the late Secretary of the Infirmary } Druggists  
 { Mr. Thomas Churchyard—his brother-in-law }  
 { Mr. William Brydon }  
 { Mr. John Hodgkinson }  
 { Mr. John Horner } Druggists  
 { Mr. Thomas Sparks }

Ralph Price, Esq.\*

\* The name of Mr. Price connected with this document I have seen with considerable surprise and regret, especially recollecting the explanation which I made to him in November last, and the manner in which he appeared to receive that explanation. But I remember that Mr. Price at that time expressed an extravagant confidence in Dr. Farre, and a sense of obligation to Mr. Travers, while he manifested an eager desire to palliate the conduct of Mr. Battley.



John Bainbridge, Jun. Esq.\* } Merchants.

John Croskey, Esq. }

Mr. Richard Redman—Ship-Broker.

Mr. John Clark, and Mr. John Dean †.

Among the persons then composing this Committee, it will be seen that fifteen are the medical or other officers of the Infirmary—their immediate relations, connexions, and friends. No less than seven of the members are druggists!—Perhaps the fact of Dr. Farre's father-in-law—the Secretary Battley, and his brother-in-law, being all three in that line of business, may account for this circumstance.

But will the Governors at large of the London Eye Infirmary permit this selected assemblage to appear the authoritative organ of their sentiments—to publish in the name of the General Committee such slanderous and libellous advertisements upon the character of an individual as have lately appeared in the public newspapers—and to do so too in defiance of the opinion of so many of the most respectable members of that Committee?

The insertion of these advertisements must have cost no inconsiderable sum. The printing of pamphlets must have been also expensive. By whom, or from what resources has this expense been defrayed? If from the funds subscribed for the support of the London Eye Infirmary, I need not characterize such misappropriation—if from the pockets of the individuals with whom the reports originated, what is the inference? But in either case, what must be the motive which could prompt to such expenditure, for the purpose of wounding the feelings and depreciating the character of

\* Not John Bainbridge, Esq., who signed the Report of 1814.

† I have not been able to find out who these Gentlemen are, although I have made every possible inquiry. But I see, in the Directory, that there is a Mr. John Dean, a Cheese-monger.

an individual—what else than eager personal malignity, than systematic professional jealousy? For, be it remembered, that this controversy originated with the Medical Officers of the Infirmary. They were the first to attack, without receiving from me the slightest offence or injury. They assailed me under the pretence of solicitude for the fame of Mr. Saunders, whose fame I had never injured. But what peculiarly aggravates the conduct of my adversaries—their assault was made at the very outset of my professional career, when I was comparatively unknown, and, when they obviously calculated upon destroying my prospects of professional success.

Dr. Farre, in the name of the Special Committee, sets out by saying, "They do not consider it consistent with the nature and principles of the Institution, to enter into a contest with any individual, and that it will not be expected that they should undertake the work of Medical Controversy." It would, on the first view, appear strange, that any of those persons who had voluntarily undertaken this work, and pronounced their verdict upon medical subjects in 1814, should now so materially alter their line of conduct and mode of expression, thus condemning their own former proceeding. But the change is accounted for by my proof that the opinions formerly promulgated by them were wholly destitute of truth and justice, as indeed, those Medical Officers well know, is now universally admitted throughout the profession. If the Medical Officers and their friends had, in 1814, thus declined to undertake the work of Medical Controversy, I should not have felt it necessary to publish my Letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, to which the recent Report professes to reply.

This Report classes the subject for discussion, under the four following heads:—1st. The general direction and

management of the Infirmary. 2dly. The merits of the late J. C. Saunders, esq., the founder of the Infirmary. 3dly. The conduct of the Committee towards the late Mrs. Colkett, the widow of Mr. Saunders; and 4thly. The conduct of the Medical Officers.

Upon the first head it were idle to dwell. For I have never disputed the merits of the Infirmary, or the good it has produced, but I do deny the truth of the allegation contained in the Report, that what I have introduced to public notice, is "the practice which I was taught at the Infirmary." The fallacy of this notion I have proved in my Letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, where the nature of my present practice, as contrasted with that which was pursued at the London Eye Infirmary, is fully explained. I have further to observe on the first head, that however universal was "the diffusion" of the modes of "cure practised by the Medical Directors of the London Eye Infirmary," however "great the number," or however "high the rank" of the pupils instructed by them, whether those pupils were "natives of the West Indies, America, Germany, Portugal, or other parts of the globe," the fact for which I have contended, and which Doctor Farre still affects to deny, is fully established—namely, that the "general existence" of the granulations of the lids—the necessity for their removal—as well as a certain mode of cure for such cases of Egyptian Ophthalmia, were unknown to the Army Medical Board, and to the Surgeons of the Army, until I made my practice known in 1812.

Now as to Mr. Saunders.—It has uniformly been the policy of the framers of this Report, to excite against me the hostility of the friends of Mr. Saunders, by representing, that I had acted ungratefully and dishonourably towards

him. But upon what grounds do they support this charge; or can they fairly maintain that any act or expression of mine has rendered necessary "the vindication of his memory?" The merits of Mr. Saunders as a man, and his skill as an oculist, have ever been the subject of my unqualified panegyric. The style, indeed, in which I have habitually spoken of this excellent man may be collected from my work on Diseases of the Eye, published in 1812, as well as from the following extract of my letter, addressed to the West of England Eye Infirmary, dated Nov. 1st, 1809.

"To Mr. Saunders, I feel more particularly grateful, for having, in the most disinterested and friendly manner, not only allowed me to witness the practice of the London Eye Infirmary, over which he presides, but also for having instructed me in his method of curing cataract, the only one which has been shewn to be applicable at an early age to children troubled with that disease. Mr. Saunders has likewise the originality of having first marked the character of inflammation of the iris, and of having pointed out its appropriate method of cure. The discovery of a successful mode of treating those most inveterate and distressing consequences, produced by the Egyptian ophthalmia, has further been the result of his scientific and unwearied investigations. Upon these highly-important subjects and some others, he has been hitherto prevented by ill health and numerous professional avocations, from making known to the world the success of his labours. But these, I confidently anticipate, will shortly be published."

A copy of this letter, with the report in which it was inserted, was forwarded to the London Eye Infirmary,—yet four months afterwards, upon the authority of such a witness as Mr. Deane, the medical officers of that institution accused me of seeking to deprive Mr. Saunders of his posthumous fame, by an attempt to publish as my own, those very discoveries which I had so distinctly and unequivocally attributed to him in this letter, and that absurd charge they now repeat with most unblushing effrontery.

They complain, and that in the most offensive terms, of



my publication of Mr. Russell's letter, referring to Mr. Saunders's refusal in 1809, to make known his mode of cure to the Commander-in-Chief, for the benefit of the army, or to allow me to do so, in compliance with the request of General Thewles. But the production of that letter, *they* rendered necessary to the vindication of my character against their own unjust aspersions, in what purported to be a Report from the London Eye Infirmary, respecting my conduct on that occasion.

In no respect, however, have I directly or indirectly questioned the purity of Mr. Saunders, or "censured his name," unless it be deemed censure to assert my own right,—unless it be deemed a depreciation of his fame, and inconsistent with the gratitude which I owe to my friend and preceptor, to alledge that which I have proved,—namely, that I have improved upon his practice, that I have advanced the science to which his life was devoted.

Were Mr. Saunders alive, he would, I am confident, readily acknowledge, and liberally and openly patronise the improvements and discoveries which his professed advocates pertinaciously and publicly deny, although they well know, that my instruments and operations are now employed by their own surgeons at the infirmary. Mr. Saunders would be incapable of publicly condemning what he privately practised; but he was in feeling, principle and character, different, very different indeed from those who affect to be his admirers and imitators.

This adoption of my practice appears from the following statement, which was made by a gentleman, a pupil of the London Eye Infirmary, before a numerous class of students, who were attending my lectures at the York Hospital on the 8th instant. There were also present my two assistants and an eminent physician, who noted the particulars of this statement—and a copy of whose notes I have in my possession.

This gentleman stated to the following effect:—

That he had been attending the London Eye Infirmary nearly twelve months—that the constant practice of its surgeons for curing the granulations of the lids, caused by the Egyptian ophthalmia, is to remove them with a knife, and not with the scissors as recommended by Mr. Saunders.

That the present practice for the cure of cataract at the infirmary is, in the first instance, to perform the operation pursued by Mr. Saunders, and described by Dr. Farre, in his posthumous work; but this being found, in most instances, insufficient to remove the disease, unless frequently repeated, my operation is afterwards performed with a sharp-cutting instrument, such as that which I have invented and published; adding, that where there is any adhesion of the cataract my operation is at the first performed.

In the Medical Report of 1814, to which are prefixed the names of Dr. Farre, Messrs. Travers and Lawrence, it is asserted, that with respect to the granulations of the lids caused by the Egyptian ophthalmia, "I have only made the *unimportant* alteration of removing the diseased growth by a different instrument."

This instrument, according to the above statement, it has been found necessary to employ upon the patients of the infirmary; and I learn that my subsequent treatment is pursued for the cure of that disease.

In the same Report the medical officers affirm, with regard to my practice for the cure of cataract, "that whilst Mr. Saunders reduced the cutting edge of his instrument, Mr. Adams increased it; whilst the former inflicted less violence on the eye, the latter inflicted more, and performed the same thing in a ruder way." "That the modification of Mr. Saunders's operation, practised by Sir W. Adams, exposes the patient to the risk of an acute inflammation, imminently hazarding the safety of the organ."

Yet, by the above statement of one of their own pupils, it appears that a sharp-cutting instrument, similar to mine, (al-



though so much depreciated), is that now actually employed at the infirmary; and that, in many instances, my operation, which they have ventured to describe, as "imminently jeopardizing the safety of the organ," is now performed by their own surgeons in preference to that upon which these medical officers had bestowed such unqualified panegyric.

What then, I ask, must be the decision of the profession, and of the public, upon the candour of Dr. Farre, when they find him, in his letter to Sir Charles Price, referring to the conclusions of the medical officers in 1814, as if their still-existing opinions—when they find his name, as well as that of Mr. Travers, prefixed to the present report, wherein the committee are represented to declare, "that they cannot be expected to undertake the work of 'medical controversy,' while it is evident from the facts contained in the foregoing statement, the controversy is at an end. What, in a word, will be the opinion of the Governors of the London Eye Infirmary, of the conduct of their medical officers, when they discover that the funds of their institution have been expended by the publication of the Special Report of 1814, with a view to mislead public opinion, in regard to my instruments and operations, while those very instruments and operations are now employed by themselves for the benefit of the patients of the infirmary?

With regard to the conduct of Doctor Farre and Co. towards Mrs. Colkett, the widow of Mr. Saunders, the authors of this report condemn me without measure for censuring that conduct, alledging that my statements are unfounded, and my comments unjust. But my censors should recollect that those are *not my statements*. For how stands the

case? Mrs. Colkett published a circular letter, dated February, 1814, from which the following is an extract:—

(CIRCULAR.)

"When it pleased Providence to take away my life husband from this world of trouble at the early age of thirty-seven, and when he had reaped little other advantage from his successful practice than the private satisfaction of doing good; it was well known to the Committee in what situation I was placed by his lamented death, and they kindly undertook to finish and publish at their own expense (at the expense of the infirmary) for my use and benefit, a work on Diseases of the Eye, which Mr. Saunders had nearly completed, and would have published had his life been spared a little longer. The produce of this publication, I had every reason to suppose, would have realized for me nearly 1,000*l.*, which sum would, of course, have been paid down to me, or laid out in an annuity for me, in neither of which cases could I have lost any part of the money by a second marriage. The Committee afterwards altered their original plan, and thought it better to allow me an annuity of 40*l.* per year from their own funds; this was regularly agreed to, and confirmed by a General Meeting of the Governors, and inserted in the Journals of the Establishment in these words:—

"To the widow of Mr. Saunders, for and during the term of her natural life," &c. &c.

"It will not be necessary for me to state at length my reasons for changing my situation, nor do I at all think it was a question which concerned the Committee; suffice it to say, that I was not conscious of sinning against any law, human or divine, in so doing, and that I married again as before stated.

"This great crime so offended some of the Committee, that, without pretending to assign any other reason, a meeting was called, at which only six gentlemen were present, and a resolution passed to rescind the annuity of 40*l.* per year to me, which resolution will be submitted to the Governors on the 18th instant, for their assent or dissent.

"I shall abstain from any personal remarks on the conduct of any of those gentlemen by whose interference the grant was attempted to be rescinded, and content myself with a bare statement of the facts, in the full assurance that I shall not be forsaken on this occasion, and in the earnest hope that you will attend on the day appointed, and join my other friend in bestowing on me, now that I am actually

in a situation to want it, the continuance of this annuity, as originally granted; and which I hope you will not think too much for the eminent services of my late husband, for whose sake alone it was first given, and with whose opinion, with respect to second marriages, I was so fully acquainted, that could he even now speak from the tomb, I am convinced he would not condemn me.

I am, &c. &c.

JANE LOUISA COLKETT,

(Widow of the late J. C. Saunders, &c. &c.)

45, Penton-street, Walworth.

15th Feb. 1814.

The substance of this letter was corroborated in various written and verbal communications to me, from both Mrs. Colkett and her husband, as well as from other sources. Upon those communications then, I felt myself authorized to make the comments which appear in my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital. Of the distressed and desolate condition in which Mrs. Colkett was left in consequence of the revocation of the annuity, granted her by the Committee of the London Eye Infirmary, and my allusion to which appears to have given such pain to the Medical Officers, I could entertain no doubt. The letters of Mrs. Colkett herself were conclusive upon that subject, and for the establishment of my own veracity as well as for the vindication of the character of Mrs. Colkett herself, I feel it necessary to publish the following extracts from those letters, while the originals I am ready to shew to any respectable gentleman who may desire to see them, and will favour me with a call, either at my house in Albemarle-street, or at the establishment which I am about to open in the city.

"Since you have kindly interested yourself so much in our affairs, it may not be considered troublesome my relating to you a fresh source of great uneasiness to us, in not receiving some cash this week, which we considered as sure and safe as the Bank could be. You will, I dare

say, be surprised when I tell you that I allude to the quarterly allowance my father has been in the habit of sending, and which, it seems, he is not able to let us have this quarter, on account of his having recently received

again from arrest. Had my father apprized us he should not have been able to send till next quarter, we could have arranged things accordingly, but unfortunately he never gave us the least notice."—"Our disappointment, when we received my father's letter, was most heavy, as we actually had people at the moment at the door, for payment of little Bili, which we firmly intended to pay from that money we knew ourselves entitled to expect. In consequence, however, of our not receiving it, we are placed in a more painful situation than I would wish to mention to any one."

"My husband's being unable to procure a situation (since our marriage) together with the disappointment of the Annuity from the Infirmary, has been the means of involving us in debt to a considerable amount—so much so, that my husband is now daily in expectation of being arrested, which is a still greater drawback to his gaining employment, for we have not one friend to relieve us." My father, God bless him, being already encumbered with the debts of—"In consequence of the disappointment from the Eye Infirmary, I am very ill at ease, from the debts necessity has compelled us to contract, and we are now in great trouble. To prove to you how difficult we have found it to live, I must assure you on my word, we have been under the necessity of asking our landlady to take goods for rent, which she has kindly done. Not only have we parted with goods, but also our little plate—my watch, and even my beloved late husband's miniature I have been obliged to pledge. Necessity, the most urgent, has compelled me to the last step."—"But distress on distress has constantly awaited us, and anxiety has impaired considerably the health of both."—"After thus stating our difficulties, may I presume to solicit for my husband the recommendation of some permanent situation of Sir William Adams, of whose zeal to serve me I cannot doubt, after such proofs given of his disinterested friendship? If I have presumed too far, I have an excuse to offer—my necessities."

Such is the testimony upon which I proceeded—but still

\* Where were her anxious friends, the Medical Officers, at the time she wrote this Letter?



more with a view to assure myself of accuracy upon this part of the case, in consequence of the peculiarly delicate tendency of Mrs. Colkett's statements, I had a *proof* of that part of my Pamphlet which related to the Proceedings of the Committee that determined upon the subject of her Appeal, submitted to the correction of a Rev. Gentleman, who was present at that Meeting.—From this most respectable Clergyman, I received a full assurance of the correctness of my information with respect to the eager and successful arguments of Dr. Farre, to deprive the relief of his friend, of the annuity, which was so necessary to save her from absolute indigence.—With such an host of evidence upon that ground, could I entertain a doubt of the statements which I made in my letter to the Directors of Greenwich-Hospital?—In the Report upon which I am animadverting, and in which Mrs. Colkett's circular letter is pronounced "grossly incorrect," I am apprized of certain proceedings on the part of the London Eye Infirmary.—But of those proceedings or resolutions I never was aware until I read this Report. The circular of Mrs. Colkett was published four years ago.—It was distributed among all the subscribers of the London Eye Infirmary, as well as among many other individuals; and yet the medical officers, whose conduct it so particularly implicated, never printed or published any reply until within this last month. They cannot therefore be justly angry with me, or with any other person, who, in the absence of any opposing proof, or even of mere contradiction, should have decided according to the statement of Mrs. Colkett.

In answer to that statement, the Report alleges that Mrs. Colkett's annuity was granted with the "*understanding*" that it should be revoked in case she married a second time. But what are the words of the grant as stated

in this Report?—Why, these—"an annuity of 40*l.* net, for the term of her natural life, to be paid half-yearly by the Treasurer, under the direction of the Committee."—That the "*understanding*" alluded to is not expressed in the terms of this grant will, I presume, be promptly admitted; and that any such understanding is implied, it is impossible for any man acquainted with the English language seriously to contend.—Yet this grant was revoked, and, I repeat it, through the influence alone of the medical officers—for at the first meeting, which determined upon that revocation, it is admitted that only six gentlemen were present, namely, Dr. Farre, his father-in-law, his father-in-law's partner, Messrs. Travers and Battley, and their friend Mr. Sedgewick. Yet the authors of this Report are quite angry with me for calling it "*A Special Committee*."—They allege that it was a *Quarterly General Committee*.—Now they state, in p. 31, "that seventy-six gentlemen are summoned on all General Committees;" yet only these six happened to attend upon this particular occasion!—Does this marvellous occurrence manifest a fairness of disposition towards Mrs. Colkett?

But notwithstanding all these circumstances that I hope will acquit me of any disposition to deliberate misstatement, which I would disdain towards the worst enemy, when assured last November by Mr. Ralph Price, who is a member of the committee, that I had been misled by the statements of Mrs. Colkett, I immediately offered explanation. I wrote a letter to Mr. Price, which I requested him, and he promised, to lay before his colleagues of the Committee. In this letter I desired permission to adduce before the Committee, the evidence upon which my statements rested; adding, that if proved incorrect, I would willingly publish the expression of my regret at having been so misled. Mr. Price, did not lay this letter before the Committee, as he has informed me, but stated to them its contents. In this, however, like many other efforts which I have made to effect a fair



and honourable adjustment of this controversy, with the Medical Officers of the Institution, *I was entirely disappointed.*\*

The Report affirms that Mrs. Colkett "received the utmost kindness from the Medical Officers"—"that their care extended to the last hour of her life," and that "she was not exposed to the pressure of absolute want."<sup>1</sup> In reply to this affirmation I refer to the letters of Mrs. Colkett herself, which are entitled to, at least, as much credit as the self-praise of those Medical Officers.

But as to the Fourth Division of the Report, namely, "the conduct of the Medical Directors and Officers of the Infirmary," Dr. Farre, in the name of the Committee, endeavours to explain away the four successive attacks which have been made upon me by the Infirmary, or rather, by its Officers. Mr. Battley's printed Circular, which was sent in December 1814, to H. R. H. the Commander in Chief, the First Lord of the Admiralty, to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, to all the Subscribers of the London Eye Infirmary, to all the Profession in the Metropolis, as well as to the different Medical Reviews for insertion; Dr. Farre and Co. now disclaim, stating that it was not authorized by them or by the Infirmary. This uncalled for, obtrusive, insidious letter, which even Dr. Farre does not attempt to vindicate, although evidently willing to excuse it, because written against me, was, however, the source and origin of the whole controversy. Battley it was who flung the first

\* I also addressed a letter to Sir Charles Price in the month of December last, as President of the London Eye Infirmary, in which letter I requested to be present at one of the Meetings of the Committee then sitting, to examine the statements contained in my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, in order to give further explanation on some points, as well as to submit additional documentary evidence, which would enable the Committee to form a correct judgment of that publication previously to their coming to any conclusions thereupon.

stone, and yet his medical colleagues disavow his act while they applaud his motive. Upon this letter they observe that I comment at some length; that is, I prove it incontrovertibly, by written documents, to be replete with statements absolutely false. They state that it was written "without doubt, under strong excitement, from the persuasion that the honors and the credit which he (B.) considered due to the name of Mr. Saunders and to the Infirmary, were unduly assumed by Sir W. Adams." Dr. Farre declares that, "in writing his appeal, Mr. Battley discharged a duty." Now, although I have unanswerably shewn that, which even this report does not attempt to controvert, namely, the entire absence of truth in the charges this person endeavoured to establish against me, yet in the face of his conviction he is thus eulogized. "Mr. Battley's claims to the respect and acknowledgment of the Governors surpass any encomium in the power of your Committee to bestow!!" There is really something ludicrous in seeing Mr. Battley's own name, as one of the Committee who sign this eulogium.

This, however, is not the only instance of the ludicrous which this Report presents. For, it not only panegyricizes the Medical Officers individually, dwelling, for example, upon the "fortunate selection of Mr. Travers to succeed Mr. Saunders," at the Infirmary, and upon "the patient research and sound professional judgment of Dr. Farre," but it extols those Officers collectively, in the following lofty terms, "gentlemen distinguished by their public and private worth—by the liberal and extensive application of their eminent and scientific attainments—and by their private benevolence." Yet this Report is sanctioned, and signed, nay, I have every reason to believe, actually drawn up by the very persons whom it thus eulogizes!!!

But the fact is, that the Medical Officers are the authors and prompters of almost every proceeding at the Infirmary.

Through their management and influence the members of the Committee are appointed. This, indeed, is pretty clearly avowed by Mr. Battley, in a letter which he addressed to me, last October, in which he emphatically states, "I will take care you shall not be of that body (the General Committee) without another person being elected with you," intimating that some one decidedly hostile (perhaps Mr. Deane) should be appointed along with me. But let the reader estimate the confident assertion of a controlling power over the concerns of the Infirmary, which this letter from its Secretary implies. Upon reading it, I was myself somewhat astonished, and some of my friends thought it not genuine; I, however, put the letter into the hands of Mr. Byng last November, to shew to the General Committee, if he thought proper, and Mr. Battley has since publicly avowed it.

The authors of the Report labour to palliate their attacks upon me by referring to the grounds which they affect to say called upon or provoked them to make these attacks—but how do they succeed?—They pretend that their special Report in 1814 arose out of the "Official Papers."—Those Papers were not however published by me, but by the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, who avowedly "considered it their duty to give publicity to the Official Report of Proceedings upon a subject so interesting to humanity," and to "state well-authenticated facts respecting the comparative merits of the new and improved operations with the old mode of extraction." The omission of the names of Mr. Saunders, and of the Infirmary in these Official Papers, did not, as the authors of the Report allege, proceed from want of information, for I had previously laid before the Board, and presented to each of its members a copy of my work upon Diseases of the Eye, in which I had strongly testified to the merits of Mr. Saunders. In that work, indeed, I thus express myself respecting Mr. Saunders. "I trust I shall be ex-

"cused for introducing an acknowledgment of the obligations I owe to my deceased friend and preceptor. To his liberality I am indebted for that general knowledge of Diseases of the Eye, which has led to the practice of the operations recommended in this work."

But my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, which was not written for publication (although the Directors thought proper to publish it), related solely to operations for cataract or artificial pupil, not one of which had been taught me by Mr. Saunders. Any reference, therefore, to Mr. S. upon that occasion, would have been quite irrelevant; and I submit, that no liberal man would require that I should be silent with regard to improvements which experience and observation had enabled me to effect—because those improvements formed a deviation from the practice of my preceptor, who would, as I doubt not, were he now alive, most unequivocally approve of my system. Indeed, in the work to which I have just alluded, (p. 28), I published a letter, which I received from Mr. Saunders, only eight months before his death, wherein he thus congratulates me upon the success of one of these operations, that for cataract with adherent iris, and says—"I shall give it a fair trial in such probable cases as may come in my way."

The medical officers, however, will not, in their publications, tolerate the idea that any part of my system is an improvement. Now, if so, how came it that Turner †, whose case was mentioned in the official papers, had

\* By a mistake of my printer, this letter was dated the 19th instead of the 20th of June, 1809.

† The Report in a note states—"This case is not admitted." Now, I ask whether it can be denied. I feel confident that it cannot; and this refusal to admit what cannot safely be denied, sufficiently illustrates the ingenuousness of those from whom this Report emanated.



thirteen operations for cataract performed upon him at the infirmary; namely, seven operations upon one eye and six upon the other, but without effect, while I perfectly restored his sight by a single operation? But to another patient of the London Eye Infirmary, who had been operated upon for cataract no less than seventeen times in that infirmary, namely, ten times on one eye and seven on another, I restored sight by a single operation on each. This was in the case of a child of about nine years of age, who had been the patient of Mr. Travers\*.

I refer to these cases, to maintain my own character against the wanton and illiberal attacks of the Medical Officers of the London Eye Infirmary, who are actuated by motives which they would not feel it prudent to avow. Mr. Battley's motive is, however, sufficiently obvious. The letter of Mr. Corlett, which is already before the public, accounts for the hostility of Mr. Travers; that of his friend and colleague, Dr. Farre, has been unremitting since the death of Mr. Saunders; and his letters in the recent publication, pretty clearly evince what are his feelings towards me.

To shew that Mr. Saunders was adverse to me for a long time before his death, and to induce the public to believe that I did not deserve his friendship, the authors of the Report give a garbled extract from one of my private letters.—Upon the publication of a private letter, addressed to an

\* In my recent publication upon Cataract, I refer to another case of a child, labouring under the same species of cataract, whose parents having watched the progress of my operation upon this patient of Mr. Travers, and witnessed its successful issue, placed their child under my care. This case was operated upon in the presence of Dr. Bain. The cataracts were completely removed in ten days by a single operation on each eye, and at the end of three weeks, the patient had recovered sufficiently to leave town.

individual now no more, I need not make any comment—for comment enough must occur to any mind educated in gentlemanlike notions, or accustomed to regard just principles.—But the authors of the Report are mistaken in asserting, that Mr. Saunders was irreconcilably prejudiced against me; because, in a publication at Exeter, I had designated myself as his assistant at the London Eye Infirmary.—For, in reply to my explanation for so designating myself, without previously asking his permission, and not, as those authors assert, in defiance of his refusal to permit me so to do, I was favoured with a letter from Mr. Saunders, from which the following is an extract:—

"MR. DEAR FRIEND, I have been very much gratified by your letter, which has restored my former sentiments. I have freely declared the dissatisfaction which I felt: I am no hypocrite, and you may therefore truly believe my reconciliation equally sincere—let not another word be said on the subject."

In a subsequent letter Mr. Saunders thus expresses himself:—"But, my dear friend, your statement of being an Assistant and Pupit at the Infirmary, has caused more embarrassment to me than you are aware of—and I did not object to it through caprice, whatever your friend, Mr. Milford, may be inclined to think of it. Our Committee, to guard against my illness, and some with a view, perhaps, to ease me of some labours, have more than once, and some rather anxiously—proposed an assistant, which, for reasons I need not mention, I have opposed. Now the suspicion of some has been excited, that I have opposed their intentions on interested motives, that I might turn the appointment to my own emolument,† and that I have, to this degree, deviated from my profession of serving the charity disinterestedly.—I only therefore require, that in any publication which will admit of it, it may be expressed, that you had the advantages of an Assistant, through my friendship and inclination to advance your pursuits—that our Committee may see it in a proper view."

Yours faithfully,  
J. C. SAUNDERS.  
Sept. 1st, 1808.

\* Are those who felt so liberally towards Mr. Saunders among the Junto who now slander my character.

† The originals of these letters, so fully displaying the falsehood of my adversaries, I am ready to shew to any gentleman acquainted with the manuscript of Mr. Saunders.



With the request of Mr. Saunders I complied, on the first opportunity, namely, the publication of the Report of the West of England Eye Infirmary, in November, 1809.\*

The framers of this Report, when they unjustly accused Mr. Saunders of having withdrawn his confidence from me, of an entire change of sentiments towards me, were not perhaps themselves aware, that they were imputing to his conduct a system of confirmed duplicity, because passion is indiscriminating, and their resentment towards me is uncontrollable.

The Committee affect to dispute my assertion, that "as none of those now practising as Oculists had ever seen Mr. Saunders operate for Cataract, I am the legitimate successor of that eminent Oculist, declaring, that I was not made acquainted with his improvements later than 1807."

But I am in possession of a letter from Mr. Saunders at the close of 1808, wherein he says, "If I had had any thing of importance beyond what you have seen me practise in the department of the Oculist, I should not have delayed to communicate it to you."

From this extract, combined with the other quotations which I have given from the correspondence of Mr. Saunders, his disposition to communicate to me any improvements which he made will, I think, hardly be doubted.

Denying then the declaration of my adversaries, and repelling the insinuation that I ever applied through Mr. John Milford for that place at the London Eye Infirmary, which was recently occupied by Mr. Travers, having the authority of Mr. Milford for thus publicly asserting that he neither was requested by me to make, nor did make, any such application, I still maintain the

\* See p. 11.

justice of my pretension to the character of Mr. Saunders's successor.—Like him I served a regular apprenticeship to the late Mr. Hill, of Barnstaple—like him, I completed my studies at Guy's and St. Thomas's Hospital.—I had seen the whole of his practice for more than twelve months, during which I assisted at his operations, both public and private. I had also most extensively carried his practice into effect, as well as materially improved upon it at the West of England Eye Infirmary—while Mr. Travers, when appointed by the London Eye Infirmary to succeed Mr. Saunders, had little or no practical knowledge in diseases of the eye;—He had had, indeed, no personal connexion whatever with Mr. Saunders, and therefore had to learn that gentleman's practice at second-hand.

Between Mr. Travers's claims therefore and mine, I shall leave it to others than the framers of the late Report to determine, while the profession will decide who has, since the death of Mr. Saunders, contributed most to the improvement of Ophthalmic Surgery.

But further the Committee declare, that they can find no trace of any correspondence between Mr. Saunders and me, later than May, 1809.

I have now before me from Mr. Saunders, a letter, dated June 29th, 1809, which begins with excusing himself for not answering my preceding letter sooner; stating the shock he had received by the sudden death of his sister. And this very letter, he is observed, wherein Mr. Saunders addresses me as usual, by the affectionate appellation of "my Dear Friend," was written *within five weeks* after I had made to him the proposal of communicating to the Commander-in-Chief, his practice for the cure of Ophthalmia, which proposal, the Medical Officers would have his friends and the public suppose Mr. Saunders considered as an ungenerous attempt on my part, to anticipate him in the communication of his practice. But the mind

of Mr. Saunders was as incapable of the low illiberal jealousy, as of the downright duplicity which, in their eager attempts to injure my character, his colleagues would impute to his conduct.

After declining to permit my communication of the discovery alluded to, I addressed to him a letter of explanation so satisfactory, that he promptly gave me credit for my motives in having made the proposal, and justly appreciated my ready compliance with his wishes. Our friendship continued without interruption. Within a fortnight, indeed, before his death, he sent me, through a gentleman of Exeter, a subscriber to the West of England Eye Infirmary, a particular application for the eye, accompanied by a letter, couched in those terms of kindness which he was accustomed to employ. But Mr. Milford, whose letter upon the subject is inserted in my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, and who had a conversation with Mr. Saunders three days before his death, testifies to that excellent man's unabated solicitude for my welfare.

With regard to the editing of the work of Mr. Saunders, I should deem it absurd to reason with those who could think me capable of the infamous as well as truly ridiculous proposal mentioned by Mr. Deane—for common sense would forbid the belief of such a story—no man, indeed, in the habit of examining probabilities, could attend to it for a moment.

Mr. Deane says, "that I informed him Mr. Saunders's work was in a state of great forwardness, if not already in the press; that I considered it would be most advantageous to me to have the credit of it—to have my name inserted in lieu of that of Mr. Saunders, and to be considered the author; adding, that if those desirable points could be obtained, I would readily pay Mrs. Saunders one hundred guineas, or whatever sum *her friends* might consider an equivalent." Now, to obtain for me those

advantages, which it was alledged I sought, the affair must necessarily be transacted with the utmost secrecy; and to prevail on Mrs. Saunders to accept the sum offered, for surrendering the fame and honour of her husband, extraordinary delicacy must be observed, lest the friends of Mr. Saunders should have any intimation of what was going forward. How then was all this to be accomplished? Dr. Farre was in possession of the manuscript; he was, according to Mr. Deane's statement, to be made the accomplice of my design, and was to "assist me in the completion of the work;" but if he withheld his assistance, "Mr. Johnson, of Exeter, (another friend of Mr. Saunders) was to become my coadjutor;" and if "one hundred guineas" was not judged sufficient, "*Mrs. Saunders's friends*" were to decide upon an equivalent!"

Here then is a complication of machinery, and a variety of dramatic persons, for the execution of a plot, which must still fail, unless secure of profound silence and secrecy. But were even all the persons who were to co-operate with me to preserve silence, still I could not calculate upon arrogating through such surreptitious means the merit of Mr. Saunders's work, because, four months before his death, in my letter to the West of England Eye Infirmary, already quoted, (p. 11.) I had expressed my expectation of this work, enumerating the discoveries which Mr. S. proposed to promulgate in that publication, while Mr. Saunders himself had, ten months before his death, announced his intention of publishing it.

How then could any attempt to make the unworthy use of this work, which is attributed to me, possibly escape detection?—Or can any person of common discernment suppose me capable of making such a proposition to a boy of twenty years of age, and a junior clerk in the Bank of England—especially after I had been apprized by that respectable gentleman, Mr. John Milford, of the extreme

prejudice against me in the mind of Dr. Farre, who had this work in his possession?

Is it then, I say, *possible*, that I could put my character in such a state of jeopardy, upon the speculation of obtaining such an impracticable object?

I wrote a full and explanatory letter to Dr. Farre, upon this subject as soon as I became acquainted with it, which I requested him to lay before the Committee of the London Eye Infirmary. This letter, after perusing it, Mr. John Milford forwarded to Dr. Farre, who now denies having received it. Letters sent by post generally reach their destination; or, if not, are returned to those by whom they are written, and certainly it has never been returned to me.

The proposal for editing Mr. Saunders's work, which I actually made through Mr. John Milford, would have been much more productive to Mrs. Saunders, than was the course pursued under the direction of Dr. Farre. Mrs. Colkett (Saunders) herself confessed her misunderstanding upon this subject in a letter to me, from which the following is an extract:

"Your intentions I cannot but consider have been misunderstood. Common justice, as well as gratitude, compel me to declare the same. I am heartily concerned to have been the cause of dissension between yourself and the Committee of the London Eye Infirmary, but hope the matter cannot possibly injure you in the slightest degree, and may yet be amicably adjusted. For my own part I am more than satisfied; grateful and I for your continued friendship, which must have been wholly disinterested, or you could not so readily have forgiven my late conduct. I sadly misunderstood your former proposal, respecting the manuscript of my dear late husband—which causes me the more readily now to credit your integrity."

It is curious to observe the strain in which Dr. Farre adverts to his services in preparing and disposing of the work of Mr. Saunders. To save me from any charge of perversion, I shall quote his own words.

"Copy of Inquiry made by letter, addressed by Dr. Farre to Messrs. Longman and Co., who published Mr. Saunders's posthumous work.

"Mr. Saunders's posthumous work consists of eight plates, and 216 pages of letter-press, besides 43 pages of introductory matter. Of this work Mr. Saunders had prepared for publication, three figures, constituting a part only of one plate, and 43 pages of letter-press.

"1st. What then, Gentlemen, would you have given for that part of the work which the author had prepared?

"2dly. Of that work, as completed by the editor, 750 copies were published, and all the expenses were defrayed by your house. At the end of eighteen months, 631 out of the 750 copies were sold, and a profit of 134*l.* was paid to Mrs. Colkett, besides 50*l.* for the copy-right.

"Copy of the reply.

"LONDON, 17th Feb. 1814.

"DEAR SIR,

"In compliance with your request, we herewith transmit the following answers to your queries respecting the publication of Mr. Saunders on the Eye.

"Mr. Saunders's posthumous work.

"1st. We should not have purchased, and it is doubtful if we should have taken the expenses on ourselves, of the work, as it was completed, &c. &c.

"2dly. The above is doubtless a handsome return, and without the exertions of the Committee, we consider it improbable that any profits would have arisen from the speculation.

"Mrs. Saunders having received 134*l.* 5*s.* 2*d.* profit from the work, without consulting the editor, *imprudently sold her right and interest in 119 remaining copies, on which all the expenses had been paid, except on the plates for 50 copies; together with her right and interest in all future editions of the work, for the sum of fifty pounds.* Messrs. Longman and Co., who were the purchasers, have since acted in the most handsome and liberal manner, and had Mrs. Saunders survived, an effort would have been made to direct the liberality of that respectable house to her advantage."



It appears that he who over-strains ingenuity and perverts facts, to fix upon me the imputation of desiring to depreciate the fame of Mr. Saunders, has no objection whatever, to say the least of it, very largely to *participate* of that fame. He declares "that which Mr. Saunders had prepared for publication, consisted of only 48 pages, and three figures forming a part only of one plate; but that he extended it to 216 pages and 8 plates." His bookseller states, and he himself thinks proper to publish, that "he (the bookseller) would not have purchased the work in the state in which it was left by Mr. Saunders;" adding, "that without the exertions of the Committee, he considers it improbable that any profits would have arisen from the speculation."

Mrs. Saunders, therefore, "received for her husband's work but 154*l.* profit upon 631 copies, and then sold her right and interest in 119 remaining copies, upon which all the expenses had been paid, except on the plates for fifty copies; together with her right to and interest in all future editions of the work, for the sum of "50*l.*" She received from the committee of the London Eye Infirmary a gratuity of 50*l.* and two years' annuity of 40*l.*, making in the whole a sum of 314*l.*

Had I been permitted to edit Mr. Saunders's work, my proposal was to give Mrs. Saunders one hundred pounds—with the whole of the proceeds from its publication; and to add to Mr. Saunders's manuscript the result of my own experience, with respect to those diseases treated of by him. It was also my intention to add the discoveries and improvements which I had effected in the treatment of other diseases of the eye, and which I published the year after the appearance of Mr. Saunders's work. Upwards of six hundred copies of this work have been already disposed of.

The reader will determine which would have been more advantageous for Mrs. Saunders, that her husband's post-

humous work should have been edited by Dr. Farre or by me\*.

Having, I presume, satisfactorily repelled the charges adduced against me in the recent Report, as well as established my veracity in regard to the statements contained in my Letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, I cannot think it necessary to trespass longer upon the reader's attention.

I have shewn that the Medical Officers who framed the Report alluded to, have most unjustly censured my conduct. They attribute to me a disposition to depreciate Mr. Saunders, whom I have never ceased to praise, and to injure the London Eye Infirmary, which I have always wished to serve. They would use the character of Mr. Saunders and the Infirmary, as a shield for themselves and as a sword against me. Their misrepresentation, with regard to both these points, would alone serve to illustrate their character and object. For where writers resort to misrepresentation, the conclusion is natural, that they are themselves sensible of the want of any valid grounds of attack.

But the art which suggested the assertion of my enemies, as to a *presumed* hostility on my part towards Mr. Saunders and the Infirmary, is quite obvious. They wished and hoped, through the well-deserved popularity of Mr. Saunders and the Infirmary, to raise a cry against

\* As a proof that I was correct in my assertion, that Mr. Saunders's work was published in an injudiciously expensive form, whereby its sale was retarded, Dr. Farre says a third edition is now called for.

The second edition, belonging to Messrs. Longman, was published less expensively than the first; and without any exertions on the part of the Committee, it appears, has been sold in little more than two years; while the first was not disposed of within double that time.

my character, by imputing to me a disposition to injure both. They would, indeed, ascribe to me the disregard of truth and of gratitude, especially with regard to Mr. Saunders, whose skill and humanity are the subjects of glowing eulogium, when it is their object to traduce me as his presumed censor, but whose fame they would let down very slyly and smoothly, when they desire to advance the reputation of Dr. Farre, or the extent of their own influence, as the patrons of his work!

Now, as to the allegation that I have misrepresented the case of Mrs. Saunders, my statement, I repeat, was founded upon the evidence of Mrs. Saunders herself, accompanied by corroborative testimony. If I were misled by that evidence, no candid, considerate man, would therefore condemn me, for I should be merely in the condition of a juror pronouncing a verdict upon false testimony. But with regard to the evidence of Mrs. Saunders, I put this dilemma—Either that evidence is entitled to credit, or it is not—if the former, the statement which my adversaries call “false and calumnious,” is completely substantiated; if the latter, what becomes of the authority of the letter from Mrs. Saunders, which my adversaries insert in the Appendix to their report (p. 77); which, by the by, is the only testimony they adduce of their kindness and humanity towards that Lady; and which letter, it will be observed, was written immediately after the publication of her husband's work; before the annuity was withdrawn from her, and before she suffered the distress consequent upon that act.

But independently of the evidence of Mrs. Saunders I have in the very Report upon which I am remarking, amply sufficient testimony, from the pen of my own censors, to maintain the principal allegations which I made respecting that Lady, in my Letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital. I alledged, first, that Mrs. Saunders had, upon the death of her husband, been granted by the London Eye

Infirmary an annuity of forty pounds a year, “for and during her natural life.”—secondly, that this annuity was withdrawn on her second marriage, through the influence of the Medical Officers of the Infirmary.—thirdly, that Mrs. Saunders did not receive from the publication of her husband's work, such an amount of profit as she was entitled to expect.—fourthly, that she suffered great distress—and all these allegations are admitted in the Report before me, either expressly, or by implication. The first allegation is distinctly stated; for it is absurd to argue, that the words, “for her natural life, under the direction of the Committee;” instead of the words used by Mrs. Saunders, “for and during her natural life,” materially alter the nature of the grant; and, upon the first revocation of the annuity, it is admitted, that only the six gentlemen whom I had named, were present.

I asserted, that one of these six gentlemen canvassed the Governors of the Infirmary to attend the meeting, subsequently called to ratify this revocation. The Report declares, “that this allegation is unreservedly and wholly denied by the gentleman, understood to be alluded to.” I have, however, the authority of one of the Governors of the Infirmary, who is a gentleman well known to the majority of the Committee, to declare, that which he is ready to testify, namely, “that he was not alone so canvassed by “this gentleman; but farther, that he was introduced by “this gentleman to Dr. Farre himself, on the above “occasion.”

Then, as to the third allegation, the framers of the Report completely confirm it; for they distinctly alledge, that Mrs. Saunders, without consulting the editor, “imprudently” sold her interest in one hundred and nineteen remaining copies of her husband's work, together with her right and interest on all future editions of the work, for the sum of fifty pounds. This sale sufficiently demon-



strates the distress of Mrs. Saunders, and makes out the truth of my fourth allegation, independently of the other evidence which I have cited.

What then have I stated, deserving of the epithets, "false and calumnious?" If any such charge can be substantiated against me, I call upon my opponents to meet me before any assembly of respectable gentlemen, and make out their case without any further controversy. I challenge my adversaries to a fair trial of the questions in dispute between us. Let neither call for a decision upon *ex-parte* statements, or partial views; but let both meet, face to face, before a society of gentlemen, willing to hear both sides, and to decide fairly.

Let this meeting take place, if my adversaries please, in the very committee-room of the London Eye Infirmary. The statement of evidence, and the investigation of facts, will not occupy much time; and, after due consideration, let such tribunal determine to which party the epithets of "false and calunnious" are really applicable.—I am willing to abide by the result. I feel satisfied that I should be able to convince those very gentlemen, whose names are coupled with those of my adversaries in the Report under consideration, that they have been as much misled as the gentlemen of the former Committee, who have now withdrawn from the connexion.

But I cannot doubt that the Governors and Subscribers at large of the London Eye Infirmary will feel themselves called upon to mark their disapprobation of this, the third essay of their Medical Officers, to abuse the benevolent character and just influence of that noble institution, by rendering its name a passport for slander,—an auxiliary for persecution,—by perverting its popularity into an engine for the gratification of the spirit and the extension of the currency of private pique and professional jealousy.

#### POSTSCRIPT.

THE disposition of Dr. Farre towards me, and his regard to candour, the most cursory reader may decide upon, from the letter which he inserts in the Appendix to the Report, and which is addressed to Sir Charles Price. In his *impartial* examination of my "Claims to an improvement on the Operation of Mr. Saunders for the Cure of Ophthalmia"—Dr. Farre, to support his own conclusion, adds the authority of Mr. Travers and Mr. Lawrence, stating that "*they find nothing in this alleged improvement but a slight variation in the mode of carrying into effect the principle of treatment pointed out by Mr. Saunders.*"

But let the reader judge of the Doctor's candour from what follows:—

He gives garbled extracts from the opinions of the medical gentlemen appointed by Government, to examine the merits of my practice, in order to prove that they were not agreed on the question of improvement in substituting the knife for the scissors. These extracts are, indeed, culled with so much art, that by breaking the context the purport of each opinion is quite perverted. With respect to Sir Henry Hallford's opinion; he says—"*Now, although the improvement is actually asserted, we are to consider the words as expressing not the fact, but his opinion, which was evidently formed from the few cases, on which cases only Sir W. Adams's operation had been tried.*" Upon what other cases, may I ask, was Sir H. Hallford to form his opinion?

Dr. Farre asserts, that "Dr. Baillie does not go the same length as Sir H. Halford; but says that his (my) mode of operating by a knife of his own invention *promises* to be much more efficient."—Dr. Baillie's words, are "*I think he (Sir W. Adams) has the merit of introducing a practice*



"which is likely to be highly useful in a particular chronic state of ophthalmia."—"As the late Mr. Saunders proposed to accomplish the same object by scissors, and actually performed the operation in two cases, the invention of Sir W. Adams cannot be considered as quite original. His mode of operating however by a knife of his own invention promises to be much more efficient, and to be more expeditious in accomplishing the cure than that of Mr. Saunders, and likely to preserve the eyes of many individuals which otherwise would have been lost."

With regard to Mr. Cooper's opinion, Dr. Farre states, that "instead of asserting that it is an improvement, he simply says that the knife appears to be the preferable instrument." Mr. Cooper's words are—"To effect this purpose (the removal of the granulations) the knife appears to be the preferable instrument, as it completely removes the whole of the diseased part, and produces the most expeditious, as well as the most perfect, cure."

Dr. Farre affirms that "Mr. Abernethy, far from giving Sir W. Adams either the merit of originality or improvement, is simply of opinion that his practice is meritorious, and deserving of a fair and prudent trial." Mr. Abernethy's words are "Sir W. Adams candidly acknowledges that he derived both his opinions and the principle of his practice from Mr. Saunders; and from strongly perceiving the necessity of smoothing the inner surface of the eyelids, he was led to undertake more bold and decisive measures for this purpose, than would in general have been adopted." After stating in what my practice consists, Mr. Abernethy adds "it appears to me to have restored a useful degree of sight to several patients, whose cases would in general have been considered desperate; I am, therefore, of opinion that the practice pursued by Sir W. Adams, in the third stage of these cases of

"ophthalmia, is meritorious and deserving in general of a fair and prudent trial \*."

But the perusal of the whole of the Ophthalmic Report, which is inserted (p. 25.) in my letter to the Directors of Greenwich Hospital, will fully illustrate the feeling and principle of Dr. Farre. He might as well have selected half a sentence as an exposition of the whole, as to have put the contents of that Report in the shape he has done. His purpose was to present a paraphrased version under the guise of literal quotation, with a view to produce an impression injurious to my professional character; while the fact is, that the Ophthalmic Committee decidedly pronounced in favour of my practice.

Doctor Farre declares that "the case of Mr. Corlett, of Homerton, has been published by me under gross misrepresentation." In compliance with the request of Mr. Corlett, I insert the following letter, which I received within these few days.

Homerton, May 11, 1818.

"DEAR SIR,

"I had this day a pamphlet put into my hand entitled "Report of the Committee of the London Eye Infirmary, occasioned by the false and calumnious statements of Sir W. Adams, &c." In this Report there is a letter addressed to the Chairman of that Committee by Dr. Farre, in which he takes an unwarrantable liberty with my name † when alluding to my letter, dated February 1815, addressed to you, which he alleges "is published under gross misrepresentations."

"That letter being inserted, without comment on your part, the misrepresentations" if any, must be made by me.

"As a friend and warm supporter of that laudable Institution the

\* In a letter which I addressed to Mr. Abernethy the day preceding that on which his opinion was given, I stated that I had found Mr. Saunders's practice in this stage of the disease, "so painful, slow, and inefficient, that I endeavoured to substitute some other mode of treatment, by which these objections might be avoided." The first sentence is evidently in reply to this part of my letter, and expresses his opinion that my practice was superior to that of Mr. Saunders.

† See page 101.

London Eye Infirmary. I take leave to refer Dr. Farre to his particular friend and late colleague Mr. Travers, who well knows the truth of every thing in that letter; and as I have reason to believe that Mr. Travers is not unacquainted with what is due to the character of a gentleman and a man of honour, he will not hesitate in giving ample testimony to the correctness of that simple narrative of facts. But if his recollection should fail him on any one point, the servants who attended me at the Guildhall Coffee-House, can (if applied to) assist him in refreshing his memory.

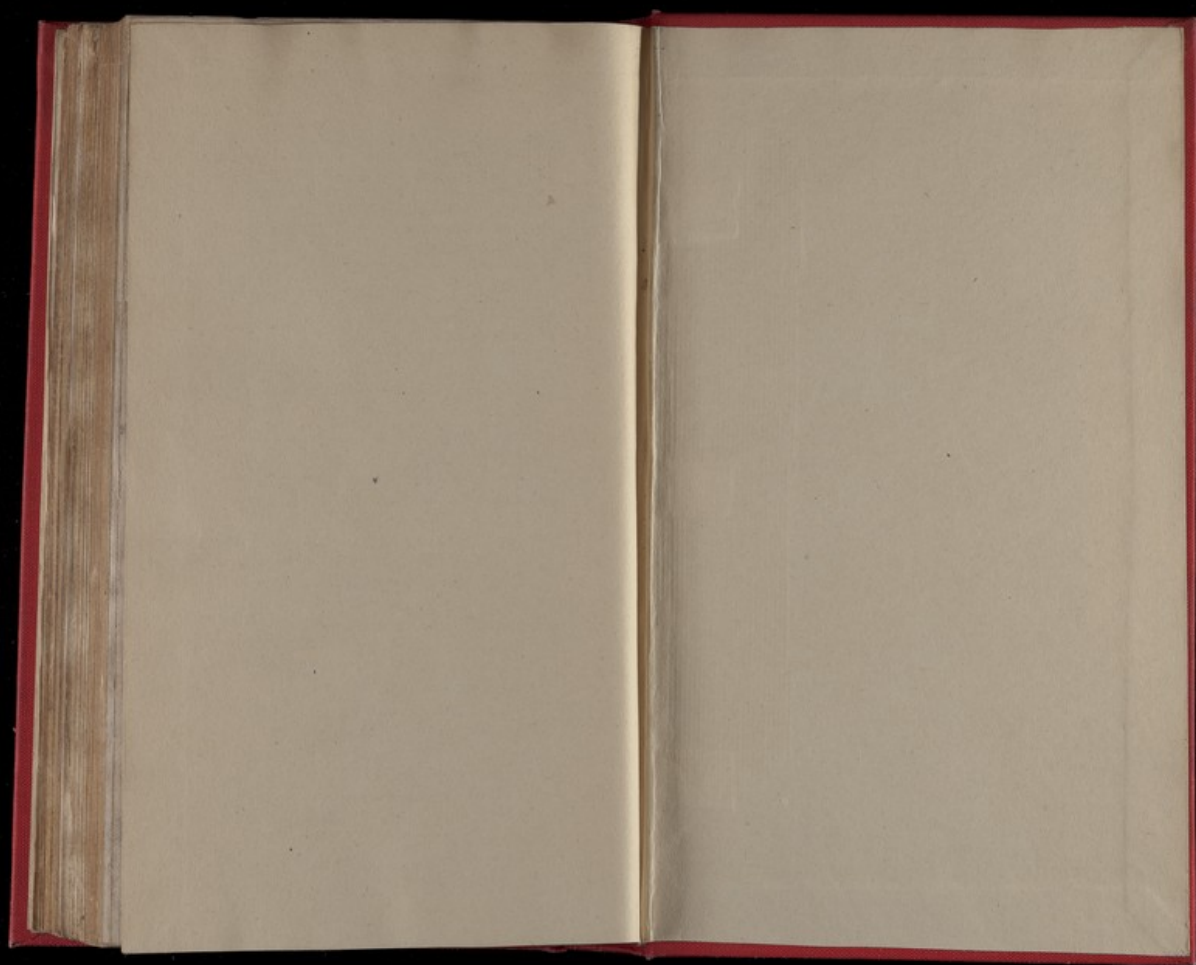
I am, Dear Sir,

Your obedient servant,

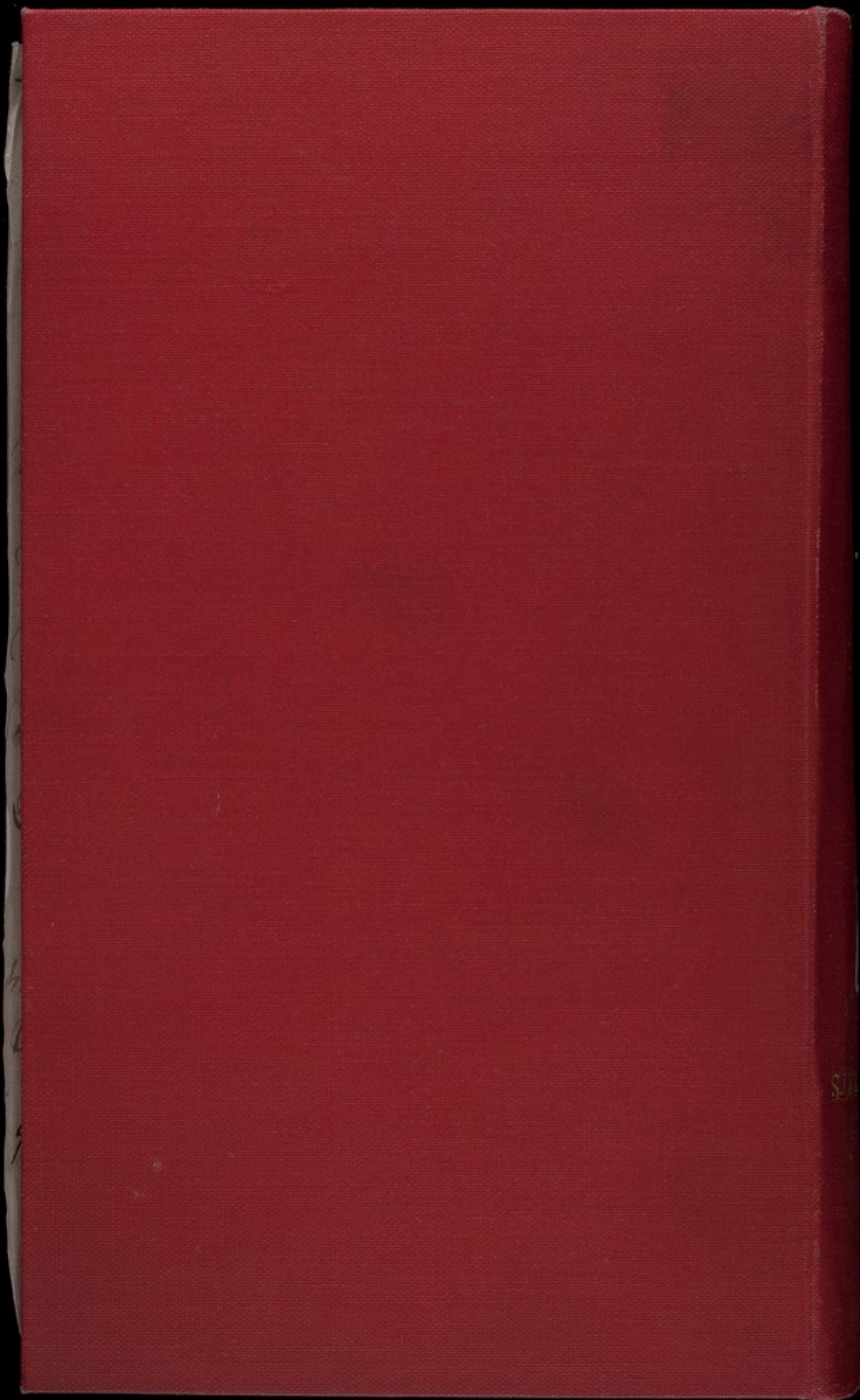
THOS. CORLETT.

"P. S. Should you deem it proper to take public notice of this pamphlet, I request you will do me the favour of giving a place to the above letter, as a caution to Dr. Farre never again to take an improper liberty with my name."

One observation more on Dr. Farre's letters, and I have done. He appears to think that he has not effected quite enough on the present occasion. Prudently avoiding all discussion with regard to the *emetic* and the *nauseating* practice, which he formerly pronounced to be the same, he says, "I shall reserve for the third edition of Mr. Saunders's posthumous work, now called for by the profession, the consideration of certain other points, in which I have also to contrast the merit of Mr. Saunders with the pretensions of Sir W. Adams, especially in the use of Emetics, as one of the means of curing the acute stage of the Egyptian Ophthalmia." Thus Doctor Farre threatens me with another attack. As Author—Editor—or Physician—he resolves not to relax his systematic hostility to my character. But, having so fully exposed the injustice of his aspersions, and the character of his misrepresentations, the public and the profession must, I am persuaded, approve my determination to take no further literary notice of him or his productions.







PAMPHLETS

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