

**Report of the Committee of the London Infirmary for Curing Diseases of the Eye, occasioned by the false and caluminous statements contained in a letter addressed by Sir William Adams to the Right Honourable and Honourable the Directors of Greenwich Hospital.**

**Contributors**

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**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.

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

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1818.



# REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE LONDON INFIRMARY FOR CURING DISEASES OF THE EYE.

At a Special Meeting of the General Com-  
mittee, held at the Infirmary, on the 21st No-  
vember, 1817.

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

## AT THE CHAIR.

PRESENT,

JOHN ANSEY, Esq. M.P.	JOHN BAINBRIDGE, Esq.
JOHN HODKINSON, Esq.	RICHARD BATTLE, Esq.
JOHN HOKNER, Esq.	WILLIAM BENNETT, Esq.
W. LAWRENCE, Esq. F.R.S.	MICHAEL BLAND, Esq.
BERNARD OLIVE, Esq.	BRILLFORD BRIGHT, Esq.
ROBERT PITCHES, Esq.	JOHN BUNSTED, Esq.
RALPH PRICE, Esq.	GEORGE BYNG, Esq. M.P.
THOMAS ROWCROFT, Esq.	JOHN CLARKE, Esq.
BENJ. TRAVERS, Esq. F.R.S.	WILLIAM CRAWLEY, Esq.
FREDERICK TYRRELL, Esq.	JOHN DEAN, Esq.
RICHARD WAGE, Esq.	JOHN RICHARD FARRE, M.D.
THOS. WARRINGTON, Esq.	

A pamphlet, entitled, "A Letter from the Honorable and Honorable the Directors of  
J. D. Dewick, Printer,  
46, Barbican.

# **LONDON INFIRMARY**

## **FOR CURING DISEASES OF THE EYE.**

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AT 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.

JOHN HARTSHORN, Esq.  
JOHN HODGKINSON, Esq.  
JOHN HORNER, Esq.  
WM. LAWRENCE, Esq. F. R. S.  
JEREMIAH OLIVE, Esq.  
ROBERT PITCHES, Esq.  
RALPH PRICE, Esq.  
THOMAS ROWCROFT, Esq.  
BENJ. TRAVERS, Esq. F. R. S.  
FREDERICK TYRRELL, Esq.  
RICHARD WACE, Esq.  
THOS. WARBURTON, Esq.

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



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.  
JOHN BAINBRIDGE, Esq.  
RICHARD BATTLE, Esq.  
MICHAEL BLAND, Esq.  
WILLIAM BRYDON, Esq.  
JOHN CAZENOVE, Esq.  
THOS. CHURCHYARD, Esq.  
GEORGE CLARK, Esq.  
WILLIAM CRAWLEY, Esq.  
J. D. CROSKEY, Esq.

D. D. DAVIS, M. D.  
ROBERT GOOCH, M. D.  
JOHN HODGKINSON, Esq.  
SOLOMON HOUGHAM, Esq.  
S. S. HUNT, Esq.  
RALPH PRICE, Esq.  
HARRY SEDGWICK, Esq.  
JOHN SMITH, Esq.  
JOHN TWEMLOW, Esq.  
RICHARD WACE, Esq.

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

THOS. AMSINCK, Esq.  
MATTH. HEATHFIELD, Esq.  
RICHD. HEATHFIELD, Esq.  
JOHN HORNER, Esq.

JOHN MACKIE, Esq.  
JEREMIAH OLIVE, Esq.  
ROBERT PITCHES, 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. CROSKY, 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

OF THE

## SPECIAL COMMITTEE.

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YOUR 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.



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 it's 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, }	1970 . . .
1809 . . . . . }	
From the 25th March, 1809, to }	1942 . . .
the 31st December, 1809 . . . }	
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 . . .

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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 it's 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 it's 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.

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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 it's 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.”

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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:—

	£.	s.	d.
From funded property and money } on bond . . . . . }	123	17	4
Annuity from the Infirmary . . .	40	0	0
Annuity from Mr. Colkett, her } father, during his pleasure, and } also dependant upon his life. . }	50	0	0

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 its 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 it's earliest friends, and they have been it's 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, disa-



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.

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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 it's 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 it's funds, by his individual contribution, and by the interest which he has excited in it's 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 it's 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* [I].

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.

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[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.*

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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 deplores, 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.

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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 Dis-  
eases of the Eye.*

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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.

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[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.

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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 do-  
mestic happiness, and for your success in professional  
exertions,

I am, dear Farre,

Yours, sincerely,

O. S. SAUNDERS.

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[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 kind-  
ness 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. Ansley, 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.		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. Sperling ....	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. Macauley .....	1	R. Wace.....	2
J. Cohen .....	1	J. Mackie .....	1	J. G. Wrench ....	1
J. Collins .....	1	H. B. Meredith....	1	R. Redman .....	1

Copies.		Copies.		Copies.	
T. J. Armiger ....	1	A. Don .....	1	J. M'Creery .....	1
R. H. Beaumont ..	1	T. Hullah .....	1	Rev. C. Pryce ....	1
C. Beckett.....	1	J. Hartshorn.....	1	B. Pead .....	2
G. Birkbeck, M. D. 1		J. Innes.....	1	T. Ragget .....	2
N. Birch .....	1	J. F. D. Jones, M.D. 2		G. L. Reed.....	1
Mrs. P. Birch ....	1	T. Keating .....	1	J. Taylor .....	3
J. Curry, M. D....	1	J. Laird, M. D....	1	A. T. Thomson....	1
S. Cater.....	1	— Lochner .....	1	D. Wace.....	1
H. Cline, jun.....	1	Miss Hutton .....	2	J. Weston.....	1
T. Churchyard ....	1	T. Moss.....	1	M. Whitelock ....	1
R. P. Cruden.....	1	S. H. Murley.....	1	G. Young .....	1

Copies were also delivered, under the Direction of the Committee, to the following Gentlemen, who are not Governors.

Copies.		Copies.		Copies.	
C. R. Aikin .....	1	— Hosegood.....	1	I. F. Pott .....	1
B. B. Acworth ....	1	— Hopwood .....	1	— Robinson, M. D. 1	
A. Bell .....	2	H. Hensted .....	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. Yelloly, M. D... 1	
— Fouch .....	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.

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[F] page 37.

*Extract from a Letter from the Rev. O. S. Saunders to  
Dr. Farre.*

*Barnstaple, 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.

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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.

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[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.

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[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 Halford 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 Halford’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 sprung, 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.











