

**A brief memoir of Sir William Blizard ... surgeon ... read before the Hunterian Society, October 7th, 1835, with additional particulars of his life and writings / by William Cooke.**

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**Publication/Creation**

London : Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, [1835]

**Persistent URL**

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THE HARTFORD OBSERVER  
PUBLISHED WEEKLY  
By the HARTFORD OBSERVER CO. (INC.)  
14061 6219119  
Nov. 22, 2013

A  
BRIEF MEMOIR  
OF

SIR WILLIAM B.  
F.R.S. L.

SURGEON AND VICE-PR  
LONDON ROSE

READ BEFORE THE HUN

OCTOBER 26, 18

WITH ADDITIONAL PARTS

HIS LIFE AND

BY  
WILLIAM CO

APPROVED BY THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF MEDICINE, 1888  
EDITION OF AN ADDENDUM IN

LONDON:  
LONGMAN, REES, ORME,  
PATERNOSTER-HOUSE

A  
BRIEF MEMOIR  
OF  
SIR WILLIAM BLIZARD, K<sub>NT</sub>.

F. R. S. L. & E.

SURGEON AND VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE  
LONDON HOSPITAL,

READ BEFORE THE HUNTERIAN SOCIETY,

OCTOBER 7th, 1835,

WITH ADDITIONAL PARTICULARS OF

HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS.

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BY

WILLIAM COOKE,

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, SECRETARY TO THE HUNTERIAN SOCIETY,  
EDITOR OF AN ABRIDGEMENT OF MORGAGNI, &c.

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London:

LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, & CO.  
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

*price 3*



BRIEF MEMOIR

OF  
SIR WILLIAM BLAIR, KNT.

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BY  
JAMES H. LEE, ESQ.

AS RECTOR AND PRESIDENT OF THE  
HOSPITAL

READ BEFORE THE HUNTIAN SOCIETY  
HUNTIAN SOCIETY

HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS

BY  
JAMES H. LEE, ESQ.

AS RECTOR AND PRESIDENT OF THE  
HOSPITAL

WILLIAM COOTE

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AS RECTOR AND PRESIDENT OF THE  
HOSPITAL

TO

DR. BABINGTON, PRESIDENT,

TO THE VICE-PRESIDENTS AND COUNCIL,

AND TO THE OTHER MEMBERS

OF THE

HUNTERIAN SOCIETY,

WHOSE AMICABLE MEETINGS AND DISCUSSIONS HAVE GREATLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE

DIFFUSION OF PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE AMONG THEMSELVES,

AND TO THE BENEFIT OF SOCIETY :

THIS MEMOIR

OF A MOST DISTINGUISHED MEMBER, IS INSCRIBED WITH FEELINGS

OF UNDISSEMBLED RESPECT,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

TO

DR. BARNSTON, PRESIDENT,

TO THE VICE-PRESIDENTS AND COUNCIL,

AND TO THE OTHER MEMBERS

HUNTERIAN SOCIETY,

THIS MEMOIR

THE AUTHOR



## P R E F A C E.

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IN the preliminary remarks, I have given an explanation of the reason for addressing the Hunterian Society on the decease of Sir William Blizard; and having been connected with this society from its commencement, and having taken an official part in the management of its affairs, every circumstance which has promoted its welfare has been deeply interesting to me. Few societies have proceeded with harmony so undisturbed, whilst the important objects for which it was established have been realized to a degree beyond expectation. It was impossible, therefore, without a departure from all propriety, to permit a man who had been eminently useful in the formation of the society, and in its advances to maturity, to sink into the silence of the sepulchre without a record of his usefulness, and a tribute to his memory.

But this of itself would not justify the *publication* of the Memoir. Sir William had been, in the best sense, a public man. He had gained celebrity as a practitioner in surgery, one of the most important departments of human labour, and had been instrumental, in various ways, to the advancement of its interests. He had identified himself with many public charities well deserving the best efforts of an enlightened mind and a compassionate heart, and had evinced great philanthropy. His character had been adorned with



frankness and uprightness, and he had been an intrepid advocate of principles which elevate the moral and professional character, and conduce to the best interests of a community. The combination of these qualities fully entitles him to a niche in the biography of his country; but those eminent and useful qualities which have rendered him worthy of this distinction, give him full claim to a biographer more able to appreciate and exhibit his merits.

There was another difficulty attending an attempt on my part to develope and sketch his character. Though not required to enter at length into the subject of religion, yet I felt that it would be scarcely possible, in a biographical sketch, with a strong conviction of the paramount claims of the christian faith, wholly to refrain from this topic. Its priority in importance as a matter of principle, and the extent of its requirements in the cultivation of the christian virtues, forced themselves on my mind, and I believed that my views were not in exact accordance with those of the distinguished man whose life I was requested to delineate. I feared, too, that as I could not wholly shrink from the subject, I might be betrayed into expressions offensive to my honoured and respected brethren in the profession, and injurious to the cause I meant to serve, should I venture to remind them of what they have at stake in matters of future and eternal moment, fearing that their plea of "works of necessity and mercy," has much wider adoption and influence than the case will justify.



I had reason to doubt whether our views harmonized on other points, not unimportant, and yet of less importance than the subject just adverted to. I might have approved more liberal measures of reformation and legislation in many of our institutions than he would have advocated in his latter years, and may be more sanguine than he was, in hope that what are called liberal opinions, in the moderate sense, in combination with extended and sound knowledge, and religious feeling, and a growing acquaintance with the true principles of civil and religious liberty, will lead to a greater prevalence of union, and kindness, and co-operation; and impart greater efficiency to the piety and benevolence of the country than has hitherto been experienced. These circumstances led me to shrink from the task. I saw that though he would require no apologist, there was a judiciousness demanded to which I could not lay claim. Having, however, put my hand to the work, though for a comparatively private purpose, I was urged to proceed, and felt a readiness to testify my gratitude towards the venerable and respected deceased, and a desire to give public effect to his many admirable traits of character. If by acquiescence in this request a want of correct feeling or sound judgment should, in any instance, be seen, I must yield to the imputation.

Little besides narrative has been aimed at. The design has been to make the reader acquainted with Sir William's professional and public character, without attempting elaborate disquisition. An extended and full biography would



have demanded materials far exceeding what it was in my power to collect and arrange. It is not intended to be purely professional. In the delineations, however imperfect, there are criterions of character, valuable recollections, and requiting testimonials, which it is hoped will not be contemplated without advantage.

The great Architect of our being, though he has been pleased to bestow on men their diversified talents, has left wide scope for their enlargement and exercise, and has attached high responsibility in regard to their neglect or cultivation. It may perhaps be said that no study, except that of divine revelation, has a happier tendency to quicken the movements of men in the right direction than that which relates to the full bearing of efficient members of the community, in the varieties of their intellectual and sentient constitution, on others of their race.

Should this inadequate effort have a tendency to commend assiduity and kindness, or excite my younger brethren to laudable efforts in the acquisition and advancement of useful knowledge; should it tend to show the excellence of professional virtue (which prohibits all petty jealousies, shallow artifices, groundless imputations, and mean hypocrisy; and calls for candour, and generosity, and benignity;) I shall feel highly gratified in having been permitted to conduce to ends so desirable.

39, TRINITY-SQUARE,

*Dec. 23, 1835.*



## BRIEF MEMOIR, &c.

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MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN,

THOUGH aware that it is unusual to occupy the Meetings of this Society by other topics than those which involve the diffusion of professional knowledge, I venture, on an occasion not likely to have its parallel, to lay aside for a while the character in which I usually appear, and to assume that of the biographer.

It rarely falls, Sir, to the lot of man to sustain the infirmities of his nature to the age of ninety; but when such instances occur, and are accompanied with the maintenance of reason, with intellectual energy and activity, it is deeply interesting to inquire what have been the results? Whether during so long a period the individual has been a corrupter of the streams of human happiness, or a cipher, standing in the way, and impeding the labours of his more efficient cotemporaries: or whether, according to his ability and opportunities, he has been actively employing the talents given him by God, and, as a social being, cherishing and acting out right intentions, and shedding a salutary moral influence in his circle. It is both wise and just to inquire, Sir, what the application?—what the observation?—how employed the opportunities of doing good?—how availed-of the means of acquiring information, and how



the knowledge accumulated by lengthened opportunities may have been dispensed for the information of others? It is right to ask, did the individual adorn the station he occupied with qualities worthy to be imitated, and leave behind him traces that, in reference to the good of his species, he had not wholly lived in vain?

Besides this, there is an interest about a man who stood almost as the only living representative of his generation. The aged oak, though putting forth only its few green leaves, and bearing its very scanty crop of acorns on its withered and shivered branches, awakens feelings of reverence and admiration which surpass in interest those awakened by the younger oak, though spreading wide its vigorous and verdant branches, and abundantly productive.

It would not be equitable, Mr. President, for men of science to say of the mellowed veteran, that he was not equal in vigour, or in cultivation of mind, or in efficiency, to the men of later generations, any more than for moralists to undervalue an aged man, because with the advance of years he did not attain to perfection. Of the latter it would be justly said, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone;" and of the former, "Let reproaches arise only with him who has left nothing for his posterity to discover or to improve." I feel persuaded that by this Society, ever distinguished for its candour and good feeling, the memory of that man will be cherished with endearments, who, while honourably and zealously practising their difficult art, steadily aims, conformably with the deliberate convictions of conscience and of judgment, to lay a solid foundation for the higher eminence of his successors; who seeks to secure facilities for their better culture, and for their rising to more



commanding elevations of knowledge and discovery, and to qualify them for greater usefulness.

If, therefore, it should be true of any man that during an extraordinary succession of years he occupied an important rank in his profession, whatever that might be, and that he uniformly endeavoured to advance its interests: if, instead of tarnishing his reputation, the tendency of his life was to commend his calling in public estimation: if he candidly disclosed his knowledge, and was ready to assist his younger brethren and smooth the difficulties in their path by kind and familiar intercourse with them, he will be deserving of as much eulogy as the recluse and cloistered author, whose honours may long survive him in the pages of literature, but who may have done little for the promotion of science by the wonderful machinery of the living tongue, the cheering countenance, the directing finger, the animating and sympathizing heart.

I feel, Mr. President, that an apology is due from me for an attempt to perpetuate the memory of that venerable and excellent man, *Sir William Blizard*, whilst there are so many Members of this Society, much better qualified than myself, to appreciate his character. I know, Sir, that I expose myself to the charge of immodesty and presumption, and can only avail myself of one ground of apology. There is no other member now who knows so fully as myself the essential services which Sir William rendered this Society in its formation, and in laying for it a durable foundation. Only one besides myself was ever acquainted with the full extent of the Society's obligation, and years ago it pleased the Almighty to remove that one from our ranks.\* This circum-

\* The late J. C. Knight, Esq. of Finsbury-place South.



stance led me to feel it a duty to cast myself on kindness which has never cooled in this Association, and on candour, which, with the lapse of years, seems to suffer no abatement.

In an association of educated men bound together by a common bond, constituted of gentlemanly feeling and of generous sentiments, and uniting them in co-operation, and for purposes of mutual instruction, and to plant the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of waters whose bitterness and poison have produced much devastation in the human family, if one fibre of that bond perish it tends to weaken the bond itself, and more especially if that fibre were one about which the other fibres had been originally intwined. So that it seemed expedient to endeavour to bring the remaining fibres into closer relation, and thus, in some degree, compensate for this deprivation, and for other losses which have been sustained. It appeared desirable to point others to their liability to lose the power of holding together, and to the necessity of binding closely, so that though one fibre after another may decay, the increasing union, and the fresh accessions, may afford security against the weakening of the cord.

I was the more ready to undertake the task which seemed naturally devolving on me, on account of having a few years back volunteered a defence of men and measures, in which the subject of this memoir was involved. Ill, indeed, would it accord with the occasion, or with my own feelings, to impugn the motives of other men; and in quoting from another publication, I do it only because I cannot better express what I think is due to a class of men not always estimated as they deserve. "In former times age was venerated, but it has become rather prevalent of late to speak of



an old man in the language of contempt. We are too apt to luxuriate in the light which shines upon our path, without due consideration of its source. If those of the profession who have been educated in later times, have clearer views of disease, and possess more simple, but, at the same time, more efficient means of treatment than ancient principles might have suggested, it surely does not become them to mark with disrespect the fathers of the science, to whose lessons they have been mainly indebted for, at least, the elementary principles of recent improvements; and from whose exemplary zeal and salutary counsel their pupils derived the impulse to continued and successful exertion. If we anticipate the period when some who are not sparing in scornful insinuation, but who have scarcely attained the meridian of life, shall in their turn become septuagenarians, should they be surrounded with no brighter honours, relative to the advantages enjoyed, than those to which the older surgeons of the present day are fully entitled, they will enjoy distinctions of no little value in the estimation of mankind."

Sir William Blizard stands upon your records as the first member who paid the admission fee. He was the first President, the first Honorary Member, and delivered the first oration; and though of late years not often among us, in consequence of his greatly advanced years, he proved himself, in several ways, (some of which will be alluded to in the sequel,) one of the sincerest and best friends of the Society.

These appeared sufficient reasons to justify the course I have taken, and having the President's permission, I shall proceed to lay before you some particulars which are of private and personal interest, and others which, if not characterized by marks of great genius or great learning,



indicate the successful application of talent of a more prevailing and useful quality. In combination they exhibit the outline of a character eminent in some of the highest professional and private virtues, and they are submitted to this meeting not in mere eulogy of the deceased, but that in our consideration of an example of unwearying perseverance, of inflexible honour, and of a humane disposition, we may become more emulous of those high qualities.

The subject of our biographical sketch had not to boast of an opulent, or learned, or otherwise distinguished ancestry. He was born at the village of Barnes Elms, in Surrey,\* in the year 1743, being the youngest but one of five children of William Blizard, an auctioneer. The family were remarkable for longevity, his father and mother having both died at the age of eighty-six, and his grandmother (on his mother's side) at the advanced age of ninety. His early education was neglected, so that he had not the advantage of good classical instruction; but in after years, without assistance from others, he acquired tolerable facility in reading Latin. He was articled to a Mr. Besley, surgeon and apothecary at Mortlake. He devoted much attention to the study of botany; and an excellent herbarium, made during his apprenticeship, is still in the possession of the family.

He commenced his professional studies in the metropolis at the London Hospital, under Mr. H. Thompson, a man of considerable talent and eminence in his day. About this time he assisted a surgeon practising in Crutched-Friars, and attended the lectures of Pott and the Hunters, by whom he was much noticed. At an early period of his life

\* I am greatly indebted for the particulars of a private and personal nature to a respected relative of Sir William.



he was elected surgeon to the Magdalen, which he attended for several years, retiring on the occasion of his appointment, upon the decease of Mr. Thompson, to the London Hospital in 1780. His competitors on this occasion were Mr. George Vaux and Mr. Andree, but he was successful by a large majority. During many years he performed all the operations, and attended nearly to the entire duties of the hospital for his colleagues Mr. Grindall and Mr. Neale.

He connected himself with Dr. Maclaurin, a Scotch physician, well known at the time as a teacher of anatomy. They lectured together first at a small place in Thames-street, and afterwards in Mark-lane; and in the year 1785 they founded the school at the London Hospital which was the first regular medical school connected with a great Hospital.\* The ground having been liberally granted by the Committee of the establishment, the building was erected at an expense of some thousands of pounds, chiefly supplied by himself, at a time when he could ill afford it.

This theatre appears to have been opened on the 27th of October, 1785, on which occasion an ode written by Sir William, expressive of humane and correct sentiment, and set to music by Dr. Samuel Arnold, was performed at the London Tavern. As the occasion was remarkable it may not be improper to quote the first recitative and air.

“Hail the return of this auspicious day!  
Now let the grateful, gen’rous heart record,  
In heart-felt strains, how Providence befriends  
This seat of commerce and benevolence!

\* It deserves mention that the London Hospital itself, ranking as it does among the noblest charities of this kingdom, was founded principally by the efforts of an individual—John Harrison, Esq. the first Surgeon of the Institution.



In this fam'd city dwells such social love  
 As smiles alone in climes of liberty.  
 The genial patronage of every art,  
 That tends to soften the rough paths of life  
 Bids the wide dome with lofty columns rise  
 Fann'd with refreshing air, and ev'ry charm  
 Which the lax nerve and drooping frame can ask :  
 She, kinder still, bids industry prevail,  
 Without whose aid all other aids are vain :  
 Sacred to her be this auspicious day !"

## AIR.

" Britons ever fam'd for sense,  
 Famed for sweet benevolence,  
 With the genuine voice of praise  
 Noble emulation raise."

Soon after his arrival in London he paid considerable attention to chemistry, and his acquirements in this branch of science were so highly estimated by Dr. Saunders that he was requested to succeed him in the chair of chemistry at Guy's Hospital; but with this request he did not comply. As a lecturer, Sir William appears to have been deficient in those essential qualifications, arrangement and connexion. He abounded in digressions, and allowed too much liberty to a discursive fancy and warm imagination.

As a Practitioner he was discriminating and decided in forming his opinions, energetic and skilful in the application of his means, and studious of as much simplicity as possible. He would sometimes remark, "the improvement of almost all sciences is shown in growing simplicity, and this should be studied, as much as possible, in the treatment of disease." He suggested, and first practised, the operation of tying the superior thyroideal artery in



bronchocele, and was one of the first surgeons who secured the subclavian artery. He introduced the practice of large and repeated abstractions of blood in fractures of the ribs, of the success of which the case of recovery after the shaft of a chaise had been thrust through the chest, related by William Maiden, Esq. and attended by that gentleman and Sir William, affords a memorable instance.\*

His judgment was particularly valuable in chronic diseases in which greater sagacity is required for detection, and much greater skill requisite in treatment, than in the acute forms of disease, when the outward expression is usually more clearly defined.

In amputating he generally performed the flap operation. The last time he operated in public was in the year 1827, at which time he was eighty-four years of age. It was the removal of a thigh, and the stump healed perfectly in a

\* The extraordinary case here alluded to excited, at the time, peculiar interest. Mr. Tipple arrived at a friend's house at Forest-gate in his single-horse chaise, in the evening of June 13th, 1812. The groom was absent, and Mr. Tipple, unaccustomed it should seem to horses, incautiously took off the bridle before disengaging the horse from the vehicle. The animal became unruly, and Mr. Tipple endeavoured to secure him by taking hold of his foretop. The horse made a violent plunge and thrust Mr. T. against the chaise-house. At this instant one of the shafts perforated the left side of the thorax, and repeated plunges carried the end through the chest and also through the ribs beneath the right arm, and became forced through the boardings, projecting several inches from the side. A second wound was inflicted on the left side by the tug-hook. Mr. Maiden in publishing this case dedicated the pamphlet to Sir William, with grateful acknowledgments of the able assistance he had rendered. Sir William whilst referring to the positive benefit from copious bleeding, commended Mr. Maiden's judicious forbearance from the use of finger, or probe, for the purpose of ascertaining the course of the shaft.

Mr. Tipple survived this accident several years, and left, as a trophy of modern surgery, the anterior part of his chest, and the shaft of the chaise, in legacy to the college of surgeons, in whose unparalleled museum they are deposited for the inspection of the curious.



fortnight. As an operator he was remarkably cool and determined, never losing his presence of mind. His hand never trembled, and it is said to have been as steady the last year as at any period of his life.

It was highly to the honour of Sir William that when called into scenes of suffering, or to the infliction of pain in operative surgery, he was never insensible to the sympathy and kindness of the man, when he had to exercise the cool intrepidity of the surgeon. He had often the satisfaction to notice how the kind and sympathizing word appeared to mitigate anguish, and to inspire with fresh courage under the required incision; and the gratitude subsequently felt for the kindness of the manner was sometimes more prominent, in the acknowledgments of the patient, than for the dexterity and success of the operation.

In intercourse with his professional brethren his deportment was marked by a scrupulous regard to the forms of etiquette, invariably combined with candour and liberality. He was not exemplary, however, in the management of his time, and sometimes hazarded the good opinion of his brethren by a want of punctuality. High as he stood in rank, and notwithstanding disparity of years, he was exceedingly courteous in consultation with the younger members of the profession, even in the lower, but not less useful department; and was ready to assist them in operations, provided there had been regular induction into the profession, and a due maintenance of the professional character. He had such an abhorrence of every thing empirical as sometimes to be betrayed into a warm and hasty censure of proceedings wearing perhaps an aspect of Charlatanism, but of which he did not, at once, perceive the proper design and bearing.



But he was most happy, and appeared to greatest advantage, in the wards of the hospital. His clinical remarks, and his oral instructions, were much valued; and he took advantage of every opportunity to disseminate the improvements and principles of his great preceptors Pott and Hunter. The aptness and vivacity of his remarks, and his ready tact in directing the attention of students to the leading points in the cases under his care, rendered his visits, at all times, instructive. Nor was he unmindful of that propriety of language which has its great advantages when cultivated by the aspirants to a learned profession. On one occasion when I had the pleasure of walking through the wards with him, he inquired of a student what was going forward in the operating theatre. The young gentleman replied, "Mr. Headington, Sir William, is operating in a case of strangulated hernia, but the gut is quite rotten." He pleasantly remarked, "Pray, sir, do not call it *gut*, or say it is *rotten*, or you will be taken for a butcher; but call it *intestine*, and say it is *gangrenous*." Had Sir William been a man of reading, and had he thus familiarized himself with the labours of his cotemporaries in this kingdom and in other countries, it would have been advantageous to himself, and must have given much additional interest and value to his professional intercourse.

No one knew Sir William better, or more correctly estimated his character, than that truly enlightened and eminent, but now lamented surgeon, John Abernethy. He was Sir William's pupil in anatomy, and dissected for his lectures, and they ever afterwards maintained towards each other feelings of the most cordial friendship. No apology is necessary for introducing here so just a tribute as was paid



him by Mr. Abernethy, at the College of Surgeons; and it might be difficult to decide whether the tribute is most honourable to him whose excellence it attests, or to the distinguished surgeon whose generous heart dictated the expression of his admiration and gratitude.

“In succeeding Sir William Blizard in the honourable office of Professor of Anatomy and Surgery, I think it right to inform my audience that he was my earliest instructor in those sciences; and that I am indebted to him for much and most valuable information respecting them.

“My warmest thanks are also due to him for the interest he excited in my mind towards those studies, and for the excellent advice he gave me, in common with other students, to direct me in the attainment of knowledge.

“‘Let your search after truth,’ he would say, ‘be eager and constant. Be wary of admitting propositions to be facts, before you have submitted them to the strictest examination. If, after this, you believe them to be true, never disregard or forget one of them. Should you perceive truths to be important, make them the motives of action, let them serve as springs to your conduct.’

“‘Many persons,’ he remarked, ‘acknowledge truth with apathy; they assent to it, but it produces no further effect on their minds. Truths, however, are of importance, in proportion as they admit of inferences which ought to have an influence on our conduct; and if we neglect to draw these inferences, or act in conformity to them we fail in essential duties.’

“Our preceptor further contrived by various means to excite a degree of enthusiasm in the minds of his pupils. He displayed to us the *beau ideal* of the medical character; I cannot readily tell you how splendid and brilliant he made it appear; and then he cautioned us never to tarnish its lustre by any thing that wore even the semblance of dishonour. He caused the sentiment of



the philanthropic Chremes, in the Heauton-timorumenos of Terence, to be inscribed on the walls of the hospital surgery, that students should have constantly before them an admonition to humanity, drawn from a reflection of their own wants :

“Homo sum ; humani nihil a me alienum puto.”

*Abernethy's Inquiry into the probability and rationality of Mr. Hunter's Theory of Life.*—pp. 1, 3. 1814.

Whatever Sir William undertook he pursued with unwearying perseverance. His exertions at the *London Hospital* were not limited to the establishment of a school, and to the routine performance of the hospital duties ; but they were unceasingly directed to the extension of its sphere of usefulness as a school of medicine and surgery, and as a charitable institution to meet the exigences of disease and accident. To his benevolent and active endeavours this hospital owes, in great measure, its present state of prosperity, and its enlarged capability of usefulness. His own interests were repeatedly sacrificed to promote these great objects. He induced most of his wealthy patients to become governors, and at a period when its funds were greatly depressed he made innumerable applications for support and assistance, and spared neither means nor labour in urging its claims on public attention. It was evident that he had not miscalculated in his reliance on the generosity of his country, and it would have been a more than ample requital for all his efforts had he received no other reward than that of awakening benevolent feeling, and directing it to objects so needy, and so deserving, as the generality of the applicants for hospital relief.\*

\* There is a class of persons elevated above poverty who are mean enough to take advantage of public charity and private humanity, as to



Nothing could more unequivocally prove the extent of his laborious endeavours, than his having been presented by the governors with a piece of plate of the value of 500 guineas, as an expression of the sense they entertained of his high character and valuable services to the hospital; and they also caused a marble bust of him, by the greatest of living sculptors, to be placed in the committee room.

But it will not be forgotten by the friends of this Hospital, nor by the supporters of other institutions, that the subject of this memoir appeared to advantage in another character. No man entered with greater ardour into those festivities which engender kind feelings and promote co-operation. On these occasions whilst he was always ready to yield prominence to his fellow labourers, the happiness he felt imparted itself to others, and often gave high zest to these convivial meetings. But in the midst of festivity he never lost sight of the great objects of science and humanity. The following lines written on occasion of the Anniversary of the London Hospital, April 12, 1821, are not quoted as having any poetic merit, but as showing the well regulated mind, studious of giving pleasure; and the amiable heart, desirous to take

provisions only designed for the really necessitous. Very recently a hospital patient asked permission to absent herself for a short time to receive her dividends! The surgeon allowed her to depart, but prohibited her return. Governors, of course, will not recommend such cases if aware of them. Gratuitous vaccination and advice are sought by many persons in good business, or in easy circumstances. A late dentist was accustomed to relate in his lectures that an old woman had repeatedly come to him for gratuitous advice. His servant accidentally observed that she came in her carriage, getting out at a little distance. The dentist desired his servant, on her coming again, to go and ask the coachman her name. She did not fail to come, and it was ascertained that she was a lady of title. She was not a little disconcerted when the dentist addressed her ladyship by name.



advantage of the season when the cup of blessing is felt to overflow, and beguile benevolence and sympathy into chambers of distress, and to conduct them onward to scenes of industry and joy, the happy fruits of the interposition of charity.

Vernal beauties deck the grove,  
New-born sweets perfume the air!  
Would ye nature's bounty prove,  
Tranquil all her blessings share?  
Cheer the being full of woe,  
Sooth the anguish of his heart,  
Bid the stream of pity flow,  
Health and balmy ease impart.

/ Would ye well the gifts employ,  
Golden fruit of toil and fears;  
Lasting bliss and hope enjoy,  
Length'ning through the vale of years?  
Aid the weak to set the loom,  
Help the maim'd the bark to guide;  
Let the cot its joys resume,  
Mercy is a Briton's pride.

Know ye what soft transports rise,  
Lieu of sorrow in the breast,  
When from danger, all we prize  
Safely to the bosom's press'd?  
Give from heaven the rapture pure,  
Save a child, a parent dear;  
Ever will the deeds endure,  
Source of festive pleasure here!

It has been already shown how highly the governors had estimated the services of Sir William, when capable of being actively useful, but even when he had arrived at the age of eighty, and might be supposed naturally inclining to retire



from public life, they passed a series of resolutions of the entire disinterestedness of which there could be no misconception, which could not fail of being equally gratifying with any former expression of their favour, and which tended to bind him to the hospital during the remainder of life.

The appropriateness of feeling and of sentiment on the part of the governors—their abiding remembrance and willing acknowledgment of benefits conferred, not upon themselves, but on a class of persons for whose welfare in affliction they had been solicitous to provide, and their desire to prolong to their institution the paternal superintendence of their venerable and beloved surgeon, by providing such assistance as the exigences of age may demand—on the one hand; on the other—the ingenuousness and devotedness of Sir William, his pious recognition of the Supreme Source of all good purposes and actions, and his testimony to public beneficence, seldom, indeed, appealed to in vain, render this document well deserving of entire publication:—

#### LONDON HOSPITAL.

*At a Special General Court of Governors, on Tuesday the 26th of June, 1821, convened to receive the Report of the House Committee.*

CHARLES HAMPDEN TURNER, Esq. in the Chair.

The following Report was read, and unanimously adopted:

#### REPORT.

Extract from the Minutes of the House Committee, Tuesday the 5th of June, 1821.

#### RESOLVED,

That the various important and highly valuable services rendered to the London Hospital by Sir William Blizard, during a period of more than forty years;

By his able and indefatigable attention to his professional duties as Surgeon of that Institution;



By his benevolent and zealous exertions to improve the funds of the Hospital when greatly depressed; and

By his Institution of that excellent Appendage to it, "The Samaritan Society," entitle him to the highest respect and gratitude of the Governors.

RESOLVED,

That it is most desirable to secure the connexion of Sir William Blizard with the Hospital *during the remainder of his valuable life*; and to provide for the discharge of his duties there, with comfort to himself, when the period shall arrive at which he may consider it necessary, in some degree, to relax from his exertions.

RESOLVED,

That for these purposes it be recommended to the General Court, to appoint a Surgeon as special Assistant to Sir William Blizard, which appointment is to cease upon the demise, or resignation of Sir William Blizard.\*

These resolutions having been confirmed by the unanimous voice of a subsequent General Court, specially convened, were presented to Sir William, by Thomas Windle, Esq. Chairman of this Court, Charles Hampden Turner, Esq. Treasurer, and Nicholas Charrington, Esq. Chairman of the House-Committee, a deputation appointed for that purpose.

Sir William acknowledged their reception in the following terms:—

\* This resolution was afterwards cancelled, and it was resolved that each Surgeon should have his assistant, a measure which Sir William had previously urged on the Governors, in his "suggestions for the improvement of hospitals and other charitable institutions," 1796.



“GENTLEMEN,

ACCEPT my respectful acknowledgments for your condescension, in thus communicating the Resolutions of the Governors of the London Hospital, on a subject to me necessarily very interesting.

The Governors may be assured of my deep and grateful sense of their indulgent and liberal consideration.

Attachment to professional pursuits, sentiments of obligation, and the example of men whose actions and names will ever adorn the annals of the Hospital, must continue to animate me in my endeavours to promote the interest, credit, and beneficent ends of that Institution.

My connexion with the London Hospital has been the pride of my life, and a great source of its comfort. To that blessed establishment for the relief of human misery my services have always been bound, and, to the end of my remaining days, shall be devoted.

The testimony which, from long and immediate observation, I have confidently urged in advancement of applications for pecuniary aid when required, may have been in some degree useful: but I only proclaimed that wisdom and public spirit, by the exercise of which, in the administrative department, the London Hospital became worthy of munificent regard, and consequently, on principles of humanity, entitled to it.

The mention of my humble efforts upon those occasions revives in me emotions of thankfulness to the AUTHOR of every good work, for the unparalleled effects of the generous exertions, and unbounded influence, of two distinguished Governors, and their charitable associates.

Not any suggestion for the promotion or improvement of the benevolent purposes of the London Hospital has ever been offered in vain: whence its high character and pretensions. The



proposition for the *Samaritan Society* was promptly embraced; and its intentions have been executed with most happy effects. But the adoption, and exemplary success of the Society, are referrible to the countenance and liberality of the same discerning and philanthropic persons, to whom are justly attributable the prosperous condition of the Hospital, and its extended benefits to the community.

The appointment of Assistant-Surgeon, agreeably to the resolutions of the Court, will enable me more satisfactorily to discharge my professional duties in the Hospital; and will, I doubt not, prove generally beneficial to the Institution.

May providence continue to favour the pious design of the London Hospital, and may blessings be showered on its benefactors!"

Under ordinary circumstances it would undoubtedly have been highly injudicious to have sought a continuance of official services at so advanced a period of life. Many an able Assistant-Surgeon has been kept from the higher responsibilities of hospital duty, when he might have conferred great honour on the institution, and have been most extensively useful; and when he has subsequently risen to the office of Surgeon, his age and standing in the profession have tended to diminish that deep interest which he might otherwise have felt on becoming elevated to a higher public appointment. The case in question can only be acted upon as a precedent where equal services have been rendered, and equal efficiency still exists. Many circumstances noticed in this memoir are fully adequate to evince the remarkable energy and activity both of mind and body which accompanied even the latter years of Sir William's



protracted life. It ought to be borne in mind, under the diversified allotments of Providence, that imbecility, not years, makes the old man. It is justly remarked by Cicero, than whom no one was more conversant with human nature, “*Manent ingenia senibus, modo permaneat studium et industria.*” It is allotted to few men at sixty-five to enjoy such clearness of intellect, and such alertness of body, as Sir William retained at eighty.

Posthumous marks of respect, and tributes to memory, are not, in the present day, and in well regulated associations, matters of form; and the image of grateful remembrance inscribed upon the heart has a vitality in it which cannot be imparted to any marble monument. When they emanate from individuals of eminence and worth, or from enlightened bodies of men, they carry great weight, and are adapted to exert powerful influence on minds which are governed by right motives. The following testimonial will be read with approbation.

*London Hospital, Sept. 2, 1835.*

Extract from the Minutes of a Quarterly General Court.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY,

That this Court receives with deep concern the announcement that on Friday last, Sir William Blizard, their venerable and honoured friend, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Institution, Founder of the Samaritan Society, (an important appendage to the charity,) and formerly for many years senior Surgeon of the establishment, departed this life.

The Court, in recording their regret for the loss which the Hospital has thus sustained in the death of one, who, by the eminent



professional rank which, during a very long life, he indisputably occupied, was enabled in obedience to the dictates of his generosity and benevolence efficiently to promote the prosperity of the Institution, and to forward every measure calculated to extend its usefulness, as well as to render its claims upon public support generally acknowledged, cannot but accompany the foregoing Resolution with an expression of the sense which the Governors will ever sincerely entertain of Sir William Blizard's high character and valuable services.

J. CECIL, *Secretary*.

Having adduced these proofs of the high regard cherished by the Governors of the Hospital towards their late venerable Surgeon, I am unwilling to pass by this Institution without bearing testimony to the talents and zeal of the present medical officers, and without expressing my belief, that as a medical and surgical school, it yields to none in the means of conveying sound practical information. Situated in the midst of a dense working population, and in the vicinity of the Docks, the accidents are far more numerous than at any other of the metropolitan hospitals. Many of the regulations are well adapted to further the interests and acquirements of the pupils, especially those in regard to dresserships, some of which, (as, perhaps, all should be,) are obtained by merit ascertained by a suitable examination.

In the year 1787, Sir William was appointed Professor of Anatomy to the old *Corporation of Surgeons*; and on the third of July, 1788, he was unanimously re-elected, the usual gold medal having been presented to him for his services during the past year. In a few years afterwards he became an examiner.



He rendered great assistance in obtaining a charter for the new college, in whose proceedings he afterwards took a lively interest to the close of his life. He and Sir Everard Home were the two first appointed professors to this chartered institution, now designated the *Royal College of Surgeons*. He served the office of president twice, and delivered the Hunterian Oration three times. When he retired from the lectures at the London Hospital, in his great desire that the College of Surgeons, (having had secured to it by Government-grant the splendid anatomical museum of the late John Hunter,) should be a depository of facts in natural and morbid anatomy worthy of the nation, and believing that one vast collection under correct arrangement, and freely accessible, afforded pre-eminent advantages to the profession, he munificently presented to the College his entire collection of nearly nine hundred preparations, amongst which were many most valuable specimens of diseased structure, and some of the best injections of the absorbents in London, effected by his own hands.

It will be universally allowed that this Institution, as well as the noble Hospital just spoken of, has conferred high advantages on the profession, and great benefits on the world. And if this chartered association has not accomplished all the good hoped for from wise regulations and powerful influence, it will not be questioned that the eminent individual towards whose memory a feeble attempt is made to do an act of justice, laboured diligently and perseveringly to promote its interests, under the honest persuasion that its prosperity was essentially identified with the honour and efficiency of practitioners in surgery in this great and enlightened country. If he, who looking farther



back than others, and having emerged from an age when the knowledge of surgery was exceedingly confined in comparison with the number of highly accomplished surgeons of more recent years; if he, who saw the system gradually imparting a tone of elevation to the surgical character, and placing practitioners in this department of human labour on a level with the most distinguished men in other departments of science, in utility, and in public estimation; if he who felt himself holding a great trust, which, under his own observation, had assisted in promoting a wonderful improvement in the qualifications of a class of men occupying an important and highly responsible station in society; if he did not see equal necessity with others for any great modification of the system, it would not excite surprise, and much less will it expose his name to indignity. It may be fairly questioned, whether, on some points, there was not an ill-judged tenacity—whether strong prepossessions did not stand in the way of a calm and candid consideration of the new measures demanded by a new order of things arising from the now advanced state of surgical knowledge, and from the general increase of information; but none will hesitate to admit that in his long connexion with the College he had contributed to foster zeal, and to enlarge and perpetuate both the means and facilities of exertion, and that he uniformly inculcated the purest motives to guide exertion to a successful and a safe result. It may be boldly asserted that his conduct in this Institution, and in the various public bodies with which he was connected, was peculiarly distinguished by a singleness of purpose, and a warm desire for the general good, which at all times obtained for him the respect and admiration of those with



whom he acted, however much they might differ from him in opinion.

In his valedictory address, delivered to the council, on the 10th of October, 1823, on the occasion of his resigning the president's chair, he has recorded a sentiment well worthy of being kept in vivid recollection by all who heard its expression, and of being known and felt by every succeeding president and member of the council or court.

“The sway of friendship, the balance of private interest, must not have influence in this place. It is only by a pure, an unbiased attention to the objects of this College, that its honour can be sustained.”

It is not generally known that the Jacksonian Prize, which has originated many standard works, was founded, in the the year 1800, at the instance of Sir William, by his friend and pupil Samuel Jackson, Esq. The honour and distinction attending the adjudication of this reward have proved incentives to laudable efforts far exceeding the intrinsic value of the reward itself. To these sources the profession is indebted for Mr. Lawrence's masterly treatise on Hernia, and Mr. Hodgson's invaluable treatise on the Arteries; and other works of distinguished merit have been elicited. Not a few meritorious practitioners, who might otherwise have remained in obscurity, have been elevated in character, and encouraged in effort, by the emulation which this well-judged prize excited and rewarded.

It will be shown, by the following resolutions, that Sir William was not inattentive to the executive business of the College.



*“ At a Quarterly Court of Assistants, holden on Monday, the  
8th of July, 1811.*

RESOLVED,

That the grateful thanks of this Court be presented to Sir William Blizard, for the extraordinary services he has rendered to the College as one of the auditors, whereby the old and very complicated accounts have been settled and arranged, and a short and very clear mode of keeping them in future has been established.

RESOLVED,

That the Court whilst they most cordially adopt the above Resolution, *which was suggested by the other auditors, who were the more immediate witnesses of those services*, are not unmindful of the many obligations which they owe to Sir William for the benefits derived to the College, from the great zeal and eminent talents displayed by him in its multifarious departments.”

As the real value of a testimonial depends on the competence of the parties giving it to form a correct estimate of the service it acknowledges, I cannot withhold a testimonial given by the Court of Assistants some years after that just quoted. This court is constituted of men pursuing the same profession as that of the individual whose zeal and talent they eulogize, men equally eminent in rank with himself, and familiar with all the circumstances of the case, men capable of estimating the genuineness of the service, and not likely to be betrayed into the bestowment of an unmerited tribute. Now, under these circumstances, Sir William could not have received their expression of gratitude but with the highest satisfaction, and it is repeated here in the hope that it may tend to actuate other men, occupying similar official



appointments, to a line of conduct equally honourable, equally meritorious, and of equal utility.

*“ At a Quarterly Court of Assistants of the*

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

*in London, holden at the College, on the 21st day of July, 1815.*

This Court having considered the many and essential benefits which the late Master, SIR WILLIAM BLIZARD, has rendered to the College in the offices of Curator of the Museum, Professor of Anatomy and Surgery, a member of the several Committees for forming a Code of Bye-laws, of Auditors of Accounts, for directing the affairs of Building; and of the various other Committees and Board which the government of the College required.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY,

That the grateful thanks of this Court be presented to

SIR WILLIAM BLIZARD,

for the devotion of much of his valuable time, and the exertion of his genius and talents in the service of the College, by which its laws have been rendered clear and explicit, its financial arrangements simplified and improved, and the cultivation of its scientific objects promoted.”

After his decease, it was resolved to insert upon the minutes the following memorial “intended to express the sentiments and feelings of the members of this Council respecting their late excellent colleague.”

“ Sir William Blizard was elected a member of the Court of Assistants of the late Corporation of Surgeons, on the 7th of January, 1796, and was elected a member of the Court of Examiners of this College, on the 15th of February, 1810.



During this protracted period he filled all the important offices of the College as member of the Council, of the Court of Examiners, of the Board of Curators, and of the various committees of the College, of which he was twice President.

In all these public duties his assiduity and zeal were ever conspicuous, and, perhaps, never surpassed.

The members of the Council deeply impressed with the sense of these services, thus record their homage to the memory of their highly valued colleague."

And the same having been read and considered,

RESOLVED,

That such report be approved and adopted, and that a copy be transmitted to Lady Blizard, with the condolence of the members of this Council."

It may not be out of place to mention that Sir William received the honour of knighthood in the year 1803 on the occasion of presenting an address to the King from the College of Surgeons.

Sir William was partly the founder and continued for many years chairman of the *Anatomical Society*, which was instituted to advance the science of anatomy and to protect the interests of the teachers. When the real welfare of the student is duly regarded, it is perfectly just that the interest of the teacher, (provided no attempt at monopoly is contemplated,) should be sustained. This society, which consisted of nearly all the eminent teachers of the day, perseveringly endeavoured to induce the legislature to afford further facilities for the study of anatomy in this country, though it must be acknowledged that these exertions were attended with little effect. But compared with the period when Sir William first studied anatomy, and was often under the



necessity of assisting in the disinterment of bodies, the present means of providing for practical anatomy, indispensable to medical and surgical knowledge and efficiency, and essential to the good of the community, is highly satisfactory, and has entirely superseded the disgusting and demoralising practice of exhumation.

Sir William, from an early period of his apprenticeship, was much alive to anatomical investigations. Within his first year he committed a mistake which placed him for a while in a ludicrous and embarrassing situation. Passing through Barnes Church-yard, a deep grave attracted his attention, and at the bottom he saw what he considered to be a skull. After dark he repaired to the spot, and observing a board descending into the grave, he slid down it, and hastily putting his prize into a handkerchief he prepared to ascend, but he found this no easy task. In addition to the difficulty of climbing the board, people were so continually passing along the footpath as to endanger the enterprising tyro's escape. It being a moonlight night, he retired behind a hedge to examine his booty, when to his utter mortification he discovered that instead of a skull he had only secured a cabbage!

The only severe indisposition he ever experienced before his last illness, (except during a single night rendered memorable by a circumstance which will be mentioned in the sequel,) occurred after a long and tedious dissection of a fine muscular subject, in which he undertook to measure every muscle in the body. He worked almost incessantly till its completion, frequently continuing over the subject both night and day. These exertions were followed by an attack of typhus, which very nearly brought him to the grave.



It will ever be considered a high trait in the character of Sir William, that he was a man of *Genuine Benevolence*. It would be enough in proof of this to say that he was admitted, at an early period of his life, to a familiar acquaintance with that distinguished philanthropist Jonas Hanway. A close intimacy existed between them for several years, and they worked together in many benevolent undertakings, especially in the Marine Society, of which excellent institution the subject of this memoir was uniformly a warm friend and steady supporter. Though, in consequence of very heavy pecuniary losses, he never realized wealth, and consequently could not be as liberal in pecuniary gifts as his generosity suggested, yet, like every man in whom benevolence is a powerfully operative motive, he found numerous ways of indulging the affluentness of his kind feelings. Many incidents called for their exercise in his profession, and he contributed to the wants of many suffering individuals, as well as to the aid of a large number of charitable institutions.

During several years he was in the habit of contributing extensively, from his own pocket, to relieve the pressing necessities of patients, who, on leaving the hospital, still perhaps but convalescent, or in a lame or incurable condition, penniless, houseless, and not unfrequently without friends, were exposed to wretchedness exceeding that of their condition before they were admitted. These were objects of great commiseration to him, and it was to relieve such distress that, acting up to the maxim, "*Nil actum credens, cum quid superesset agendum,*" he founded the *Samaritan Society* in the year 1791. The institution of such a society, which with comparatively small means was



adapted to diffuse a great extent of benefit among the poor, is sufficient to embalm his memory in the heart of every friend of humanity. The Tract Sir William published, under the title of "Remarks concerning circumstances of distress not within the provisions of Hospitals, with the Address and Regulations of the Samaritan Society," is well worthy of an entire reprint. It contains sentiments of benevolence, and sets before the public an object for its practical application, not only appropriate and forcible when written, but equally appropriate now, and likely to remain so till human sympathies shall need no prompting argument or extraneous incentive to the exercise of compassion. The following is the preface, and in connexion with the readiness to meet his views, which the author experienced, its perusal may lead other surgeons and medical practitioners to consider whether they have availed themselves of all their resources for the relief of suffering which a benignant Providence has placed at their disposal, and which no other class of persons can so freely obtain and so successfully apply.

"To learn all the varieties of wretchedness, to remove it, or to soften its pangs, the ear must be unweariedly inclined to tales of woe; the hand must be ever ready to succour; and the heart and understanding to advise, to comfort, and to guide.

In the lustre of public charities, misery, of a nature not immediately to attract the eye, often remains unnoticed.

The greatest exertions of art, and the most diligent care, are extended to poor, sick, and hurt fellow-creatures. But skill and tenderness will hardly avail against disease whilst the mind is continually depressed by reflection upon a hopeless prospect in life, or upon the condition of a family pining with grief and want.



In Hospitals the helping hand of charity is still wanted. Various are the distresses that call for it, frequently admitting of easy relief, not, however, within the limits of such establishments to grant.

The Samaritan Society was instituted with the view of explaining the circumstances of cases in hospitals that have a claim upon benevolence, of obtaining a fund from which relief might be afforded, and providing a body of men that might properly execute and perpetuate the good design. But the address and regulations of the society will explain its intentions, and prove the best appeal to humanity in its favour."

This society is now able to dispense £500 per annum in the relief of objects of distress.

In the unceasing intercourse which practitioners in medicine and surgery are required to hold with necessitous persons under heavy personal or relative afflictions, nothing is more delightful than to have at hand a fund like this, or to have access to the heart and pocket of private beneficence. This makes them oftentimes the angels of mercy to the habitations of pain and destitution. Sir William could very justly say, "The Samaritan Society will plead for itself with the small and sweet voice of genuine charity."

Though similar instances of disinterested labour are not uncommon in the profession, the following acknowledgment deserves its record in this place.

"EIGHTH REGIMENT OF LOYAL LONDON VOLUNTEERS.

*At a Meeting of the Committee appointed for regulating the affairs of this Regiment, held on the 13th day of December, 1803.*

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY,

That the thanks of the regiment be presented to Sir William Blizard, and Mr. Lewis Leese, for their constant and unremitting



attendance on the late Mr. George Dewry, during his severe illness, for their humane endeavour to afford him every relief that professional skill and abilities could desire, and for their liberal and benevolent conduct in generously devoting to the benefit of the widow the pecuniary remuneration voted to them by this committee, and to which their exertions had so justly entitled them.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY,

That the above vote of thanks be fairly transcribed, and signed by the secretary, and that the Lieut.-Colonels and Majors be requested to present the same.

PETER EARNSHAW, *Secretary.*"

It is honourable to our profession, Mr. President, as one pre-eminently demanding an unperturbed state of thought and feeling, that whilst as individuals we have held our *Political Opinions*, and have felt equal interest with others in all events and questions bearing on the welfare of our country, we have not been, and are not prominent in the arena of political strife and controversy. There are, indeed, a few men amongst us whose irrepressible ardour forbids the restraints of prudence and of professional duty, and they enter, fully armed, into the exciting contentions of parties taking opposite grounds in the administration of public affairs. Sir William was of this temperament, and would, it is probable, have been a party-leader had not his feelings on this subject been regulated by a deep sense of the paramount claims of his profession, and by a judicious desire to avoid entangling himself with political discussions in the wide intercourse to which he was called in daily engagements: but he retained his patriotism to the last.

In the early period of his life he was a decided reformer,



and at about the age of twenty, he sent numerous letters to the periodicals of the day under the signature of *Curtius*. Some appeared in the Middlesex Journal or Chronicle of Liberty, others in the Freeholders' Magazine, or Monthly Chronicle of Liberty, and were written in a liberal and manly spirit, forcibly advocating the privileges of subjects, and exposing several flagrant abuses of power and acts of injustice. As he rose in the world and acquired greater influence, he acted up to these principles, and boldly endeavoured to check corruption and mismanagement in all the institutions with which he was connected. In political affairs he became an ardent admirer of Mr. Pitt, after whose death he joined the Pitt Club. As years advanced he saw less necessity for change than he had at an earlier period, so that to many of his own profession who had risen up when light and liberty were rapidly spreading, he appeared to stand in the way of improvements, whilst he was honestly acting out the convictions of his judgment in restraining the rapidity of the current of liberal opinions to which he had once endeavoured to give an impetus.

Persons who are accustomed to mark improvements find cause of high satisfaction in the wonderful advance which has taken place in London as to the safety, comfort, and health of residents within the last fifty years ; and from the state of things in the metropolitan city, assure themselves that the country is not coming to that desperate extremity which the discontented, both high and low, would represent. At that time London not only teemed with robbers, and persons ready to commit all enormities of violence and crime, but there was no well-regulated police to repress their outrages. Sir William, in his anxiety for the public good,



became an active member of the *London Military Foot Association*,\* formed for the purpose of supporting the civil power in the maintenance of peace and order. This body rendered most important service in the assistance which they afforded in the suppression of the riots in the year 1780. An occurrence which took place in these disturbances in Broad-street, is represented in the well-known engraving of them by Heath. Sir William is in the foreground, having left the ranks, and is in the act of picking up a wounded insurgent, whilst another rioter is raising a club as if designing him a mortal blow, but is restrained by a third who seems to recognise him.

At that period of national excitement, in the recollection of some present, when the invasion of England was hourly expected, and the citizens of London, as well as the lovers of their native soil elsewhere, associated themselves in arms for the defence of their King and Country, Sir William was appointed, in conjunction with the late Sir Robert Wigram, Lieut. Colonel of the 6th Regiment of London Loyal Volunteers. Many gentlemen now living will recollect his ardour and activity, and the devotion of his time and energies to the service. It might be regretted that he allowed himself to be thus diverted from his professional duties, but as he

\* This association was incorporated with the Honorable Artillery Company in the year 1781. I have received the following memorandum of Sir William's connexion with this Company from F. W. Bossy, Esq. a zealous member of that body, and a highly respected member of the Hunterian Society. "William Blizard joined the Honourable Artillery Company, in 1780, and was elected Surgeon in 1781, in which office he continued till the end of 1790, when Mr. Samuel Orange, a pupil of Mr. Blizard, was elected as his successor. Mr. B. was elected a member of the Court of Assistants, and continued a member of the Court till the end of 1796. In 1794 he was also elected one of the Trustees of the Company's Estates."



assumed the military function solely for the hour of peril, we find him resigning his office the moment impending danger was averted.

I cannot pass over the notice of an extra-professional publication of Sir William's bearing on the points referred to in this division of our memoir. It is entitled "Desultory Reflections on Police with an Essay on the means of preventing crimes and amending Criminals," 1785. The frontispiece is Justice (in medallion) with an inscription *Æquitas augusta*, and the motto placed over the figure is "Be just, and fear not. Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy Country's, thy God's, and Truth's."\* It is dedicated to the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, the Aldermen, Recorder, Sheriffs, and Common Council of the City of London.

It appears to have been the common practice to employ men in the police who had been thieves, under the impression that such men were better acquainted with the persons and the haunts of the profligate and dishonest. The magistrates, too, lent themselves indirectly to communication with thieves in a manner that had our author's just and severe reprehension, as well as the other practice adverted to. The magistrate communicated with his clerk, he with the runner or constable, he with the keepers of houses of entertainment, and he with the rogue himself. He mentions some instances of the atrocious evils of this depraved system, and considers the equally injurious practice of employing criminals to superintend prisoners as productive of a thousand bad effects.

He laments that there was no prison discipline. Even yet far less effort has been made in this humane and enlightened

\* Shakspeare.



country to separate, instruct, and reform criminals than ought to have been made ; but we trust that in most prisons the picture he has presented, would, if applied to present times, be much overdrawn. “ Within its walls,” he says, “ the institutes of God and of men seem to be totally disregarded, till a poor wretch is condemned to die ; then it is curious to observe what wondrous pains are taken to prepare him for the next world. His soul, in a moment, is become of great value ; and his faith, confession, and salvation, are objects of high regard.”

He calls for an extermination of some of the magistrates, little mindful of the duties and dignities of their office, as loudly as he does for that of thieves ; and he urges the reward of public virtue. He condemns congregating criminals in hulks, and commends solitary confinement, as advocated by his benevolent friend Jonas Hanway. His description of a particular construction of houses to favour the escape of thieves in some districts of London, affords an example of the ingenious and systematic devices to which the wicked resort, and which are only to be counteracted by the appointment of men of right principles, and by wise and inflexible superintendence.

The prevalence of house-breaking led him to recommend a scheme which might, on some occasions, be highly useful ; but one by which a timid, dreaming, or imaginative and nervous man, might have proved a great annoyance to his calmly-sleeping and unsuspecting neighbour. This scheme was, that a bell should communicate from the master's room of one house with the master's room of the next, and to be designated *reciprocals*. On an alarm of thieves it was expected that assistance would be obtained in such way as not



only to frustrate the design of the unwelcome visiter, but to render his capture probable.

The author alludes to the cruelties often practised by parochial authorities, and pleads for the female character under circumstances which often expose her to cruelty and indignity, when she is an object of far greater compassion than appears under her circumstances of degradation. From extended observation at the Magdalen, he avows his belief that the female, with her lost innocence, may in most cases, by proper means, be considerably amended.

This work concludes with an Essay on the means of preventing crimes and amending criminals. The author adopts the principle that reform, to be most influential, ought to begin with the higher classes and descend to the lower; and therefore he calls upon government to commence the business of reformation in parliament, and to apply it to all the gradations of office. He pleads for the appointment of men of public virtue to the Magistracy, to Lord-lieutenancies, and to the office of County Sheriffs. He urges that the rising generation should be instructed, and became one of the early advocates of a system which has been most extensively beneficial throughout the country, in combining religious and moral instruction with teaching to read, and which had then been commenced about two years. He says, "Whether Sunday schools may supply the deficiency I cannot presume to say, but every rational means of improving the morals of the lower order of people, and this as one, ought undoubtedly to be attempted." He recommends that every public-house not warranted by considerations of utility should be abolished, and that employment should be found for the idle.



Happily some of these suggestions have been acted upon ; but there is enough of remaining vice, abuse, and ignorance, to demand the best endeavours of every upright citizen and philanthropist.

Sir William was *hospitable* as well as benevolent and patriotic. At one period his table was frequented by most of the eminent men in the profession, and by others distinguished in science and literature. The self-taught Ferguson, and the lettered Porson, were frequent guests. Though he had not enjoyed the advantage of an education which qualified him to travel through a wide circuit of the sciences, yet he was a great admirer of science in general ; but to the cultivation of his own profession alone was he enthusiastically devoted.

He was elected a Fellow of the Antiquarian Society, January 21st, 1779.

In the year 1787, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

He was also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and a Corresponding Member of the Royal Society of Göttingen.

He assisted in establishing the *Horticultural Society*, and was one of the first Fellows ; but after a few years he retired in consequence of their fashionable fêtes, or public breakfasts, which he considered as incompatible with the objects of a scientific society.

He was one of the founders of that highly useful and interesting establishment, the *London Institution*, of which, for many years, he was Vice-President. He took an active part in the management, and was uniformly one of its steadiest friends and supporters. Though he was then in his 93rd year, yet he presided at the last annual meeting.



The pamphlets and papers he published indicate that whilst circumstances bearing on his profession had his predominating attention, he took a deep interest in other beneficent objects.

Of his work on Police some account has been already given.

He published an account of a new method of treating Fistula Lachrymalis, in the Philosophical Transactions. Vol. lxx. 239. He also wrote

Experiments and observations on the external use of tartar emetic in the London Medical Journal, 1789;

Observations on the use of electricity in deafness, in the same Journal for 1790; and

*Suggestions for the Improvement of Hospitals and other charitable institutions.* 8vo. 1796.

This is a work of considerable merit and was translated into the German language by Dr. J. Abers. It consists of five parts.

1. Reflections upon the subject of Assistant Surgeons to Hospitals.
2. Remarks concerning circumstances of distress not within the provision of Hospitals: with an account of the Samaritan Society.
3. Observations relative to Hospitals.
4. Proposition for triennial parochial sermons, and collections from house to house, for the benefit of Hospitals, and other charitable Institutions.
5. Proposition for appointing representatives of the several Hospitals, and the other principal public charities in the metropolis; and meetings accordingly

The first sentence in the introduction evinces the manliness of the author's mind and an honesty of purpose which it



would be well if every subsequent writer could have imitated. "Every offering to the public should be made under the impression of rendering some kind of service to the world : it is, therefore, thought unnecessary to make any declaration concerning the motives of this publication."

The last sentiment of his introduction is as modest as the first is manly. "Whatever be the imperfections of these essays for the benefit of those who are in sickness and in want, they may probably induce men better qualified, to render greater services ; for the mind, excited to a certain degree, will often move on until it has worked out something useful, agreeing in tendency with the exciting cause."

An account has been already given of the Samaritan Society, the subject of the second part of this interesting publication. Other parts I must pass over, but as the work is out of print I cannot forego the satisfaction of presenting an epitome of the observations on Hospitals, which suggests many useful hints to private as well as public practitioners.

Sir William, in the first place, seizes hold of the advantages they present as a rational system of instruction in the healing art, and then he proceeds to consider every point bearing on the comfort and welfare of the sick inmates. He cautions against over crowding. He shows the perniciousness of animal effluvia and the necessity of ventilation. He prohibits nurses collecting wash, shows the advantages of open space, good sewerage, iron bed-steads, beds of straw, and linen curtains. He points out the necessity of frequent exposure of the bed and bedding, and of preserving warmth in bed by clothing rather than by close rooms. Our author demands a thorough cleaning and washing of all patients admitted, the removal of fever patients, and an annual lime



whiting of walls. He recommends the free exposure of convalescents to the air, and takes the opportunity, as his thoughts turn to the efficacy of a salubrious atmosphere for life, health, and comfort, to advert to the wisdom of that appointment of the Creator by which its purity is preserved. He remarks, "Infinite are the means that have the property of counteracting the production and consequences of things that would render air injurious. *Omniscience* is every where manifest in the balancing effects of opposite causes, by which animal and vegetable existence is maintained."

After giving some account of the disinfecting processes then resorted to, he proceeds to the important subject of *Diet*, a point in the management of the sick not always sufficiently regarded either in the counsels of the practitioner, (though far more so than formerly,) or in the management of attendants. "The purest air, with cleanliness," says our author, "and all the comforts of bed, and dwelling, together with the help of medicine, will not prove sufficient for restoring health, or preserving life, without strict regard to articles of diet." As a remedial sustainer some high encomiums are passed on a sound malt liquor, particularly bottled porter; and some cautions are given lest the wine often needed by the suffering should be cruelly withheld by the nurses and watchers to supply their own overfondness for strong liquors. With respect to that valuable article, milk, he remarks on the necessity of guarding against the prevalent system of adulteration, by frequent superintendence of the act of milking, where a large charitable institution does not possess neighbouring pasture land to keep its own cows. Admission of recent vegetables, and fresh vegetable juices, come under commendation. Then Sir William



directs his readers to the antiseptic virtue of spring water, to which the inhabitants of this great city are even yet not sufficiently alive. The abundant supply of river water to the metropolis for cleanliness, comfort, and safety, is such as ought to awaken feelings of the deepest gratitude; but as a beverage the water from the spring is not only more refreshing but more wholesome than that obtainable from the Thames or the streams communicating with it. He shows the propriety of giving to the sick needing water, some of the pure liquid from the spring, not the impure water of the vat; and maintains that all their drink should be prepared with spring water. He adverts to the excellence of the water of the springs in London, a subject which ought to awaken gratitude to God, whilst the artificial supply should enkindle sentiments of thankfulness for the ingenuity and enterprise of man.

Though it might not be prolix to go through all the details of this valuable publication, it would carry us beyond the present design. His regard to the neatness and propriety of the grounds and offices indicates his good taste. His recommendation of warm and cold baths—his suggesting suitable employment for the patients—his maintenance of the necessity of free intercourse between inmates and near relations, are proofs how extensively he applied himself to the consideration of the welfare of the patients in the use of all auxiliaries to their comfort and restoration. His recommendation that deaths and funerals should be veiled as much as possible, is a due concession to the survivors, among whom such scenes may prove destructive of the sustaining influence of *hope*, on the maintenance of which restoration may be suspended; and his recommendation that all deaths should



be announced at the weekly board with solemnity and due inquiry if all had been done to avert the catastrophe, does him great honour, But whilst he would have investigation to ensure the fulfilment of all humane and official duties whilst life continued, he was equally the advocate of making the dead subservient to the good of the living by those pathological inquiries which examination of the body promotes.

But Sir William carried his designs for the good of the inmates of hospitals higher than in merely aiming to heal diseases, and administer to the comfort of mind and body. He sought their moral improvement, and recommended that advantage should be taken of the favourable opportunity of pointing out their duty to God and their neighbour. Well knowing that many of the patients could not leave the wards to attend the chapel, he inculcated the propriety of having divine service performed, every week, in every ward, as well as in the chapel on the Sunday; a measure which could not fail of having a most salutary tendency. He recommended that the pharmacopœia should be revised every three years, that there should be a library for students, and that there should be a general meeting of all the medical officers at least once a year for the special purpose of discussing subjects under the heads of inventions, improvements, and discoveries; as well as to consider observations upon epidemics, cases of cancer, hydrophobia, and other diseases of dangerous tendency which he has specified. Other topics, such as duties of the surgery beadle and nurses, qualifications of committee, and several points bearing on the construction and executive of hospitals, are adverted to in a manner which denotes comprehensive and enlightened views,



with a prevailing desire that whilst things of magnitude have their due consideration, minor things, whose well-working is essential to the full efficiency of every large institution, should not be overlooked.

I pass from this long account of his suggestions for the improvement of hospitals, to another publication, which places Sir William before us again in his disinterested efforts to do good. This is, "*A Lecture to the scholars at the Maritime School at Chelsea, on the situation of the large blood-vessels of the extremities, explaining the use of the tourniquet, to which is appended a brief explanation of the nature of wounds.*" 12mo. 1798. He held the appointment of Surgeon to this institution. In office he is ever found alive to duty, and remarks, "From reflection on my duty as Surgeon to the Maritime School, and a sincere regard for the objects of my care, I proposed to teach them the situation of the large blood-vessels of the extremities, and the application of the tourniquet. This I attempted in the plainest manner in my power, in the way of lecture, as the most familiar and effectual method of impressing truths on juvenile minds; and it was pleasing to observe the attention and feeling expressed by my young auditors." In the second place we observe his humanity and patriotism. "From a desire to promote the great cause of the naval interest of my country in that essential concern, *the preservation of the lives of seamen*, I have now endeavoured to render my lecture a useful offering to these young warriors."

He then refers to circumstances not only in the navy and army, but in other situations of life, in which the information he gives may be essential to the preservation of life, and then directs his readers to the most exalted motive for



the diffusion of useful information. "But knowledge of this kind" says he, "may be productive of some degree of good, though never practically required; for science ever tends to improve the heart, and raise the mind to contemplate the power, wisdom, and goodness of *Him that made us*." Well, indeed, would it be were we able in these times of unprecedented effort for the extension of knowledge, to assent to this opinion. Genuine science, it is true, will have this tendency; and it is highly gratifying to observe the rapidly growing disposition, among truly scientific men, to recognise the traces of a divine hand, and to interweave the principles of natural theology with their philosophical investigations: but we meet with many instances of a contrary character, and this is not to be wondered at when the pride of human nature is well considered.

The third edition of this little publication, printed in 1798, lies before me, and with slight alterations and additions adapted to the present state of knowledge on a few of the subjects discussed, it would be fully entitled to the attentive perusal of every man who desires to be useful to a fellow creature brought by accident to an emergency likely to end in death without immediate assistance.

Sir William published a paper in the *Medical Facts and Observations* (1792) on some Epidemical Effects.

He published also his *Hunterian Orations* delivered in 1815, 1823, and 1828.

He likewise published his *Oration before this the Hunterian Society*, with *supplementary observations and engravings*.

The mention of this Oration leads me to notice more fully, and yet as succinctly as possible, some of those services which make it a duty to perpetuate the name of Sir William



Blizard among the lasting memorials of this society. Numerous as were felt to be the advantages of medical and surgical associations for the diffusion of knowledge, no society existed which from its locality was easy of access to practitioners in the eastern part of London, except those useful associations in hospitals chiefly designed for the advantage of students. When the project of forming a Society within this district of the metropolis was laid before Sir William, he entered most cordially into the proposition; and to discuss it more fully, and to ascertain more clearly how he could further the object, he engaged the deputation to breakfast with him at an early hour two days subsequent to the first interview. He descanted at some length on the advantages of bringing men occupied in similar pursuits into friendly intercourse and co-operation, for the maintenance of liberal and honourable sentiments, for the advancement of science, and for the public good. He adverted to the open field, expressed great satisfaction in the total absence of the spirit of rivalry, and assured his visitors of success. Some discouragements had been encountered, but these he regarded only as motives to persevering exertion. He not only gave his name and wrote letters, but to some individuals he applied in person. Though then advanced in years, advanced so far that in most persons if repose is not desired, decrepitude demands it, yet he entered with youthful zeal into all the preliminary arrangements. He attended the meetings, and by his presence and his counsels brought about adjustments of differences of opinion which otherwise might have terminated in division. To him exclusively appertains the honour of the society's name, and it is a designation by which it is widely known through the



united kingdoms, and in other lands; and the lapse of years has proved it to have been most happily selected.

Sir William was chosen, by the unanimous voice of the members, the first President, and at the first anniversary he was selected, as other presidents have since been, to fill the office a second year. His attendance was most punctual. The number of his communications was great, not only obtained from personal observations but from other sources, and their nature was of high value. But still higher importance was attached to the courteousness of his manner, to his firmness and suavity, and his constant solicitude for the substitution of the milder for the sharper expressions, whenever, in the then young society, the ebullition of warm emotion endangered harmony. At that period the council felt his continuance in office so momentous, that when the second year had nearly expired, and they were preparing to nominate officers for the year ensuing, it was unanimously resolved, on January 24, 1821—

“That the Council feeling highly indebted to SIR WILLIAM BLIZARD, for his general attention to the interests of the society during the preceding two years; and feeling likewise that it is of importance to the society that his presidency be continued another year, they recommend to the general meeting to suspend the operation of the law rendering a member ineligible for the office of President for more than two years in succession, and that Sir William Blizard be proposed for re-election.”

At the general meeting, on the 8th of February, the recommendation of the council was unanimously agreed to, and Sir William was re-elected. There are some present who will bear their testimony to the statement that during



his presidency of three years, Sir William contributed most essentially to place the society on a firm basis, and to transfuse into its councils and discussions a spirit of harmony which has interwoven itself in the proceedings ever since.

To this veteran in service the society is indebted for the valuable bust of John Hunter, still ornamenting our room; and for having placed the just claims of the society before the council of the College of Surgeons, so that their successive publications have been transmitted to our library.

The following letter, addressed to one of the secretaries, on occasion of Sir William's having been requested to be a steward for the ensuing annual dinner, affords satisfactory evidence that his interest in the society's welfare and usefulness did not decline with his retiring from office, or with the lapse of years.

*Devonshire Square, 16th March, 1830.*

"Dear Sir,

I accept with pleasure the office of steward: for should the Almighty remove me from you before the period of the next annual meeting of the Hunterian Society, this testimony of my opinion of the utility of the society, and of my grateful sense of the kind attention to me of its members, will remain.

Your's, dear Sir, most truly,

*To Wm. Cooke, Esq.*

WILLIAM BLIZARD,"

Though taking but a very rapid glance, Mr. President, at the character and pursuits of Sir William Blizard, it would be inexcusable to pass wholly by that subject which infinitely surpasses all others in importance and interest, and which, in its being pursued in all its simple and genuine



bearings, gives more real dignity to human nature than it is susceptible of by any other agency. I rejoice to say that our late venerable friend was not of that class of the Faculty who delude themselves into the belief (or seem to act under the delusion) that attendance on the sick, though not in all cases imperatively needed on the Sabbath, or, at least, not in the hours appropriated to divine worship, affords an apology for habitual neglect of the ordinances of religion. Medical men live in the midst of scenes so appalling and affecting, and are so habituated to think of their resources for relieving others, that they are too apt to overlook the lesson inculcated on themselves. No class of men are so accustomed to deduce principles from facts in hope of mitigating the woes of others; and none perhaps are more remiss in the application of their inductive philosophy, so as to derive the moral advantages which the solemn monitions they daily receive are well adapted to impart. This is lamentable, and the explanation is not difficult; but I would rather turn to the delightful truth that, under strong temptations to an opposite practice, there is so greatly increasing a number of men actively engaged in professional duty, full of philanthropy, and zealous for the interest of science, who find it not incompatible, even with extensive practice, to occupy their place in the sanctuary. Thus whilst they are realizing the personal benefits of religion, they arm themselves with the best sustainer which can be administered to many a drooping and disconsolate patient.

I will not venture on the difficult and delicate task of endeavouring to ascertain to what extent Sir William aimed, in the regulation of his thoughts and affections, and in the performance of his duties, to conform himself to the will



of Almighty God as revealed in Holy Writ, and sought the salvation offered to a fallen world through faith in the divine and adorable Redeemer. But it is a source of high satisfaction that his oral testimony was against every approach to materialism; that his writings abound with pious allusions to the attributes and providence of God; that he delighted to point out the wonderful proofs of design in the conformation of the human body; that he was habituated to remark the wonderful processes of nature, and ready to ascribe them to nature's God; that he regarded and read the sacred book of revelation, as well as the volume of nature ever spread open around him; that he attended public divine worship; and that he went about doing good.

Were mankind but alive to the costliness of maintaining the malevolent emotions, and to the rich rewards of the benevolent feelings; anger and malice, envy, hatred, and revenge, would seldom gain a lodgment in the heart, and reconciliations would not be postponed till the approach of death on account of some frivolous question as to the principles of adjustment. Sir William had fallen into an unhappy difference with two of his colleagues, and there was reason to fear the existence of interminable animosity. He became suddenly ill, and subsequently mentioned to a friend that whilst his thoughts were awakened to the subject of death, he could look at the momentous event with composure except on the one point of not dying in peace with all men. Early in the morning he sent for his two colleagues, and told them what had been his sentiments, and begged that without explanations they might shake hands and become friends. Highly to their honour they readily



assented, and their future years, (to one of them, indeed, but few,) as well as the remaining years of him who solicited the restitution of friendship, were, no doubt rendered more peaceful and happy than they would have been had the disagreements continued.

Allow me to observe, Mr. President, that an instance like this, in which affliction leads to a triumph over animosities or other outrages on social order, is often a great desideratum in man's present state of brief and chequered existence; but, speaking medically, it is far better to combat and repress the inflaming causes which are usually more manageable and transient, than to wait the malignant effects, which take deeper root, and are more difficult to be eradicated.

In the summer of 1827, Sir William, then eighty-four years of age, paid a visit to Edinburgh, which was the longest journey he ever made from home. He experienced the greatest pleasure from the warm and kind reception he met with at the modern Athens, from several of his old friends and former pupils at the London Hospital, particularly from the Bells, Dr. Monro, and others who might be named. The journey was completed in four days; and he commenced travelling every morning at five o'clock. The only objects of attraction on the road were the hospitals of the principal towns through which he passed. He visited them all, inquiring minutely into their economy, and into their capabilities of affording medical instruction.\* He proceeded to Valleyfield, and paid a visit to his valued and then oldest friend Sir R. Preston, Bart. From this wealthy

\* The College of Surgeons had not at that time recognised any of the country Hospitals.



gentleman, who was Sir William's senior by three years, and was distinguished for almost a princely hospitality, he received a most hearty welcome.\*

It would be unjust to all parties, if no notice were taken of a testimony of respect paid to Sir William on his birthday, March 1, 1834, shortly after his retirement from the London Hospital. The numerous and highly respectable company, chiefly composed of members of his own profession, physicians, surgeons, and general practitioners, with other gentlemen of eminence, friends of the London Hospital, could be actuated by no sentiments but those of high esteem, when inviting him to a social festival at the Albion Tavern.† From the sentiments expressed on that occasion—sentiments of congratulation and admiration, on the one hand, and of thankfulness and an overwhelming sense of deficiency and unworthiness on the other; all present concurred in the opinion that it was an occasion which did honour to those who promoted it, and felt conscious that it tended to rouse not only the more delightful feelings of their own hearts, but those feelings which are most elevating to the social nature of man.

But, though the energy of an iron constitution had sustained the wear and tear of great activity of mind and body

\* Sir R. Preston died in 1834, at the age of ninety-four. He was formerly one of the Elder Brethren of the Honourable Corporation of Trinity-House. Sir William was Surgeon to this Corporation, and appears to have been held in high estimation by the illustrious and distinguished men who constitute the brotherhood.

† William Cotton, Esq. F.R.S. an old friend of Sir William's, faithful and warm in his attachment to the last, and a very kind and liberal supporter of many charitable and scientific institutions, very ably filled the chair at this interesting meeting. He was assisted by nearly seventy stewards, with Alfred Hamilton, Esq. one of the assistant-surgeons of the London Hospital, as Honorary Secretary.



up to nearly the ninetieth year, it began then to yield. Sir William's sight failed him, and, at length, he became nearly blind. Having been informed that he had cataract, he determined to have it removed, and though rather dissuaded by his friends, who considered that the operation could scarcely be unattended with danger at his advanced age, he firmly resolved on submitting to it.

The lens in the right eye was skilfully extracted by Mr. Lawrence,\* at 8 o'clock in the morning of September 23, 1834. In the evening he was bled to eight ounces, Mr. Lawrence remarking, that he must be treated not according to his age, but to his state of health and constitution. The operation, and the confinement consequent upon it, were borne with great composure and patience. Every thing went on in the most favourable manner possible. On the third morning the eye was examined, and the wound in the cornea was found perfectly united. As there was some degree of eversion of the lower lid, from laxity of the integuments, a small portion was removed, and the evil obviated. Nothing could be more gratifying than the result of this operation. He became able to recognise his friends, and to write as well as ever; and he afterwards appeared in improved health and spirits.

Sir William throughout life often indulged himself in versification, and some of his compositions have poetical merit. In early life his pieces were patriotic, in later life they were of pious tendency. The quotation which follows is from a piece which has peculiar interest about it, being written in the present year, and being a soliloquy on sight,

\* Mr. Lawrence had never before operated on so old an individual, Sir William being then in his 92nd year.



depicting his emotions on regaining that noble faculty, by the loss of which he, for a time, had been denied the power of beholding the objects of nature in their vast variety and inconceivable beauty; and had been incapacitated for examination of the works of art, affording, in an achieving age like the present, endless gratification to an observing eye. It is dated March 1st, 1835. The following lines are taken from the conclusion.

HUSH! blessed Impress! sight suddenly restored!  
 Prostrate, I breathe thanksgiving, gracious Lord!  
 The face of nature, sun-gilt world, to see,  
 Revives each fibre's sense of function free.  
 But I will not the loss of sight deplore;  
 Its restoration animates the more.  
 The series of impressions on the sight,  
 And, in the scale of wonder and delight,  
 Are forms which have an organized frame,  
 Or vegetate, or have a sentient claim.  
 The human features, with mysterious sway,  
 Benevolence, and bravery, portray.  
 Yet, oft would sorrow mingle with a smile,  
 And sympathy, as oft, its pangs beguile.  
 Should *Herschel* farther move sight's marv'lous sphere,  
 Bigots may bode a solemn era near.  
 The mighty universe is the same still:—  
 Learn, and obey, th' adored Maker's Will!  
 On the analogy; the harmony;  
 In all creation, far as mortals see;  
 On the prophetic Truth to man revealed;  
 And on his Christian Faith, his Hope, and Shield;  
 Newton affords an intellectual light  
 To which will bend the humble lay on sight.  
 Infants are by instinctive impulse mov'd;  
 This, reason's force, and nature's law have proved.



The focal errors vision can detect,  
 Optical apparatus may correct.  
 Science, and art, thus point th' adapted way ;  
 Which their true vot'ries faithfully obey.  
 Whence this memorial—whence my grateful soul,  
 Would raise its faculties without control !  
 Thy mercy, God ! beams through my lengthen'd days !  
 Receive my fervent homage ! Thanks ! and Praise !

Sir William was endowed with extraordinary retentiveness of memory. He distinctly recollected the attachment of muscles, and other anatomical particulars, which, usually, it is exceedingly difficult to retain. He was able to repeat numerous passages from Shakspeare, and within a year of his death, when dining at a friend's house, he repeated aloud to the company the whole of Gray's *Elegy in a Country Church-Yard*, almost without hesitation, though he had not read it for forty or fifty years.

But notwithstanding these auspicious appearances as to his physical and intellectual energies, the period was drawing near when he was to be called to his "long home."—"When the silver cord should be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.—When the dust should return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return to God who gave it."

For several months he had experienced difficulty in breathing, especially on ascending a staircase. On the occasion of His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, the new President, visiting the hospital in May last, he accompanied him through several of the wards, but on ascending to the upper wards he was so overcome that he was obliged to rest for



some time. About this period his legs began to swell, and he was troubled with other symptoms evincing organic change in the valves of the heart. Those who watched him narrowly observed an unhealthy appearance, and an expression of anxiety in his countenance as well as growing feebleness. The difficulty of respiration gradually increased, and latterly he became subject to a loss of consciousness which lasted only a few seconds, but was accompanied with a tingling sensation extending to the ends of the fingers. He still, however, continued to go about as usual, though a very little fatigued him. He attended the court of examiners at the College on Friday, August 21st, a week before his death. It was remarked that he appeared very unwell, and continued for some time pressing with his fingers upon the temporal arteries which he said relieved the uneasiness in his head. On returning home, between twelve and one at night, he expressed himself as feeling better than he had done for some time, and spoke confidently of his recovery. On Saturday he was very poorly, and he continued feverish all Sunday, taking scarcely anything but lemonade. He retired early to rest, and on Monday kept his bed, dozing the greater part of the day. In the evening his bowels, which during some days had been confined, having been acted on by castor oil, he revived; and he was so much better on Tuesday, sitting up the whole afternoon, that great hopes were entertained of his life's being yet prolonged some weeks. The following day, however, these hopes were annihilated; he was too unwell to leave his bed, and on Thursday was feverish, and became evidently worse. He continued in a state of excitement the whole of the afternoon and night, incessantly talking and very irritable, though otherwise perfectly



rational. He took scarcely any nourishment, and was unable to obtain sleep. It was observed that mucus was gradually collecting in the air-passages, rendering respiration more difficult. During the morning of Friday his powers were gradually declining, but he was more tranquil, and said to a friend who visited him, "you have come to see a dying man." About one o'clock it was thought he had not many hours to live, and even this conjecture exceeded life's limit. A little before two he drank some wine from a tea-pot, holding it without assistance. His breathing was now becoming rapidly worse. He lost the power of articulating, and at two o'clock closed his long life, calmly and without much suffering, retaining his mental faculties to the last, and having been fully conscious of his approaching end. Even the day before his death he dictated a letter to the President of the College, accounting for his absence at the Court the following night; and on the Friday morning recognised those about him and conversed most rationally.

His body was not examined.

I cannot, Mr. President, conclude this memorial without remarking that men have their respective endowments. The two Hunters differed much from each other, and Baillie from them both. About Abernethy there was a charm which fascinated all who knew him well. Another name, that of Babington, cannot be mentioned in this Society without peculiar endearments and delightful recollections. Each filled his station well—with high honour to himself, and with great advantage to his profession and his race, but no one of them could have filled another's station with equal success. So with the subject of this memoir. Rich in experience; accurate in observation; definite and decisive in practice; forcible and energetic in teaching; bold in avowing his



opinions; manly in his disregard of calumny; but grateful for good opinions, and humbled when betrayed into uncalled-for severity of expression. Ignorance may say he was not a Hunter, a Baillie, or an Abernethy—No, Sir, he occupied his own sphere, and through an almost unexampled succession of years exerted his endowments in the noble object of lessening human misery and advancing the interests of his profession with a zeal and perseverance well worthy of imitation. It has been very justly said, that “the character of men placed in lower stations of life are more useful as being imitable by greater numbers.” It will not be considered the less instructive a sketch of character because it involves no rare qualities or pre-eminent talents, but exhibits talents and acquirements of a common order applied successfully without resort to any dishonourable method of gaining influence or popularity; progressively raising the individual to high professional rank, securing to him the confidence and estimation of a wide circle, and leading him into numerous channels of unceasing labour for the benefit of mankind. The motto, on which his whole life was a commentary, and which it recommended to others, would seem to have been “Be not weary in well doing for assuredly ye shall reap if ye faint not.”

#### *His Funeral.*

Sir William had resided for thirteen years at Brixton Hill, and his body was interred, September 4th, in a vault beneath the church of Brixton. Besides mourning relatives, his remains were followed to the grave by J. W. Freshfield, Esq. M.P. one of his executors, Wm. Cotton, Esq., J. G. Andrews, Esq. President of the College of Surgeons, and senior Surgeon of the London Hospital, and a few other private friends.



## APPENDIX.

SIR WILLIAM was tall in person, and his features were strongly marked. It would be inferred from his physiognomy that he was a man of strong emotions, and that he had permitted nature to express herself by the appropriate actions of the muscles of the face. He was prone to jocularity, and would indulge himself in merriment on the prominence of his nose, and the development of the muscles which denote the passions. Walking with him round the museum of the College, the bust of Sir E. Home, and that of himself, stood before us. "There, sir," said he, "look at that pudding-faced bust—every interstice is filled with fat, there is not a particle of expression; but look at the other, and you see it all character and expression." His manners indicated the cultivation of the gentleman. He had adopted the custom of carrying his hat in his hand, so that his head was almost invariably uncovered. The portrait which is in possession of the College of Surgeons, painted by Opie, is not so striking a likeness as the bust by Chantrey, or the smaller one by Rivers.\*

Few persons estimated more highly the good opinion of their brethren, and none could be more indifferent to unjustifiable attack and calumny, whether uttered by the censorious tongue, or written by the slanderous pen.

Allusion has been made to his high sense of professional honour. Abhorrence of quackery, in any form, was a leading feature in his character. He could not endure to have kept secret any remedy adapted to the relief of human suffering, nor bear with the self-commendation, or the detracting inuendo, designed to place another

\* This beautiful bust was executed within a year before his death; and friends desirous of possessing such a memento, can obtain casts at a moderate charge, by application to Mr. C. A. Rivers, 26, Derby Street, Kingsland.



practitioner in a false-light, or to subvert his interests. Every thing which militated against pure integrity, and unsophisticated courteousness, incurred his marked disapprobation. He was ready to make all reasonable allowance for difference of opinion, and unavoidable errors of judgment; but when the motive appeared unworthy of a member of a liberal and enlightened profession, he felt much regret. He was solicitous that in all the medical and scientific associations the public character of the members should be regarded as well as their scientific qualifications, and has been known to withdraw his recommendation even of a friend if that friend had committed acts tending to depreciate the credit and dignity of his profession. His punctiliousness on points of etiquette remained with him to the last. During his illness he required the medical friends who attended him to adhere to all the usual forms in consultation; and at the last conference, which took place only an hour before he expired, he requested them to retire to an adjoining room and having consulted to return and give him their opinion.

About fifty years ago, many distinguished physicians and surgeons resorted to coffee-houses to meet their mercantile patients, (some it is said for less worthy purposes;) and the apothecaries of those times, more dependant and obsequious than their posterity in these reforming days, often carried thither their fees, and sought direction in their difficulties, and obtained a sanction for pouring in their nauseous potions with un pitying profusion: but customs have altered, and Sir William was one of the last of the generation of medical men who regularly frequented Batson's coffee-house in Cornhill.

It must be owned that our deceased and venerated friend was a pluralist in appointments, as well as fellowships. Some of them were not of his own seeking, and none of them, in connexion with charitable objects, were sources of revenue, but they were indications of his diffusive benevolence. In addition to the official appointments which have been mentioned, he was Consulting



Surgeon to the Deaf-and-Dumb Asylum, the Marine Society, the Clergy Orphan Asylum, and the London Orphan Asylum.

He appears to have been a decided advocate of general instruction. The approbation he expressed at the establishment of Sunday Schools, showed the solidity of his convictions; for at that period persons of authority and influence were loud in denouncing the scheme as one from which the most disastrous consequences might be anticipated. In his latter years we find the aged man endeavouring to bless the infants of the poor by providing schools, where the first developments of mind are submitted to discipline. Notwithstanding the pressure of years and duty, he permitted himself to be named on the committee of the Infant School Society, formed some years back to promote the establishment of schools of that order through the country—institutions which have proved highly advantageous in a physical as well as moral point of view.

Numerous anecdotes might be related, but desiring to be as concise as possible, I shall limit myself to a very few, and only give those which are characteristic.

He entertained great respect for the clergy, and was always ready to befriend them, knowing many to be poor, and well deserving of kind consideration. On one occasion having declined his fee, and stated that it was his rule to do so, the clergyman remarked that there was no rule without an exception, and that being a beneficed clergyman he must insist on giving his fee, and presented two guineas. This was honourable to both. Sir William was a man of a catholic spirit, and would, no doubt, as readily have given his counsel to a suffering minister of any other religious persuasion as to one belonging to his own church.

The following anecdote is copied from *Joe Miller*:—"Mr. Blizzard, the surgeon, being ill of fever, several of his profession made interest with the Governors of the London Hospital to succeed him. Blizzard recovering, and meeting with one of these surgeons at a coffee-house, the latter began to apologize for his having



solicited, urging that it was no more than is customary when an hospital physician or surgeon was supposed to be in danger. "Sir," said Blizard, "if you will forgive me for living, I will forgive you for soliciting."

Many years ago, when the vicinity of London was greatly infested by footpads, he was travelling alone on the Essex-road, and his carriage was stopped by three men. Having placed a pistol against the breast of one of them it missed fire, he therefore gave up his watch and purse. Afterwards recollecting that the watch, though not of much value, had been given him by an esteemed friend, he asked for it back again. The man to whom he had given it up replied, "There, my honest fellow, take your watch," at the same time returning it. It was supposed that the man had been under Sir William, at the London Hospital, and had probably recognised him.

The following anecdote, though true to the character, I do not mention with approbation. I rather feel with a late venerable and pious physician, who, when meeting a very distinguished surgeon in consultation, rebuked him for having exclaimed, "What the devil!" by saying, "the less familiar you are with that personage the better."

At the period which has been alluded to when it was dangerous to travel in the vicinity of London, by night, unarmed, Sir William was accustomed to carry some weapon with him, which habit he continued till the period of his death. One night, on leaving the court of examiners at the College, he missed his favourite hanger, which had more than once served him as a weapon of defence in early life. His servant was unable to give any account of it, which induced Sir William to exclaim, with some energy, "It must be found, for with it I am in fear of no one, not even of the devil himself." A member of the Court who was by, shrewdly remarked, "*If that is the case, he had better have it put into his coffin with him.*"



Of the productions of Sir William's pen, a rather full account has been already given. Most of his recreations in verse remain in manuscript, but several of his pieces were printed for distribution among his friends. On occasion of the calamitous fire at Ratcliff, in 1794, when fourteen hundred families were thrown out of their homes, a benefit at the Royalty Theatre was given for the sufferers, he, sympathizing deeply with them, wrote an address, which was recited with good effect.

An allusion has been made to the political writings of his early years. No great importance, of course, will be attached to his sentiments at that period; but the sketch of his life and character would have been incomplete without a specimen of his style of writing when he first came into the field of authorship. He was bold in his animadversions, but the chief abuses on which he passes censure are not the evils decried in the present day. This circumstance allows me to introduce his essay without its introduction appearing to have any political bearing. Least of all would his remarks on the monarchy be applicable to the gracious Sovereign who now occupies the British throne, with his amiable and beloved Consort.

It is satisfactory to observe that Sir William, in the most daring flights of his youth as a public censor, was never betrayed into a reckless disregard of those essentials of good government, the maintenance of religion and public order, and the cultivation of knowledge; and the germ of that universal benevolence and true patriotism which he retained throughout life, with all the changes his opinions underwent, is clearly perceptible.

The following article is taken from the *Freeholder's Magazine*, or *Monthly Chronicle of Liberty*, for October, 1769.

### *On the Intent and End of Government.*

When the inhabitants of the world became numerous, it was found expedient, to preserve lives and property from the ravages of bad men,



to form societies, and make compacts to bind them. The modes of such ancient compacts were different in almost every country, and suited to the peculiarities and particular circumstances of time and place.

When men, by mutual commerce, became in some degree civilized, and humanity and all the social virtues glowed in their hearts, laws were frequently added to the original bond, whereby benevolence was enjoined on the members, and every sort of wrong, cruelty, and oppression forbid, on pain of corporal punishments and penalties.

This was in days of old, when men young in society, knew, from nature and intuitive wisdom, that they were born free ; that to be rescinded from that freedom, was to be robbed of the noblest privilege of existence ; and that the true end of society could only be to strengthen the security of it, and that by the punishment of criminals *in terrorem*. It is an eternal truth, that those, whose actions are repugnant to the principles of humanity and benevolence are enemies of freedom, *e. g.* suicide is a crime against nature, which supersedes all human institutions. No man, therefore, can give his life to any one ; and he who would take it, not forfeited to his country, is a bloody tyrant. Every man protests against the seizing of his lawful property, and all things sacred authorize it. The robber then, is a despotic villain. Thus might I go on ; suffice it that to be safe from such unnatural beings, the more honest and humane part of mankind entered into the social compact.

*Reges ex nobis non nos a regibus.* An agreement and laws were nothing if not executed, and the occasion of the first compact presently demanded the law's force, for rapine and plunder were still heard of. The people, then, nominated a certain number of select men to dispense justice ; and of these in many parts of the world, for the more convenient transaction of affairs, ONE singly was invested with superior power, a sort of prime minister, or executive officer, whom we, however, in plain English designate King. But the power of those was never considered as *from themselves* : In their own persons they were subjects of the law ; (a distinction all



of us should remember,) officially only they were Kings.\* So in a free state, (and such indeed were all states originally,) every thing is *ex lege*; and those officers of government who infract the fundamental principles of the constitution dissolve all engagements, derived from the nature of the office, between them and the people; and the people are again free to nominate others. This is the unsophisticated language of nature. And thus we trace Government and Kings to their simple source *a compact*, made to strengthen, that liberty and security which nature authorized and which the Christian religion and the most sublime reasoning have confirmed to be the birthright of every son of Adam.

Taxes on the people were originally made according to regular estimates on individuals. This is a vast field to expatiate in; but I shall pass it with two or three plain questions, to which I fancy every Englishman would be both respondent and commentator. Is not the man, who exacts money on a false plea, a defrauder? Should your steward squander away, or connive at the embezzlement of your rents, and thereby, from a munificent squire reduce you to a pauper, would not he be a villain? Or if in a club of friends, the president or moderator, assume the sole directorship, destroy the wonted harmony of the place, and then demand from every member tribe-dues to support the dignity of the chair, and fee the waiters; would not he deserve the same epithet? By considering the history of former times we may discover that we do now pay in taxes, duties, &c. infinitely more than a proportionate price for the remaining paltry security for our liberty, lives, and fortunes.

To preserve men free—*truly free*—we have seen is, or rather was, the genuine design of government. The English constitution is admirably adapted to that noble end; but through the frailty of

\* "As the good Lord Mansfield is Chief Justice, &c. who yet in all probability will one day pay *capital* obedience to the laws." Happily this prediction was not fulfilled, and none would have exceeded our humane author in regret had things arrived at that issue.



human nature there has often been a desire in the head to become an arbitrary dictator, in a few lords to assume the government of both king and people, and in the commons to become creatures of those lords, for mean interest's sake, thus being accessory to the destruction of that order of government, for the preservation of which they were, with generous confidence, nominated to the national synod. The point whence proceed riches and titles, is the common centre of gravity of degenerate and ambitious men; but a good King, as a bright luminary, will never suffer such sort of men to bring a gloom on his people. As transient clouds they will be wafted away as fast as they assemble, and his lustre will continue unsullied.

The three estates in this realm are distinct in their peculiar prerogatives, and in those prerogatives the check upon each other consists, and it should ever be exercised by either, when the others assume an undue and unconstitutional power. Kings have seldom had wisdom and spirit enough, to exert themselves in this manner for the good of their people. An exertion of the King's prerogative, in the dissolution of the parliament, would be the means of removing all the grievances of Englishmen at this day. The Lords in general are too voluptuous and supine for such a manly task. The want of virtue in the Commons is the source of misery in England. And thus for want of wisdom, spirit, and virtue, we groan under the most oppressive burthens; and what good can be expected from such a combination of ills? Despotism has had the sanction of M——y. A few lords have assumed the power just taken notice of, and exercised it in a most audacious manner.

The C——s have been so lost to all sense of honour and honesty, as to neglect to oppose the nobilitated perpetrators of rapine and oppression, and in addition to these negative crimes, have committed actual ones of the deepest dye; even premeditated the total destruction of our venerable system of liberty. If we had heard of these things only, our hearts and minds must have given the lie to the narrator; for who, if he had not the weeping evidence of a whole



nation, would believe, that men could so forget themselves as to act in flat contradiction to the sacred charges of their ancestors, in opposition to their own true and lasting interest, and in the certain assurance of the dreadful execrations of posterity.

CURTIVS.

Excepting his other political papers the following is a catalogue of his writings :—

A New Method of Treating the Fistula Lachrymalis—Paper on, in the Phil. Trans. Vol. lxx. p. 239.

A Pamphlet entitled Desultory Reflections on Police, with an Essay on the means of Preventing Crimes and amending Criminals. 1785.

Experiments and Observations on the external use of Tartar Emetic. London Medical Journal, 1787.

Observations on the uses of Electricity in Deafness. London Medical Journal, 1790.

Suggestions for the Improvement of Hospitals, and other charitable Institutions. 8vo. 1796.

Lecture to the scholars of the Maritime School at Chelsea, on the situation of the large blood-vessels of the extremities, explaining the use of the tourniquet: to which is appended, a brief explanation of the nature of wounds. 12mo. 1798.

Observations on some Epidemical Effects. Medical Facts and Observations, 1792.

Hunterian Orations, 1815. 1823. 1828.

Oration delivered before the Hunterian Society, with supplementary Observations and engravings.

An Address to the Chairman and Members of the House Committee of the London Hospital, on the subject of Cholera. 1831.

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