

A letter to Dr Robert Jones of Caermarthenshire, in answer to the account which he has published of the case of Mr John Braham Isaacson student of medicine, and to the injurious aspersions which he has thrown out against the physicians who attended Mr Isaacson / by Andrew Duncan.

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A
L E T T E R
T O
DR ROBERT JONES
OF CAERMARTHENSHIRE,

IN ANSWER TO THE
ACCOUNT WHICH HE HAS PUBLISHED OF THE
CASE OF MR JOHN BRAHAM ISAACSON
STUDENT OF MEDICINE,

AND TO THE
Injurious ASPERSIONS which he has thrown out
against the Physicians who attended Mr Isaacson.

By ANDREW DUNCAN, M.D.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS EDINBURGH,
AND MEMBER OF THE ROYAL SOCIETIES OF MEDICINE
OF PARIS, COPENHAGEN, EDINBURGH, &c.

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L. E. T. H. R.

DR. ROBERT T. JOHNS

OF C. LEANING

IN A REPLY TO THE

ACCOUNT WHICH WAS PUBLISHED IN THE

CASE OF MR. JOHN P. HANCOCK

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DR ROBERT JONES.

SIR,

I HAVE now perused your publication, entitled *An Inquiry into the State of Medicine*; and I address this letter to you, in consequence of some passages which it contains.

It is by no means my intention to enter into any refutation of the new doctrine which you have adopted. To me, the absurdity of it appears to be self-evident. Nor do I propose to become the advocate for those respectable characters whom you have loaded with abuse; some of whom you have even boldly charged with villany and falsehood *: If they incline, they want not abilities to vindicate their own conduct. I shall also pass over in silence, all those expressions of supercilious disdain, which in different parts of your work, although you have been yet but little more than three years engaged in the study of medicine, you have thrown out against

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* The gentlemen here alluded to are, Dr Cullen, Dr Monro, and Mr Alexander Wood.

my publications, my practice, my premiums for encouraging experimental inquiry, and my Dispensary as you are pleased to call it. If these be not able to defend themselves, they are not worth defending.

But, in the unfair account which you have given of the case of Mr Isaacson, you have represented me not only as an ignorant physician, but as a bad man. Others whom you have treated in the same manner, may probably consider silent contempt as the best answer. Perhaps they are right. But, for my own part, I put too high a value upon the character of an honest man, not to do every thing in my power to defend it. Your book may fall into the hands of many readers who are unacquainted either with your character or with mine; and, if no reply be given, they may imagine that there is some foundation for what you say. Before the publication of it, you retired beyond the reach of the laws of this part of Britain; and at present, I have neither leisure nor inclination to follow you into Wales.

These reasons have determined me to defend myself before the tribunal of the public, in a letter addressed to you. And I trust, that every candid reader who shall peruse it, will be fully satisfied, not only that I have been accused without any good reason, but that your conduct in this affair was highly culpable, and might have been severely punished by the laws of the land.

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The following plain narrative affords sufficient confirmation of these assertions.—In the month of October 1780, Mr Edward L. Fox, then a student of medicine at this place, but who is at present, I believe, in Cornwall, called at my house, and requested the favour that I would visit his friend Mr Isaacson, who was then very ill. I immediately accompanied Mr Fox to Mr Isaacson's lodging, where I received from his own mouth a full and particular account of the progress of his complaints.

His disease was a distinctly marked fever, attended with an evident disposition to the putrid state; and his habit of body was such as gave me ground for being alarmed. I directed for him such measures as in my judgment appeared necessary: And although I informed him that I hoped there would be little danger in his case, I at the same time observed, that, as the progress of every fever was uncertain, it would be more satisfactory to me to attend him in conjunction with any other physician most agreeable to himself, than to attend him alone. After delaying for a day or two, during which time his fever continued to increase, Dr Monro was fixed upon. Mr Goodwin, an intimate friend of Mr Isaacson's, who then lodged in the same house, and who had always been present when I visited Mr Isaacson, called first at Dr Monro's house to request his attendance,

tendance, and afterwards at mine to inform me that Dr Monro would meet me at Mr Isaacson's lodging next morning at ten o'clock. We met accordingly, and regularly continued our attendance every day during the whole course of Mr Isaacson's illness. After our visits, we adjourned to Mr Goodwin's room; where, in presence of that gentleman, we concerted those measures which we thought necessary, and left our directions with him and the sick-nurse. In the course of the disease, our patient had much delirium, and the symptoms of putrescency ran to a great height. A fore, in particular, under his right arm, discharged a large quantity of an ichorous and bloody matter, which had a very high degree of foetor, in so much that Mr Goodwin, who was afraid of infection, thought it prudent not to go into the room, but merely to give the necessary directions to the nurse in his own room.

The remedies which we principally employed in this case were, the Peruvian bark, the acid elixir of vitriol, and the free access of cold air. Besides these, Port-wine was liberally employed; and he was likewise allowed to take a considerable quantity of strong cyder, for which he expressed a desire before his delirium came on. Under these remedies he had by imperceptible degrees a complete recovery.

During the whole course of this treatment,
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neither your name nor that of Dr Brown was ever mentioned. Dr Monro and myself regularly visited Mr Isaacson together; and, as our views of the disease were the same, every measure was concerted with the most perfect harmony. We entertained not even the most distant idea, that any person whatever was attempting to make our patient, while under the delirium of a fever, and incapable of giving his own assent to any measure, the subject of a dangerous experiment, which, if it had been carried into execution, would in all probability have proved fatal to him.

After all Mr Isaacson's febrile symptoms had left him, we directed him to the use of ass-milk and a restorative diet. Dr Monro then discontinued his visits; and I called upon him occasionally, rather as a friend than a physician.

No sooner was Mr Isaacson in this state, than it began to be reported that he was cured by Dr Brown, after Dr Monro and Dr Duncan had given him over. This story was particularly told in a pretty large company by Mr Richard Codrington, one of those favourite pupils of Dr Brown, whom you mention as having been a witness to the conclusive experiment which he made, That brandy is an effectual cure for the gout, which you think was demonstrated by his having obtained, in his own case, the temporary use of a pained foot, or rather, perhaps, by his

having forgotten the pain of it in consequence of intoxication. Nay, I was afterwards informed, that Dr Brown himself went so far as to say to one gentleman in Edinburgh, that if he had not boldly interfered, Dr Monro and I would have killed our patient in one day longer. As soon as I heard what Mr Codrington had said, you may readily suppose that I thought it my duty to inquire into the matter.

I went to Mr Isaacson, and took the first opportunity, when the nurse was out of the room, of asking him, Whether he knew any thing of his having been treated by Dr Brown and you? He assured me, That he was entirely ignorant of the whole matter. When the nurse returned to the room, I put the same question to her, telling her the reports I had heard. The nurse informed me, That, during the course of Mr Isaacson's illness, you had made repeated applications to her to exhibit to Mr Isaacson, without the knowledge of his physicians, medicines which you would bring to her : That you had offered her money to comply with this request; and that one day when you met with her on the street, you prevailed upon her to go into Dr Brown's house, where Dr Brown in your presence had earnestly urged the same request, and had given her particular directions about exhibiting to Mr Isaacson rum and laudanum in large quantities.

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But she positively asserted, that she had strictly adhered to the advice given by Dr Monro and me; and that she had never on any occasion exhibited the medicines, or followed the advice, given by you or Dr Brown. She said, That one night when Mr Isaacson was delirious, and could not distinguish one person from another, you had come into the room with a tea-cup in your hand, and attempted to give him the contents of it, but that you could not get him to swallow it; and that she saw the greatest part of it afterwards thrown into the ashes by the landlady of the house. But she positively affirmed, That during the course of her attendance, this was the only medicine of your's which Mr Isaacson had tasted; and that your directions with regard to rum had been entirely disobeyed, the patient having been regularly kept upon the use of wine, cyder, and the other articles which were ordered by Dr Monro and me.

The landlady of the house, who bestowed a great deal of attention on Mr Isaacson during his illness, corroborated in every particular the account given by the nurse, where she had access to know it. She informed me, That you had endeavoured to prevail upon her to exhibit your medicines privately, without either the knowledge of the nurse or of the physicians: That she

had positively refused to comply with your request : That she was afterwards present when you made an application to the nurse, who also refused : That the nurse informed her, she was one night prevailed upon by you to go into Dr Brown's house, where the same request of exhibiting laudanum and rum was again made by Dr Brown himself ; but that she was still firmly resolved to adhere to the directions given by Dr Monro and Dr Duncan, and to exhibit no medicine but what they ordered. She added, that she was firmly convinced the nurse had stuck to this resolution ; and that she herself, who was constantly present with Mr Isaacson when the nurse was asleep or absent, had never given him any other medicines but those ordered by Dr Monro and me. She informed me also, That she saw you one night attempt to give Mr Isaacson a draught which contained a large quantity of laudanum, but that you could not get him to take it ; and that as soon as you left the room, she threw it into the ashes.

Mr Goodwin, to whom I also applied for information about this matter, informed me, That you had been remarkably troublesome with your kindness during the time that he was afraid to venture himself into Mr Isaacson's room : That the nurse had informed him of your application to her, and had asked him whether she might
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give any medicines brought by you : to which he replied, that he thought Mr Jones was only wishing to make an experiment ; that in so dangerous a case he should be afraid to trust him ; and that he would never give his consent to it. He added, that he firmly believed she had implicitly followed our directions, and totally disregarded those given by you and Dr Brown.

After I had received this full information of what you had done, and intended to have done, in Mr Isaacson's case, I must own, Sir, that I viewed you in no other light than in that of emissary to Dr Brown ; and if your own account of the matter can in any degree be depended upon, this is now put beyond all doubt. You had indeed been the ostensible agent ; yet I was inclined to think, that, upon a thorough examination of the matter before a court of justice, the original and principal delinquent might be fully detected and properly punished. I considered full detection and exemplary punishment, as a matter of consequence to society, with the view of preventing such practices in future. I thought, that if hereafter any unfortunate student, who put himself under the care of a physician in whose judgment he had confidence, should fall a victim to the rash experiments of any wild theoretical interloper who was capable of bribing a nurse, we should be in some measure culpable
for

for it, by having allowed you and Dr Brown to escape on the present occasion.

With these sentiments I went to Dr Monro. I informed him of the reports I had heard, and of the accounts I had received from Mr Isaacson, Mr Goodwin, the nurse, and the landlady. Till that time he had heard nothing of the attempts made by you and Dr Brown. I need not mention his surprise at your extraordinary conduct. He was fully sensible, that the same motives which now influenced you to claim the merit of the cure, would have led you to represent us as the cause of Mr Isaacson's death, if your request had been complied with, and he had fallen a victim to the rum and laudanum. For in that case you would probably have kept your paction, as you call it, with the nurse, of never divulging any thing of the matter; and the whole of your interference would have for ever remained a profound secret. Dr Monro saw the hazard to which he and other practitioners would be subjected, if such procedure were continued. He was aware of the still greater hazard to which the lives of students would be exposed, if they were practised upon by those who never saw them, but merely received imperfect accounts of their situation from an acquaintance or a nurse: But at the same time he was very averse to any prosecution or legal inquiry.

quiry. He was principally averse to it on your account, because he considered you in the light of an imprudent young man, who had thoughtlessly brought yourself into a very disagreeable situation ; and he imagined that the mal-practices might be sufficiently proved of you, altho' they could not be brought home to Dr Brown, whom he considered as the original aggressor. He was averse to it on account of Dr Brown's wife and infant-children, who might have suffered more severely by it than we could easily foresee. And besides this, he thought there was but little danger that Dr Brown would repeat such practices, and still less chance that he would again find any student to be his assistant in the manner that you had been.

To his judgment I yielded ; and all thoughts of prosecution were dropt. I took occasion, however, to state the case to several gentlemen of the law, eminent and respectable in their profession. It was their unanimous opinion, that if the facts which have now been related could be fully proved, imprisonment, pillory, or banishment, would have been the punishment inflicted upon you. And they were farther of opinion, that if your rum and laudanum had really been exhibited, and if Mr Isaacson had died immediately after this experiment, you could

could not have escaped the gallows but by a Royal pardon.

Although the idea of a prosecution at law was dropt, yet the case of Mr Isaacson did not cease to be the subject of conversation. As being a party concerned, I was often asked the particulars of it ; and I never failed to give what I then thought, and am still convinced, was a fair and candid representation of the matter. This, however, probably produced the following letter to me from Dr Brown.

To Dr DUNCAN, Physician, Edinburgh.

“ SIR,

“ I have received certain information, that
 “ you have, in a very public manner, made free
 “ with my character, as a man and as a physician. I should have thought your conduct
 “ more proper, if you had any information of
 “ any thing reprehensible in my conduct towards
 “ you, to have mentioned your complaint first
 “ to myself ; and then, if I did not give you the
 “ entire satisfaction that you might think yourself intitled to, to have adopted the method
 “ you have thought proper to follow. Though
 “ you have not done so, I still think it a proper
 “ step to apply to yourself for information of
 “ what

“ what you have to say against me. I am in ex-
 “ pectation of your immediate answer.

“ JOHN BROWN.”

To this Letter I returned the following Answer.

“ SIR,

“ In answer to your letter which I received
 “ yesterday, give me leave to ask you the fol-
 “ lowing questions.

“ 1. Did you, during Mr Isaacson's late illness,
 “ give advice or directions to Mr Jones respect-
 “ ing the method of treatment to be followed in
 “ that case?

“ 2. Was you privy to the fact, that Mr Jones
 “ exhibited, or ordered to be exhibited, to Mr
 “ Isaacson, when under the delirium of a fever,
 “ medicines of a very active kind, without gi-
 “ ving the smallest intimation of this to the phy-
 “ sicians who were attending him, and who
 “ were at the same daily prescribing medicines
 “ for Mr Isaacson of a different nature?

“ 3. Are you ignorant, that, soon after Mr
 “ Isaacson's recovery, a report was propaga-
 “ ted that he was cured by large doses of lau-
 “ danum given by your directions, after he had
 “ been given up by Dr Monro and Dr Duncan?

“ 4. Is there any foundation in truth for such
 “ a report?

“ given them any answer, it puts a period to
 “ any farther correspondence on this subject on
 “ the part of ANDREW DUNCAN.”

After this second letter, I heard nothing farther from Dr Brown on the subject. When the case of Mr Isaacson happened afterwards to be mentioned, I always gave the account I have now given. And I am convinced, that in the repetition of Dr Brown's letters, when I had them not in my pocket to read, I never did him any injustice. I am sorry you have reduced me to the necessity of printing them: but if they do him no credit, it is your fault, not mine. Nay, the whole matter would probably have been in a short time forgotten, if your publication had not revived it.

I have now, Sir, given a fair detail of this matter; and I trust that it is unnecessary for me to add much more, to obtain with every impartial reader, a full acquittal from all the calumny with which you have loaded me.

That Mr Isaacson himself thought I had some merit with him, may be inferred from the following circumstance. No sooner was he able to go abroad, than he came to my house, and, in language expressive of the most sincere regard, returned me his best thanks for the kind attention I had bestowed upon him during his illness. He pressed me to accept of a proper pecuniary compensation

compensation for my trouble. This, however, I declined; as it is a general rule with me, as well as with almost all the other medical practitioners in Edinburgh, never to accept of a fee from any student of medicine. But he afterwards sent me a book, which was marked, “ To
 “ Dr Duncan, as a tribute of gratitude from his
 “ humble servant, J. B. Isaacson.” Of this I cheerfully accepted; and it has ever since had a place in my library, among many other similar donations.

These, Sir, were the sentiments and feelings expressed by the man whose life was at stake on the present occasion. But you, although you had no concern whatever in the matter, have thought proper, for reasons best known to yourself, in your panegyric on the Discoverer of the New Doctrine, as you call it, to bestow upon me a return of a very different nature.

You charge me, in a general way, with folly, weakness, and malice. I pretend not, Sir, to be exempted from the frailties of human nature. But before the candid reader determines with what degree of these I am chargeable, he will at least consider on whose judgment I am here condemned. You have now, it is true, obtained the title of *Doctor of Medicine*, although rejected upon trial by the university of Edinburgh, as unworthy of that honour. But your new title
 has

has not, I suppose, conferred upon you any additional wisdom or prudence. With most of those who know your character, I am not afraid; and with those who do not know you, I am persuaded that no very high opinion will be formed of your judgment, from the publication in which you have attacked me.

You charge me as guilty of a crime, for having said that Dr Brown and you had clandestinely, and without authority, interfered with a patient under the care of Dr Monro and me. I did say so. And is it possible for any man to read your own narrative, without being satisfied that the assertion is true? On every occasion you call us the attending physicians: And you admit, that we knew nothing of the practices which you were attempting to carry on.

For this, you seem indeed to think it a sufficient apology, that a gentleman, for whom I had then a great regard, was desired by Dr Brown and you to communicate to me your intended interference, and to demonstrate to me the necessity of having recourse to your knowledge for the safety of my patient. This message, however, you allow, he declined to deliver. And you admit, that he advised you to leave the treatment of the case to the physicians under whose care it was. You will not therefore pretend to say, that the blame was his. He would indeed have acted,

in my opinion, a more friendly part both to you and to me, if he had told me of your interference. But, do you suppose any reader can consider it as an excuse for your conduct, that he refused to comply with your request, and that you refused to follow his advice? or at least, if you was not open enough to express your refusal, that you acted in contradiction to it?

As an apology for no intimation of your interference being given to the other physician who attended, you assert, in the most positive manner, that Dr Brown once desired you to communicate his plan of cure to Dr Monro. You admit, however, that you did not do so. Do you mean from this, to take the blame upon yourself, and to represent Dr Brown as being fully exculpated? Do you really think that this will be considered as a sufficient apology even for him by any unbiaſſed reader? Had he acted with the ſmalleſt ſenſe of propriety, had he been influenced by the leaſt ſpark of humanity, it was his duty, before ordering any thing, if there was any inſuperable obſtacle to his meeting with the attending phyſicians, to have ſeen the patient himſelf; and not to have truſted to the information which he derived from a ſingle converſation with a nurſe, or from the report of an unexperienced young man. But it will not, I imagine, require much ſagacity in any reader to diſcover his reaſons for acting as he did.

It

It is vain for you, after the acknowledgments which you have yourself made, to pretend that you alone had a right to direct the treatment of this case; and that Mr Isaacson first called in your assistance, and intrusted his life to your skill, on the present occasion. Let us but for a moment suppose, that, as you assert, Dr Monro was called in by no authority but your's, and that I came by no authority but my own. Yet you will not pretend to say, that during the whole course of Dr Monro's attendance, he ever saw you, spoke with you, or heard of your name, as attending this patient. After he was called, therefore, every reader must consider the case as entirely out of your direction, even supposing that it had been once under your care. But I go farther, Sir, and if you do not know it already, I must now tell you, that after your conduct with respect to this case began to make some noise, I asked Mr Isaacson whether he had ever put himself under your care; and he positively assured me, that the allegation of your being called to attend him at any time during the course of his fever, either by himself, or by any authority from him, was entirely groundless; and that there could be no other foundation for your assertion, but his having mentioned your name during his delirium.

You accuse me, Sir, as having been the most

active person in a plot against Dr Brown; and of having very near ruined him, both as a man and as a physician. What ground is there for this charge? Does a wish to have truth brought to light, deserve the name of a plot? Or did this dispute originate from any interference of mine with a patient of his? Am I accused of having almost ruined him, because I was anxious to have the matter brought before a court of justice, or is it because I yielded my own judgment to that of Dr Monro? I will not pretend to say, that it was not really a misfortune to him that a prosecution did not take place. I have often thought, that he anxiously wishes to have the character, at least, of being an oppressed man; and many parts of your publication, particularly the dedication and the conclusion, lead me still more than ever to adopt that opinion. I am fully persuaded it has mortified him not a little, that Dr Cullen, whom in his lectures he has publicly abused in the most indecent manner, and whose character he has frequently attacked both as a physician and as a man, has hitherto treated this abuse, either with silent contempt, or ironical wit. If, therefore, he wishes that there should be some ground for its being thought that he is oppressed, perhaps I did him an injury by allowing this matter to drop. For had the proof against him been deficient, he might, although
really

really guilty, have obtained a victory, even at your expence. I shall only say, it was not my fault that he was deprived of the chance of it.

With regard to the accusations against him being spread through the numerous circle of my friends; if this be criminal, I pretend not to innocence. When the case of Mr Isaacson came to be the subject of conversation, was it to be expected that I should remain silent? I did not remain silent. I freely told what had happened; and I gave my opinion without reserve. This, however, I can answer for; when I related the circumstances, I adhered strictly to what I then thought, and am still convinced, was the truth. If a fair relation of facts was any prejudice to his character, he had himself only to blame; unless, perhaps, some share of that blame was due also to you, his assistant and emissary.

You accuse me, Sir, of employing every mode of intimidation to prevail upon the nurse to deny the truth. How inconsistent is this, even with your own story! According to your own account of the original paction with her, made in Dr Brown's house, she told you before-hand, that, if ever your practices were discovered, she would deny the whole matter. The paction, if ever it existed, was broken; not, probably, on her part. Had you not, therefore, reason to believe, that she would now act as she had before said, without any mode of

intimidation being employed? Of this charge against me, however, you have offered no proof. On what authority you have asserted it, I know not. But whatever your authority may be, I declare before God and the world, that there is not a shadow of foundation for it: And I trust that every candid reader will consider it as being merely the groundless aspersions of a malevolent man, who is himself capable of such practices.

I trust, Sir, that the account I have now given, will afford to every unbiassed man, an ample vindication of my character from the heavy charges which you have brought against me. And if you can yourself peruse it, without being sensible of the impropriety of your conduct, you have a worse heart than I am willing to believe. I sincerely wish that you may see your fault, and repent of it. I hope that you will drop the arrogant vanity of supposing, that you, and a few other unexperienced young men, who are acquainted with the New Doctrine, as you call it, are the only physicians in the world. I sincerely hope, that you will never hereafter clandestinely endeavour, by tampering with a nurse, to make those who intrust their lives to other practitioners, the subject of your dangerous experiments. If you do continue it, be assured, that altho' your plots be still conducted under the mask of friendship, you will not long escape unpunished. I hope,

Sir,

Sir, that notwithstanding the thorough conviction which you profess in the truth of the New Doctrine, you will allow yourself to reflect, that you, as well as others, are liable to error; and you cannot be too cautious how you carry your theories into practice. For, although opium, wine, and spirits, are articles of the utmost importance in medicine, and have been liberally employed for centuries before the name of Dr Brown was ever heard of, yet the abuse of laudanum, and your spirituous regimen, as you call it, must be followed by the most dreadful consequences. And whatever you may think of your obligations to Dr Brown on account of the medical instruction you have derived from him, I cannot help being of opinion, that the present case will convince almost every reader, that it would have been much for your honour, as well as your interest, if, in place of coming to Edinburgh as a teacher of Latin or of medicine, he had still continued to exercise his original occupation of an operative weaver in a country village.

But you are yet a young man, and may relinquish those dangerous tenets in which you at present profess so firm a belief. Be persuaded, that it will be nothing to your credit, obstinately to persist in that belief. For in all ages, the grossest absurdities have ever been supported with the

most stubborn bigotry. It requires no uncommon penetration to discover, either the absurdity, or dangerous tendency, of the doctrine which you have embraced. It is sufficient to observe, that, according to this doctrine, dropsy, diarrhœa, fever, scrophula, palsy, epilepsy, &c. are but different degrees of the same disease, each depending on a determined degree of weakness; and that all of them, where they are curable, will be most certainly cured by opium or spirits taken in very large quantities. Nay, in one part of your book you expressly assert, that there are but two diseases affecting the whole system, and that it is only the ignorance of physicians which has given the name of disease to any thing else. And whether you be yourself sensible of it or not, it follows as an unavoidable consequence of the doctrine which you defend, that brandy is an effectual cure for both of them. For, to speak in your own dialect, it must be an effectual cure for the one by increasing excitement, and for the other by exhausting excitability. Every person who conjoins common sense with the smallest degree of medical experience, must be sensible that any refutation of such a doctrine is totally unnecessary.

I mean not, however, to lay the blame of this wild idea to your charge. The avowed purpose of your inquiry, indeed, is, to promulgate

gate it to the world, as, what you call, a great discovery. But, at the same time, no discerning reader can peruse your book, without being satisfied that it is principally intended as a quack-bill to celebrate the praises of Dr Brown. And, though it be published in your name, yet I can assure you, an opinion is very commonly entertained here, that Dr Brown himself ought in reality to be considered as the author of it. If there be any truth in this supposition, what must be your opinion of that man, who can say so much in his own praise, and in such a way? What must you think of yourself?

That you may soon discover, and hereafter avoid, your present errors, is the earnest wish of

Your most obedient servant,

EDIN. Oct. 31. }
1781. }

ANDREW DUNCAN.

APPEN-

A P P E N D I X.

TO the account of Mr Isaacson's case, given in the preceding Letter, I was advised to subjoin the testimony of those who had the best opportunity of being acquainted with the facts here related. I accordingly sent my manuscript, first to Mr Goodwin, and then to Dr Monro, accompanied with the following letter to each of these gentlemen.

“ Dear Sir,

“ In consequence of a late publication by Dr
“ Jones, I have prepared for the press the in-
“ closed letter to him. I beg that you will be
“ kind enough to peruse it; and then inform me
“ whether you can attest the truth of what I
“ have asserted with regard to you. By return-
“ ing an answer in writing as soon as it suits
“ your convenience, you will much oblige,

“ Your most obedient servant,

ANDREW DUNCAN.”

To

To this letter I received the following answer from Mr Goodwin.

To Dr DUNCAN,

“ Dear Sir,

“ I have perused your manuscript Letter addressed to Dr Robert Jones of Caermarthen-shire; and I acknowledge, that every circumstance contained therein concerning me, is true.

“ I have no pretensions to party-spirit; nor do I wish to enter into controversial broils: but on an occasion like this, I should think myself guilty of great injustice, if I refused to confirm what I have before avowed.

“ I therefore assure you, Sir, that I am ready to give my attestation to every sentence relating to me mentioned in your Letter to Dr Jones: And as far as I had an opportunity of being acquainted with other particulars in this case, you have adhered strictly to truth in the account you have given. I am

“ Your most obedient humble servant,

EDMUND GOODWIN.”

“ Dr Monro’s answer to me was in the following words.

To

To Dr DUNCAN.

“ SIR,

“ I have perused your Letter to Dr Robert
“ Jones, and hereby declare in the most solemn
“ manner, that, so far as is consistent with my
“ knowledge, every circumstance in it is related
“ by you with the most strict regard to truth,

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your most humble servant,

“ ALEXANDER MONRO.”

In confirmation of this testimony by Dr Monro and Mr Goodwin, I shall next add that of Mr Isaacson himself. He left Edinburgh last summer; and is at present at Landwade, in the neighbourhood of New-Market. But I transmitted to him the following queries; to which he returned, in course of post, the answer subjoined to each.

QUERIES sent by Dr Duncan to Mr Isaacson at Landwade, to which Mr Isaacson's answers are subjoined.

Ques. 1. Was I called in to attend you during your fever, by no authority but my own, without

out your knowledge, and contrary to your inclination?

Ans. My friends, Messrs. Fox and Goodwin, thinking me very ill, proposed calling in you; to which I consented.

Ques. 2. Was Dr Monro called in on my suggestion, and with your consent and approbation, to attend you in conjunction with me?

Ans. I am certain he was.

Ques. 3. Did you ever call Mr Jones to attend you in that fever? Did he ever meet with Dr Monro or me in our visits to you? And did you ever consider yourself as being his patient during our attendance?"

Ans. The domestics said, that I frequently called for Mr Jones. Whether I was rational or not at the time, they must determine: But I had not the least recollection of that circumstance when it was mentioned to me after my recovery. I considered myself as your patient from the first day of your attendance; and to the best of my knowledge, Mr Jones never saw you or Dr Monro in my chamber during my illness.

Ques. 4. Did you ever, after your recovery, hear from the nurse, that Mr Jones wanted to persuade her to give you such medicines as he should bring her, and to disobey our orders?

Ans. The nurse declared to me, that Mr Jones solicited her to administer the medicines he brought

brought according to his directions, and not to mind the physicians. But she assured me, that the injunctions of the physicians were implicitly attended to, and Mr Jones's entirely neglected.

Quest. 5. Did she not tell you, in my presence, that Mr Jones had offered her money as a bribe, if she would act by his directions without the knowledge of your physicians?

Ans. She did tell me so.

Landwade, Nov. 15. 1781.

THAT the account given of this affair by Mr Isaacson's landlady, and the two nurses who attended him, might be better authenticated, I here subjoin their depositions on oath, as delivered before a civil magistrate.

“ At *Edinburgh*, the ninth day of November one thousand seven hundred and eighty-one years: In presence of Robert Moubray, Esq; one of the magistrates of *Portsburgh*,

“ Compeared Margaret Honeyman, spouse of James Tullis wright in *Middleton's-Entry*, in the district of *Easter Portsburgh*, who being solemnly sworn, examined, and interrogate, depones, That Mr John Braham Isaacson, student of medicine in the university of *Edinburgh*, lodged in the deponent's house for about eight months previous to June last. That in the months of October and November 1780, he was
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confined for some weeks with a dangerous fever; and was attended by Dr Monro and Dr Duncan, who visited him regularly twice a-day while he continued in danger, and left directions with Mr Edmund Goodwin, student of medicine, who also lodged in the deponent's house, as to the management of the patient; which directions were communicated by Mr Goodwin to the deponent and the sick-nurse. Depones, That Mr Robert Jones, another student of medicine, came frequently to inquire after Mr Isaacson, and sometimes went into the room to him; but the deponent is certain that he never was in the house at the same time with Doctors Monro and Duncan. That Mr Jones sometimes went to Mr Goodwin's room; and Mr Goodwin informed the deponent, that those visits were very disagreeable to him, and that he was obliged to bolt the door to keep him out; and desired the deponent to do every thing in her power to prevent Mr Jones from having access to him; and particularly, to stop the key-hole of his door with paper, that Mr Jones might not know by the light of his candle that he was at home. Depones, That Mr Jones repeatedly endeavoured to persuade the deponent that Dr Monro and Dr Duncan were treating Mr Isaacson's case very improperly, and to prevail with her to take medicines from him, and to administer them to Mr Isaacson privately, without

out the knowledge of the physicians or the nurse; but this she positively refused to do. She, however, in the presence of Mr Jones himself, repeated to the nurse the request he had made, and the nurse also refused to comply with it; upon which Mr Jones said, that Mr Isaacson, when he recovered, would reward her well, if she administered the medicines as desired. Depones, That on the nurse's still refusing, Mr Jones said she was a damned fool, for he would give her two guineas if she followed his directions; to which she answered, that she would not do it if any body would give her her apron full of gold. Depones, That, some days after, the nurse informed the deponent, that she had been carried to Dr Brown's house by Mr Jones; and that, when there, she had been again requested and pressed to administer the medicines, as above deponed to, but that she had persisted in refusing to comply. Depones, That one evening late, the deponent saw Mr Jones drop an hundred drops of laudanum into a tea-cup, and add some wine thereto, which he immediately carried to Mr Isaacson's room; and the deponent, who was frightened that he would give the patient this dose, which she thought would kill him, followed Mr Jones to the room. That Mr Jones endeavoured to make Mr Isaacson swallow the contents: That Mr Isaacson did not seem at that time to be free

free from delirium sufficiently to know Mr Jones; but on tasting the medicine, he spit it out of his mouth; cried out that it was laudanum, and that he was poisoned: but to the best of the deponent's observation, he did not swallow any of the medicine. Depones, That upon this Mr Jones left the room, desiring the deponent not to leave Mr Isaacson till she had made him swallow it: but no sooner was he gone, than the deponent took the cup, and after showing it to the nurse, and telling her how the contents had been compounded, emptied it into the fire-place. Depones, That the nurse never did, as far as the deponent knows, ever give any medicines to Mr Isaacson, except those ordered by Dr Monro and Dr Duncan, which were delivered to her by Mr Goodwin and the deponent; and from the deponent's attention to Mr Isaacson during the dangerous part of his illness, she is certain that no medicine could be given him without her knowledge; and she herself never gave him any, except those ordered by Dr Monro and Dr Duncan. Depones, That some weeks ago, Mr Jones came to the deponent, and informed her that he was about to publish a book, in which he was to give an account of the cure performed by him upon Mr Isaacson; and that he wished to have her attestation of the fact, to be inserted in that book. That he then read over to her a state of the case, which the deponent refused

to attest; telling him, that she would not put her name to what was not consistent with truth; for Mr Isaacson had never got any thing by his direction but a flannel shirt, after the turn of the fever. All this is truth, as she shall answer to GOD.

“ Compeared Janet Ferguson, spouse to Charles Bisset trone-man in Edinburgh; who being solemnly sworn, examined, and interrogate, depones, That for seven weeks preceding the 18th of December 1780, she attended Mr John Braham Isaacson, student of medicine in the university of Edinburgh, in the capacity of a sick-nurse; Mr Isaacson being at that time sick of a fever, at his lodgings at Mr James Tullis’s in Middleton’s-Entry, Ediuburgh. Depones, That when the deponent first went to wait on Mr Isaacson, he was attended by Dr Andrew Duncan physician in Edinburgh, and nobody else in the medical line; but a few days after, Dr Duncan called in Dr Monro, professor of anatomy in the university of Edinburgh, to his assistance; and thereafter, those two gentlemen gave regular attendance upon Mr Isaacson so long as the deponent continued to wait upon him as sick-nurse, which was till he was so well recovered as to go out in a chair. Depones, That during all the time she continued with Mr Isaacson, Dr Duncan visited him twice every day, and
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sometimes oftener when the deponent sent for him; and so long as Mr Isaacson continued in danger, Dr Monro also attended him twice every day along with Dr Duncan. Depones, That Mr Edmund Goodwin, a student of medicine who lived in the same house with Mr Isaacson, was in use to direct the deponent as to the management of Mr Isaacson when the physicians were not in the house; and it consists with the deponent's knowledge, that Mr Goodwin received directions regularly from Dr Monro and Dr Duncan; and these gentlemen were in use, after seeing the patient, of meeting with Mr Goodwin in his own room, as Mr Goodwin declined going into Mr Isaacson's room while he continued in danger; and the medicines which the deponent administered to Mr Isaacson, were sometimes delivered to her by Mrs Tullis the landlady, and at other times by Mr Goodwin. Depones, That the deponent knew Mr Robert Jones late student of physic in the university of Edinburgh: That Mr Jones, as well as some others of Mr Isaacson's fellow-students were in use of coming to see him during his illness; but Mr Jones never was in Mr Isaacson's room along with Drs Monro and Duncan, nor did he ever converse with those gentlemen in Mrs Tullis's house, as far as the deponent knows. Depones, That Mr Jones, along with Mrs Tullis the landlady, called the

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deponent out of Mr Isaacson's room one day when his disease was at the worst, and Mrs Tullis informed the deponent that Mr Jones was very desirous that the deponent should administer to Mr Isaacson certain medicines, which he said had been prescribed by Dr John Brown; and that Mr Jones had applied to her (the landlady) to propose the matter to the deponent. That upon this the deponent said, that as Mr Isaacson was attended by two of the first physicians in Edinburgh, she would give him nothing but by their directions: To which Mr Jones answered, that if the deponent would do as he desired her, Mr Isaacson would give her a handsome reward when he recovered. That Mr Jones then told her, that the medicine he wished her to administer to Mr Isaacson, was a bottle of double rum, of which she was to give him a glassful with fifty drops of laudanum in it the first night, and another glassful with 100 drops of laudanum in it the second night, if the first dose should have a good effect. To this proposal the deponent answered, that if such medicines were given to Mr Isaacson in the state in which he then was, he would not recover to reward either her or Mr Jones. To which he (Mr Jones) replied, that the deponent was a damned fool for refusing, and that he would give her two guineas out of his own pocket if she would do it: Upon which
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the deponent said, that if the best graduate in Edinburgh would give her her apron-full of gold she would not do it: Whereupon Mr Jones swore at the deponent, and said that he would do for her; and immediately the deponent went into Mr Isaacson's room, and shut the door. Depones, That two or three days after this, when the deponent was going to her own house for some clean linen, she met Mr Jones in the Potter-row, just at the head of Middleton's Entry; when he renewed his former request, and walked along with the deponent till they came to the well, when he desired her to go into the mouth of Cellers's Court to talk farther on the subject: and the deponent having gone accordingly, Mr Jones opened a door at the end of the court, and ushered the deponent into a house, where she found a gentleman whom she understood from his conversation to be Dr Brown, and the master of the house. That the Doctor asked her what she thought of Mr Isaacson's situation; to which she answered, that she thought him very low: and Dr Brown immediately repeated the request formerly made to the deponent by Mr Jones; adding, that he would send the rum and laudanum, and also some Madeira. The deponent, however, refused again to do as desired; and Dr Brown, finding that she would not consent to give the medicines herself, proposed that she would

allow Mr Jones to administer them: But this also the deponent positively refused; and immediately left the house. Depones, That as she suspected Mr Jones would endeavour, notwithstanding what had passed, to administer the medicines to Mr Isaacson, she desired the landlady not to call her out of the room to Mr Jones for the future, and she saw or heard nothing of Mr Jones or Dr Brown for some days; when Mr Jones, one evening when Drs Monro and Duncan were gone from visiting Mr Isaacson, came into Mr Isaacson's room, along with the landlady: That the deponent, being employed at the fire-side, did not observe Mr Jones immediately, but hearing Mr Isaacson cry out, " Good God, what is " this? it is laudanum! I am poisoned!" she went to the bed, and found Mr Jones with a tea-cup in his hand containing some liquid, which he afterwards set down on the table, requesting the landlady to give it to Mr Isaacson at a proper opportunity: That the deponent did not upon this occasion say any thing to Mr Jones against administering the medicines, having been previously advised by Mr Goodwin, to whom she had mentioned the threatenings used by Mr Jones, to appear to acquiesce in Mr Jones's proposal: but immediately on Mr Jones leaving the room, which he did after giving the landlady the directions as above, the deponent tasted what was in
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the cup; and being told by the landlady that there was laudanum in it, and finding by her taste that it was in great quantity, she observed, that if Mr Isaacson had taken it, it would have killed him, and the landlady immediately threw the contents of the cup into the fire; and the deponent observed from the quantity thus thrown out, that Mr Isaacson got very little of the dose. Depones, That Mr Isaacson in his delirium often mentioned Mr Jones as speaking to him, but never Dr Brown; nor did he ever, when free from delirium, desire either Dr Brown or Mr Jones to be sent for. And the deponent, who was almost constantly in the room with Mr Isaacson till his recovery, never saw him get any medicines but those ordered by Drs Monro and Duncan, nor heard of his getting any. And farther depones, That neither Dr Duncan nor any other person whatever, have at any time used any means with the deponent to prevail with her to give any other account of any thing that happened during her attendance on Mr Isaacson, or since, but what is consistent with truth; and particularly that Dr Duncan has never conversed with her on this subject except in Mr Isaacson's room. And also depones, That the deponent never informed either Dr Monro or Dr Duncan of any of the facts she has now deposed to, till after Mr Isaacson was out of danger; when, on

Dr Duncan's asking her, whether Mr Jones or Dr Brown had at any time interfered with his patient, she told him the fact as now deponed to. And all this is truth, as she shall answer to God.

“ Compeared Janet Murray, spouse to James Reid porter in Edinburgh; who being solemnly sworn, examined, and interrogate, depones, That in the months of October and November 1780, she attended Mr Isaacson in quality of sick-nurse, as assistant to Mrs Bisset the former deponent: That when Mr Isaacson was at the worst, Mrs Bisset or Mrs Tullis were constantly with her in Mr Isaacson's room: That Mr Isaacson was regularly attended by Drs Monro and Duncan, and that he regularly got the medicines which they ordered. Depones, That she never gave him any medicines ordered by any other person, and that nobody ever applied to her to give him any other medicines than those ordered by Drs Monro and Duncan. Depones, That she saw Mr Jones sometimes call at Mr Isaacson's room, but that she never saw him attempt to give him any medicines. Depones, That she heard from Mrs Tullis the landlady, and Mrs Bisset the nurse, while she attended Mr Isaacson, that Mr Jones one night attempted to give him a draught, which he would not take; and that after Mr Jones left the room, the landlady threw it
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into the fire-place. And all this is truth, as she shall answer to God."

FROM the evidence here delivered, I leave the reader to form his own conclusions, both with respect to the conduct of Dr Jones in Mr Isaacson's case, and the account which he has given of it. I began my Letter with observing, that it was my intention to confine myself to this case only; and I have accordingly adhered to that resolution. I cannot, however, conclude without remarking, that from all I have been able to learn, the injurious aspersions which he has thrown out against other gentlemen in Edinburgh are founded on similar misrepresentations. Nay, he is not more accurate with respect to facts when he bestows applause, than when he pours forth illiberal abuse. To prove this, I shall briefly take notice of the two most remarkable instances of panegyric which I have been able to find in his work, excepting only the praises of Dr Brown: And in these instances also, the praise seems indeed to be introduced principally to magnify Dr Brown's reputation.

At one place he bestows a very high encomium on my worthy and intimate friend Dr James Hamilton of the Royal Infirmary. He represents Dr Hamilton as having, in consequence of Dr Brown's new discovery, introduced into the Hospital the use of brandy in the cure of fevers. In proof of this, he has printed the case of Thomas Collins from the records

cords of the Hospital; in his remarks upon which, he ascribes the cure to eight ounces of brandy ordered for this patient.

Here it is unnecessary to observe, that wine and brandy had been used in certain kinds and states of fever, not only by Dr Hamilton in the Infirmary at Edinburgh, but by every practitioner in this country, long before Dr Brown had thrown out even the most distant insinuation respecting his new hypothesis. But it is somewhat singular, that the predilection which Dr Jones seems to have for brandy, should here lead him entirely to overlook the effect of another very active medicine. On the very day upon which, even according to Dr Jones himself, the cure in this case was performed, Dr Hamilton ordered for his patient five boluses, each containing, according to the history which he gives of the case, no less than ten grains of the calx antimonii nitrata. This, I need hardly observe, is a medicine which the College of Physicians at Edinburgh have introduced into their Pharmacopœia, as being, if not exactly, at least nearly the same with Dr James's fever-powder.

Mr Lata, who officiates as clerk to Dr Hamilton in the Royal Infirmary, and who is permitted to prescribe when any particular occurrence requires it, visited this patient in the evening; and finding that he was reduced very low under a
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looseness which before subsisted, and was increased by the antimonial, ordered him eight ounces of brandy, mixed with twice as much water, to be taken in small quantities at a time at short intervals. If, therefore, the brandy produced a cure, the merit is due to Mr Lata: And if there be any foundation for Dr Jones's compliment, he is unjustly deprived of the honour of having introduced a complete revolution of the medical art in the chief nursery of its practical part in Scotland.

But the reader will be pleased to observe, that the antimonial not only operated by stool, but induced also a profuse sweat. Under this sweat the patient still continued when Dr Hamilton visited him next day at noon, and found him free from complaints, with his pulse at 84. Accordingly, at that visit, both the antimonial, and the brandy also, were ordered to be omitted. Dr Hamilton then thought, and still thinks, that this fever was cured by the antimonial; and I dare say, very few practitioners who read the case, even with Dr Jones's remarks upon it, will entertain a different opinion.

Here, however, the medical reader will probably be startled at the great quantity of the antimonial which was employed. For Dr Hamilton is made to prescribe for his patient, no less than 50 grains of this powerful medicine. The truth

truth is, each bolus, as appears from the apothecary's books, contained only 5 grains of the antimonial, in place of 10, as printed by Dr Jones. Whether this has proceeded from ignorance in the transcriber of the case, or inaccuracy in the printer, I will not pretend to say. But, independently of this mistake, the reader must see how little claim Dr Hamilton has to the fulsome compliments which Dr Jones has bestowed upon him.

In another part of this Inquiry, a high encomium is bestowed upon the Society of Scots Antiquaries, and their illustrious Founder. After this, the reader is told, that Dr Brown, from the sole consideration of his literature, was, without application, and without his knowledge, chosen their Latin secretary. From whence Dr Jones has derived this information, I know not: but as I had the honour of being admitted a member of the society prior to Dr Brown's appointment to any office in it, and as I have been very regular in attending their meetings, I may be supposed to know something of the circumstances of the case. Here also he is as wide of the truth as in the former instance.

I was present at the meeting of the Society of Scots Antiquaries when Dr Brown was appointed to the office which he now holds in it. At that meeting, John Callander, Esq; of Craigforth, was
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unanimously nominated secretary for foreign correspondence. But Mr Cummyng, the ordinary secretary of the society, observed, that as Mr Callander resided in the country, his assistance could not always be immediately obtained. He therefore urged, that Dr Brown should be appointed assistant secretary for the Latin, and Mr Drummond for the French language. Mr Alexander Wight, one of the vice-presidents of the Society, who had proposed Mr Callander, observed, that the abilities of the secretary already nominated were so well known to the members in general, that none of them would suppose he required any assistant either for Latin or French; but, in consequence of his residence in the country, Mr Wight made no objection to this additional appointment. The Earl of Buchan, who sat as president at that time, then asked Mr Cummyng whether he had conversed with these gentlemen on this subject, and knew that the offices would be agreeable to them. To this Mr Cummyng replied, that both of them were very desirous to obtain these appointments. With what justice, then, can it be said, that Dr Brown was appointed, without application, and without his knowledge?

These circumstances, although in themselves they be of very little importance, yet serve to show how precipitate Dr Jones has been in his assertions, without taking the trouble of procuring information.

formation, even when it could easily have been obtained; and how cautious every reader ought to be, before he gives his assent to any thing contained in Dr Jones's *Inquiry into the State of Medicine*, although positively asserted as an undoubted truth.