

A letter to Mr. Birch, in answer to his late pamphlet against vaccination / by a member of the Royal College of Surgeons, in London.

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A
L E T T E R
TO
MR. BIRCH,
IN ANSWER TO
HIS LATE PAMPHLET
AGAINST
Vaccination.

BY
A MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS,
IN LONDON.

Quid dignum tanto feret hic promissor hiatu?

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. MURRAY, 32, FLEET STREET.
1806.

LETTER

TO

MR. BIRCH,

IN ANSWER TO

HIS LATE PAMPHLET

AGAINST

Slavery.

BY

A MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS
IN LONDON.

Gold diggers have lost the promised mine.

LONDON:

S. GOSWELL, Printer, Little Queen Street.

1800.

LETTER.

&c. &c.

SIR,

IN addressing myself to you, in answer to your late pamphlet, permit me to congratulate you on your having in some measure acknowledged a bantling, which, on its first entrance into the world, you had unkindly repudiated. Whilst the shiness which you shewed on a former occasion, in not prefixing your name to your work, was considered by some contracted minds as proceeding from fear, I attributed it solely to that modesty ever attendant on the most distinguished merit.

Though a pamphlet, arraigning the conduct of an individual, may be published anonymously, as your "Dressing for Lord Thurlow" was, yet in a tract, contrasting the sentiments and opinions of two

gentlemen of the same profession, whose interests are daily clashing, and published with the view of degrading one of them, such a procedure would be considered as presumptive evidence, that the work had been written by the individual concerned. You, doubtless, were aware of this, and therefore very prudently procured a gentleman to adopt your offspring.

At the end of your pamphlet now lying before me, is tacked "An Examination of Mr. Cline's and your own Evidence on the Subject of the Cow-pox," before the Committee of the House of Commons, by a Mr. Rogers. It was a matter of astonishment to many gentlemen, that, out of the number of practitioners who gave their evidence before this Committee, only a comparative statement of Mr. Cline's and yours should be published, and this ostensibly by a pupil of yours.

Could you for a moment imagine, so shallow an artifice would succeed in deluding the public? or that a few pages, written professedly with the view of degrading Mr. Cline, and exalting yourself, could possibly be supposed to proceed from any other pen than your own?

This chef-d'œuvre of literary imposition was, I am credibly informed, nearly lost to the world,

for want of an adopted father. The gentleman whom you first requested to take it under his protection, possessed too much virtue and integrity, to allow his name to be introduced to the world, as the author of a work he did not write; and too much honour to become the tool of private malignity. I can almost believe, compassion alone would have restrained him from bringing your talents before the world, in competition with those of Mr. Cline. However, you were not to be deterred from your purpose by his friendly admonition; and you probably recollected the words of the poet,

Invenies alium, si te hic fastidit, Alexin;

or, in plain English, "If one won't, another will." With a dedication to yourself, this work was at length ushered into the world under the patronage of a Mr. Rogers.

It seems to have been principally intended to act the part of an avant-courier, or light balloon, sent before, to ascertain the current of public opinion; to inform the world that you, who opposed Vaccination before you understood it, were the only person competent to decide on its merits; and that Mr. Cline's opinions, though founded on observation and experiment, were not to be

put in competition with an hypothesis of yours. The silent contempt with which it was treated, being construed by you into tacit approbation, you have at length appeared *in propria persona*.

When, in your exordium, you adopt the hackneyed phrase, "that truth must ultimately prevail," you have my most cordial concurrence. In the full confidence of this maxim, I am persuaded, that although the prospects of Vaccination are now somewhat clouded by calumny, falsehood, and misrepresentation; it will soon shine forth in its original splendour, fully accomplish its object, and prove its claim to the eternal gratitude of mankind.

On the first introduction of the practice, considerable doubts of its efficacy were entertained by many men of rank in the profession; but, on trying the experiment, and finding it succeed, every liberal and enlightened mind adopted it. They knew the ravages of the Small-pox, and lamented them; and eagerly embraced an opportunity, of sacrificing an inexhaustible source of professional emolument, by affording mankind a protection from so dreadful a pestilence.

You begin by lamenting the gloomy apprehensions of parents, "dreading lest what they were

persuaded to do in the hopes of saving their children from one disease, may *not* prove the means of plunging them into another, at once novel and malignant." Here it would seem, that parents vaccinated their children, in the hope of plunging them into a novel and malignant disease. Your solicitude for their distressed situation, and professions of humanity and duty, would gain more credit, were they not shewn, in spreading unfounded reports, and creating unnecessary alarm.

As the Jennerian Committee sent you their Report, you are undoubtedly justified in dissenting from it, and in stating your reasons for such dissent. The Report commences by stating, that the Medical Council appointed a Committee of twenty-five of *their* members, to inquire into the truth of the cases that had occurred exciting prejudices against Vaccination.

That the Council might as well have published the names of their Committee I readily allow; and it must also be conceded to me, that you have amply punished them for their neglect, by insinuating, that as the society is numerous, consisting of persons of both sexes and all professions, it might probably have been formed from them indiscriminately,

This mistatement in the very outset of your remarks, must certainly induce your unbiassed readers to "regard with an eye of suspicion" whatever follows. Without being a member of the Medical Council of the Royal Jennerian Society, I have obtained a list of their Committee, which is as follows ;

Drs. BAILLIE,	Messrs. FIELD,
— BLANE,	— HINGESTON,
— WILLAN,	— KNIGHT,
— HAMILTON,	— ED. LEESE,
— MARCET,	— LEWIS,
— YELLOLY,	— PARKINSON,
— SKEY,	— PAYTHERUS,
— DENMAN,	— PEARSON,
— CLARKE,	— RING,
— ADAMS,	— UPTON,
— CROFT.	— WACHSEL,
Messrs. ADDINGTON,	— WILSON.
— AIKIN,	

Now whatever may be your opinion of this Committee, the profession, and the public at large will, I believe, allow it to comprehend "regular and experienced physicians and surgeons fully competent to perform the task for which they were elected."

You next accuse the Committee of having adopted a dogmatical style, "as if they were more intent on imposing a law, than on producing conviction." But their language appears to me of that firm and decided nature, which the event of their inquiries justified, and the times required, in answer to the prevaricating, unintelligible jargon of the Anti-vaccinists.

Your charges of vagueness and ambiguity are equally unfounded. When reports of failure were industriously circulated, it became the duty of the Council to inquire into the truth of them. They did so, and the result of their inquiry is before the world. There never was, and for the honour of our profession, I hope there never will be, a parallel instance of persons in the search of truth, having to wade through such a chaos of wilful mistatements and base fabrications,

In the course of their inquiry they found, that a few persons had received the Small-pox after being vaccinated: and that the recurrence of the Small-pox, both after inoculation and the natural infection, was by no means an infrequent occurrence. To both these points their inquiries were directed. Having found a few instances where the Cow-pox had failed, they candidly and honourably acknowledged them; and having learn-

ed well-authenticated cases of the Small-pox a second time, they were equally bound to state them also.

However the word few may be carped at by the opponents of Vaccination, yet when we consider the myriads that have been vaccinated, the ignorance of some practitioners, and the carelessness of others, in a practice entirely novel, the failures may not only be considered as few, but much fewer than could have been reasonably expected.

With respect to the recurrence of the Small-pox, if there be any practitioner living, who is ignorant of the possibility of such a circumstance, it must arise from such an obstinate adherence to error, as can scarcely be conceived. Numbers of cases, published within these few years, stand as well authenticated as any cases can possibly be; and must carry conviction to any enlightened and unbiassed mind.

It must be universally acknowledged, that the Small-pox has been more studied and better understood, within these few years, than at any former period. Hence more cases of its recurrence would naturally be published. When it occurred a second time formerly, and the patient had it heavily,

it was roundly asserted that he could not have had it before ; and when lightly, that it was any thing but the Small-pox.

This is one of the many errors in medicine, which time and observation have corrected. It was likewise thought, that neither the measles, nor the scarlatina, could occur twice in the same subject ; but this is also disproved. Why these diseases do not occur more than once in the mass of mankind, is a problem that remains to be solved ; but no positive argument can be drawn from this, to prove that they never happen twice in some individuals.

The laws of affinity that govern inanimate matter, can never be applied to account for the healthy or morbid functions of the living body, where so much depends on sex and age, but above all, on idiosyncrasy. Analogical reasonings are generally fallacious : they ought always to be received with caution, and never adopted in opposition to the evidence of our senses.

When the Small-pox occurs a second time, whether it ought to be divided into the primary and secondary species, is a *lana caprina* not worth disputing about. Though the laws of nature seem

to act invariably, yet we sometimes meet with exceptions ; and if the "*exceptio probat regulam*" be urged in the one instance, it is equally applicable in the other.

When the Committee state, that the Small-pox occurring after Vaccination is often much milder than usual, and loses some of its characteristic marks, they are amply supported by the cases that have happened in this metropolis ; where it has sometimes been so extremely slight, as to render its existence doubtful. They are equally justified in stating, that the Small-pox occurring after inoculation, or the natural infection, is often severe, and sometimes fatal.

Of the former kind is the case of Dr. Stewart's child, of Plymouth ; who was inoculated when very young, and had about two hundred pustules. At the expiration of six years, she was again inoculated for the Small-pox ; suffered much more than the first time, and had a considerable number of pustules. This case, which has been quoted by every eminent writer on Vaccination, shews how correct you are in stating, that the advocates of Vaccination deny that the Small-pox ever recurs after inoculation. This is another proof of your *candid statements*.

Of the latter kind, is the case of William Birt, of Arundel, communicated to Mr. Ring by Dr. Plowden, and published in the Medical Journal for November 1805. This man caught the Small-pox in 1738, and had it so severely, that he was supposed to be dead. He however recovered, and for the rest of his life, was a living monument of the havoc the disorder had made.

The marks he bore being deemed a sufficient security against any future infection, he was appointed to attend a pest-house. In February 1799, two women died of the Small-pox in this house; on the 28th of the same month he sickened; the eruption appeared on the fourth day. Dr. Plowden saw him on the sixth; he found him labouring under those symptoms, that usually attend the worst kind of the Small-pox. The eruption was confluent, and his throat was severely affected. He died on the twelfth day.

These cases are sufficient to prove, that its recurrence is sometimes attended with danger, and even with death; whereas those cases which have occurred after Vaccination, have been few in number, and comparatively mild in their symptoms: so few, that they are like the spots which exist in the sun, without obscuring its lustre. They are the

Raræ nantes in gurgite vasto.

You pledge yourself, to prove the truth of the cases published in the tract under the name of Mr. Rogers. That you are, and ought to be responsible, for the assertions and allegations contained in that pamphlet, I know, and allow.

Several of those cases have been completely and satisfactorily disproved ; yet they are still vaunted forth, as irrefragable proof of the inefficacy of the Cow-pox. This *ingenuous* line of conduct, of continuing to propagate unfavourable cases that have been fully refuted, has been adopted by every Anti-vaccinist.

You assert, that “ of the abundant number of cases laid before the public, the majority cannot be mistated or unfounded ; and if so, the cause of the Committee falls to the ground, for granting, which never can be granted, that only one third of the cases adduced were substantiated, there would remain above one hundred and fifty cases of acknowledged failure.”

Now, if implicit confidence were to be placed in the accounts of the Anti-vaccinists, more cases of disease, failures, and death, would be produced in a short time, than of patients who have been vaccinated.

Your late friend and colleague, Dr. Rowley, in the short space of a few weeks, published five hundred cases of that kind. Of these, so far from one third being substantiated, I fear no contradiction from any honest or intelligent practitioner, when I assert, that not one hundredth part of them ever existed, as there stated. These cases are condemned even by the lukewarm friends of Vaccination, as wilful misrepresentations and gross impositions.

This man's character is now fairly before the world : his name and his works are consigned to their merited ignominy.

Notwithstanding what you have asserted to the contrary, instances of mortification of the arm, in Small-pox inoculation, have been sometimes known to occur. I shall mention one instance as coming within my own knowledge.

Mr. P——, a surgeon of Bristol, on marrying an heiress of large fortune, retired from practice, and lived within a few miles of town. His eldest daughter being inoculated for the Small-pox, her arm mortified. She was brought to town, and put under the care of the most eminent physicians and surgeons ; yet the case terminated fatally.

That such cases may have happened after Vaccination, I readily admit; probably, in both instances, from neglect or mismanagement: but surely they are far more likely to occur in the former, where there are many pustules, than in the latter, where there is not necessarily, or generally, more than one in one arm; and where the inflammation may be easily suppressed by proper means.

In considering Article xx. of the Report, you content yourself with stating, that as far as your experience and information go, new diseases have been introduced by Vaccination.

Why then have you not pointed out those peculiarities, in which they differ from other diseases?

It is true, in your first pamphlet (Mr. Rogers), you have mentioned that the disease shews itself in three forms—1st, “An eruption, which appears on the face as well as the body and limbs.” So do the itch, bug-bites, leprosy, and many other cutaneous diseases.

2d, A hasty abscess, which contains a fluid dissimilar to any other;

And lastly, glandular enlargements of the skin, at first the size of a pea, then growing knotty and hard, and at length suppurating.

Of these different forms you say, that the eruption is the most frequent. "It may be heard of in every parish in London; alas! in too many private families, it is not an hybrid eruption, but one *sui generis*."

By far the greater number of persons, in whom diseases are said to have occurred after the Cow-pock, are those of the very lowest description. Many of those brought forward by Dr. Rowley are proved to have been nothing more or less than the itch; and many more to have been merely bug-bites. These "may be heard of in *every parish in London*;—alas! in *too many private families*. They are not *hybrid eruptions*, but *eruptions sui generis*."

A woman living in the neighbourhood of the Doctor, not long before his death, shewed her infant to a medical gentleman, and informed him that it was under the Doctor's care for the cure of the Cow-mange. He soon convinced this deluded female that it was nothing but bug-bites. She adopted means to destroy them; and in a few days those eruptions disappeared; which had de-

fied the Doctor's mercurial alteratives for many months.

" Crimine ab uno
Disce omnes."

Before Vaccination was known, these diseases were more commonly attributed to their proper causes. The general neglect of cleanliness on the part of the poor, the prevalent custom of dram-drinking, the deficiency of wholesome food and proper raiment, the frequent exposure to damps and colds, and many other circumstances unavoidably arising out of their unfortunate situation, will ever render them more frequently the victims of disease, than their more affluent neighbours.

But now every thing is attributed to the Cow-pock. Was this child vaccinated? No. Then the disease is scrophula. Was *this* child vaccinated? Yes. No matter when, where, or how: *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, and the Cow-pox must bear the blame.

The clear and precise definitions you have given of these new diseases, do great credit to your nosological talents; but we should have felt ourselves more obliged, had you condescended to point out, in what the eruptions differed from other

eruptions, in what the contained fluid was dissimilar *from* any other, and lastly, in what those hard, knotty tumors, differed from common scrophulous ones.

Until you have performed this task, you must allow me to continue sceptical, on the point of new diseases.

I am informed, that about three years since, when in the wards of St. Thomas's Hospital, after uttering many bitter anathemas against the Cow-pox, you mentioned having been consulted that morning respecting a child, who had a *spanking* abscess on the nates after Vaccination. On a gentleman's inquiring what proof there was of its being caused by the Cow-pock, you turned on your heel, and walked off.

I can hardly suppose this to be the first case of abscess you had met with in those parts; neither do I believe it will be the last; as abscesses ever have occurred, and ever will occur there, so long as that part shall be continued as an appendage to the human frame.

Not long since, you introduced at a society of medical men, of which you are a member, a child afflicted with one of these new diseases: after an

accurate examination, they declared it to be nothing but a common case of scrophula. You attempted to convince them of their error, by pointing out the blue appearance of the swellings; and when they declared it to be the common appearance of the disorder, you indignantly led your *protégée* out of the room. Yet the gentlemen who gave this opinion were "regular and experienced physicians and surgeons."

You are continually resounding in our ears, that "experience should never be sacrificed to experiment." But if you have practised thirty years in one of the largest hospitals in this metropolis, without having known, heard, or read that scrophulous swellings often assume a bluish appearance, no farther proof need be adduced, that some persons, despising experiment, will never grow wise by experience.

In Article xvi. the Committee state, that by means of Vaccination, the Small-pox has in some populous cities been wholly exterminated.

In Article xviii. That the prejudices raised against Vaccination have been in a great measure the cause of the deaths of near 2000 persons during the last year, in London alone.

In Article iii. That the cases published to prove the failures of Vaccination have been fully refuted: and in

Article iv. That those medical men (Anti-vaccinists) who dissent from the Jennerian Committee, are stated generally, as acting perversely, and disingenuously; persisting in bringing forward unfounded and refuted reports, and even misrepresentations, after they have been proved to be such.

Of these articles you state that you are compelled to say, and ready to prove, that the three first are absolutely unfounded. If the most unqualified assertions, unsupported by the slightest shadow of argument, could be admitted as proofs, you would be completely unanswerable. As it is not my intention to oppose assertion to assertion, I shall consider each of these articles separately.

The city of Vienna affords ample proof of the truth of the 16th Article. By adopting Vaccination in this city, the deaths by the Small-pox were gradually reduced from upwards of eight hundred * annually, to only two, and both these were strangers who imported it with them.

* Vide Dr. De Carro's Letter to Dr. Reeves in Edin. Med. Journal, Jan. 1806.

In several other cities on the Continent, it had also been rendered extinct by this practice, and when afterwards introduced by travellers, or foreigners, and in one instance (Milan), after the lapse of three years, it was again subdued by Vaccination.

The Bills of Mortality bear sufficient testimony of the truth of the 18th Article. In this metropolis, by the progress of Vaccination, the deaths by Small-pox were considerably diminished.

Many families, alarmed by the unfounded reports and gross misrepresentations that were circulated, hesitated to adopt this salutary practice. In the moments of their indecision, their infants fell victims to the natural infection of the Small-pox; and some even to inoculation.

The persons who created these alarms, and fabricated these reports, may, and justly ought to be, arraigned, as being in a great measure the cause of so many deaths.

In support of the 3d Article, I need only appeal to the different answers to Rowley, Moseley, &c. and to the communication in the Medical Journal, where many of the cases adduced against Vaccination have been ably and fully refuted; more of

them probably would have been refuted, but a refutation of each separate case, adduced by the former, would be an herculean and unprofitable task.

Sufficient has been proved to convince any impartial mind, that he was not entitled to the slightest credit. I regret being compelled to say this of the dead, but there are instances in which forbearance to the dead would be injustice to the living.

In answer to the 4th Article, you declare the censure of disingenuousness and perverseness to be too severe under any circumstances; had you excepted the conduct of the Anti-vaccinists, I would most heartily have agreed with you.

You no sooner enter the lists to defend your confederates, than you immediately desert them. You assert that you are conscious of your own sincerity, but cannot judge of the motives of others. To convince the world of this will be no easy task.

If any man, or set of men, continue to propagate reports of cases, which, after a full and impartial investigation, appear to be wholly unfounded or grossly misrepresented, such conduct would not deserve any other epithets than those of perverse

and disingenuous. Neither could it be deemed consistent with a love of truth or science. Yet such has been your conduct and that of your colleagues.

The cases of Montagu's child *, and Bowen's, though fully refuted, are still trumpeted forth by you, under the name of Rogers, as cases of failure: the former of whom, there is reason to believe, never had the Cow-pox, nor the latter the Small-pox. The truth of the latter is now acknowledged by Mr. Bowen himself.

However indignantly you may attempt to repel the charge contained in this article, you will find it no easy matter to convince the public, that where an uniformity of argument and profession is followed by an uniformity of conduct, there is not also an uniformity of motive.

Arcades omnes,
Et cantare pares, et respondere parati.

You assert it to be "the peculiar boast of surgery, to have discovered a *cure* for two of the greatest evils that afflict mortality; in the judicious practice of Inoculation, and by the improved treatment of *lues venerea*."

* Vide Ring's Answer to Moseley.

What right surgeons have to boast having triumphed over these two diseases the public can determine. But it must not be forgotten, that the merit of introducing Inoculation into this country, is due to a lady, and not to a surgeon. Whatever merit the Suttons may claim for reviving the cool treatment in this disease, it will ever remain a stigma on medical men, that they so long neglected this method, which the Arabians so earnestly recommended, and so successfully practised.

It has been the lot of Vaccination, in common with some other improvements in medicine, that when other arguments fail in opposing it, religion is had recourse to.

When the extermination of the Small-pox is advised and attempted, your colleagues accuse us of impiously attempting to wrest from the hands of Providence one of his most powerful scourges : and you most triumphantly ask, “ why is it not remembered, that in the populous parts of the metropolis, where the abundance of children exceed the means of providing food and raiment for them, this pestilential disease is considered as a merciful provision, on the part of Providence, to lessen the burthen of a poor man’s family.”

Has Providence, then, created beings only to destroy them? Or does he exercise his vengeance only on the most innocent part of the creation?

That such a sentiment should proceed from one who, in the present improved state of medical science, recommends Small-pox hospitals, I am not much surprised; nor would it have excited much astonishment had you advised us to forward this merciful view of Providence, by introducing the plague, or attempting to generate the poison of the yellow fever.

At the commencement of Vaccination, you were its determined opponent, and as such were summoned before the Committee of the House of Commons. At that time, more than three years after its introduction, you knew of no failure, and only mentioned some cases, where persons exposed for several days to variolous contagion, on being inoculated with the Cow-pox, went through both diseases. This only proves that the Cow-pox will not always suspend the action of the Small-pox, but does not affect the question of its destroying the susceptibility, if applied before such exposure.

One of your ostensible reasons for opposing it, was the introduction of a new disease into the human frame. Had this practice nothing more in view

than the adding another to the already too numerous catalogue of human diseases, the attempt could not have been too severely reprobated; but when it was proposed as a means of exterminating a disease, that has for centuries been the scourge of mankind, a friend to truth and science, knowing it was impossible to foresee the consequences that may result from such a discovery, would not have prejudged the question.

As an additional proof of your candour, you affirm that Dr. Jenner left London, in consequence of being frequently requested to visit unfavourable cases; though it is well known, that no cases had then occurred to shake the confidence of his friends, or to afford matter of exultation to his enemies. The most probable reason of his quitting town was, it being found, when properly conducted, to be so mild a disease, as to be generally intrusted to the care of those medical practitioners, who attended the families.

You next attack the origin of the Cow-pock; and as it is admitted, that the disease is communicated to the cow by the milker, you most profoundly ask, Is it the itch? the lues? or the Small-pox itself? When a person writes on a subject he does not understand, and uses declamation for argument, and assertion for proof, what

can be his motive ? Is it ignorance ? Is it vanity ? Is it interest ?

When the man applied to you with the itch, that you should be ignorant of the real nature of the disease, until informed by your pupil, will not create much surprise. That a few milkers in Kent Street should have this disorder, will not excite so much astonishment, as that, in Kent Street, any family should be free from it.

You propose that an inquiry should be instituted, in order to ascertain what diseases the milkers in Gloucestershire and Holstein are most liable to. Were the accounts of the Anti-vaccinists true, they would be found to be merely walking masses of disease, interesting only to the speculative pathologist. But their ruddy complexions, and clear skins, would soon convince him, that if he wishes to see "an eruption which appears on the face, as well as on the body and limbs, a hasty abscess, containing a fluid dissimilar to any other, and glandular enlargements of the skin, &c. &c." he must return to Saint Giles's and Chelsea.

Dr. Jenner's theory of the grease, so far from being abandoned by his friends, is proved to their satisfaction, beyond the possibility of a doubt. It

was not in support of any idle conjecture, or favourite hypothesis, that this opinion was adopted. It was one which he was compelled to admit, by an induction from facts. In those dairies, where the milking is confined to the females, the disease is not known. Add to this, it is met with only in those seasons when the grease prevails; and in almost every instance, they have been able to trace its introduction into a dairy, to some person milking the cows, who had been previously employed in dressing horses.

When a theory so novel, so interesting, and unexpected, was first communicated to the world, it was natural to suppose, attempts would be made to excite the disease in the cow, by inoculation from the horse. Though, for a time, these attempts were unsuccessful, yet negative experiments prove nothing. Dr. and Mr. Loy, of Yorkshire, however, at length succeeded. Since then, Dr. Sacco, of Milan, superintendent of Vaccination in Italy, has succeeded on a much larger scale, has inoculated with equine and with vaccine matter, and found them equally successful*. Mr. Tanner of Rochampton, Dr. La Font of Salonica, and others, have also succeeded. The want of success in the more early experi-

* Vide Ring's Treatise on the Cow-pox.

mentalists probably arose from their using the pus that flowed from the horse's heels ; not knowing, or not recollecting, that pus, from whatever part, or whatever animal it flows, is probably the same ; but that the fluid which produces this disease must be of a specific nature. It is now discovered to be a darkish ichor, issuing from the cracks of the heels.

Of your other remarks on the origin of this disease, I may say,

Thy other arguments are all
Supposures hypothetical,
That do but beg ; and we may choose
Either to grant them, or refuse.

Until you have produced either proof or argument in support of them, they are not deserving of an answer. Had there been any originality in any of your remarks or assertions, it would in some measure have compensated the reader for the dulness of your performance ; but every thing contained in it is borrowed and hackneyed :

Much thou hast said, which I know when,
And where, thou stol'st from other men.

The motto which you propose for the bust of Jenner, is well known to have been applied with

more force and propriety to your late friend, Dr. Rowley. A gentleman under examination for a licentiate's degree, was asked his opinion of the use of mineral acids in gout, and replied that he had never seen any good effect from them; on which one of the Censors remarked, that he thought *he* had; the gentleman immediately answered, "*Sic putat Rowley; at Rowley, nostro judicio, Davus non Œdipus.*"

You next attempt to wrest from Dr. Jenner the merit of the discovery; but in a mode rather more modest than your attack on Mr. Cline; since you arrogate nothing to yourself. If Johnson's maxim, which has already been quoted on this subject, be adopted, "that he *only* discovers, who proves," Jenner is entitled to the sole merit of the discovery.

You seem not a little chagrined, that the opinion of the Court of Assistants was not required on this occasion. But what have they to do with it as a body? They could have given only their individual opinions. They compose but an insignificant share of the members of the College; are not chosen from the members at large; neither are they selected for their superiority of literary acquirements, or professional attainments. While the supporters of

Vaccination can boast of the names of Wathen, Forster, Blizard, Heaviside, Cline, Charlton, Keate, Ware, Norris, and Dundas, of the Court of Assistants, they may safely defy you to point out their superiors, or even their equals among the other members.

The Court of Assistants will not feel themselves much obliged to you, for thus unnecessarily dragging them before the public ; since, whatever their merit may be as individuals, their conduct as a body "will never pass without censure till it passes without observation."

You assert, "that if the lower orders of society have conceived prejudices against Vaccination, it will not be easy to root them out!" To this I readily assent. But the more difficult this task may be, the greater will be the obloquy that must attach to those characters, who have wilfully and unnecessarily implanted those prejudices.

You affect to consider the occasional substitution of the Cow-pox for the Small-pox at the Small-pox Hospital, as a kind of *Punica fides*. Happy indeed would it have been for this metropolis, had this "pious fraud" been more generally practised. Who directs this institution I know not ;

but whoever he may be, I think myself entitled to say, he is

Fidens animi, atque in utrumque paratus.

When you and your colleagues advise us to drop Vaccination, your difference of opinion, as to the conduct we ought to adopt, reminds me of the fable of the town besieged ; in which the carpenter, the mason, and the currier, recommend the materials of their respective trades, as the best means of defence. Thus you recommend, for the future, inoculation for the Small-pox ; and that this branch should be confined to surgeons. Mr. Sutton advises all those who have been vaccinated, to be inoculated for the Small-pox again and again : while the modest Dr. Squirrel recommends to them Small-pox inoculation, and long courses of his mercurial alteratives. Should the inoculation of the Small-pox not succeed, the medicines may be continued for the short space of *only* one and twenty years ; which, he assures us, will be attended with great advantage both to the health and pocket. Had the Anti-vaccinists the candour of “ drunken Barnaby,” they would certainly exclaim,

*Suavis odor lucri tenet,
Parum curo unde venit.*

In noticing the objection of Vaccinists to the Small-pox, that the scrophula, if not generated by this disease, is at least often roused into action by it, you deny the scrophula has been so prevalent since the introduction of inoculation, as before. This assertion is in direct opposition to the best medical authorities of the day. You ask, "who ever hears of crowds of people, flocking from the most distant counties, to be cured by the supposed virtue of the royal touch? Who now ever sees those pieces of gold, which in the reign of James I. and long after, were suspended as amulets, endued with the sovereign power to cure the evil?"

This is only a presumptive argument, and easily answered. It is no proof that the scrophula is less frequent now than formerly; but that the days of superstition are past, and that the confidence in the royal touch is lost. The public now know, notwithstanding the royal patents which are daily granted, that there is no more a "*royal road*" to the knowledge of medicine, than to that of geometry.

It has been said by some Anti-vaccinists, that they never can adopt this practice, until some theory be given how it acts in destroying the susceptibility

of the Small-pox. How do we know that persons who have had the measles, the small-pox, or the scarlatina, are, with few exceptions, for ever afterwards insusceptible of these contagions? From experience: and the same experience teaches us, that those who have undergone Vaccination, are, with equally few exceptions, for ever insusceptible of the Small-pox.

There are but few subjects in medicine, of which the public can ever be admitted as competent judges: Vaccination is one of them. To understand this, only requires an unbiassed mind, with moderate capacity and application. If we allowed, however, that the public were no judges, yet, in a controverted subject like this, no unfair conclusion would probably be drawn, by impartially considering the characters of those who support, and those who oppose it.

In support of it, the College of Physicians have given their decided and unanimous vote of approbation. It is almost superfluous to say that this College reckons amongst its members, men of the strictest probity, of the highest literary endowments, and greatest professional acquirements. The approbation of such men is not the hasty effusion of a moment; but the result of a cool

and dispassionate investigation. It is also adopted by every liberal and enlightened practitioner, in the British realms.

Among its opponents are several *Doctors*, but not *one* regularly educated physician ; some members of the Royal College of Surgeons, and an abundance of quacks.

In other countries the introduction of this practice, like that of every other improvement in medicine, had to contend with prejudices, which soon vanished like mists before the sun. It is in this metropolis, that the opposition has reached its *acmè*. This is the centre, from which the opposition has radiated. It is here that every artifice, delusion, and misrepresentation, which human ingenuity could devise, have been practised against it. Although these for a time may succeed in alluring a few credulous victims to the altar of variolous inoculation, yet truth must ultimately triumph. After having had recourse to such means, you will find it an arduous undertaking to convince the world, that you and your colleagues have merely acted in obedience to the calls of duty, and the dictates of humanity ; or that you, and you alone, of all the profession, are alive to the feelings of honour and philanthropy.

You profess to entertain a great respect for some of the characters who have signed the different testimonials ; and yet accuse them of imposing on the public as a salutary practice, what they know to be only a doubtful and dangerous experiment. If men enjoying the confidence of the public, could so far abuse it, instead of being entitled to respect and esteem, their names and characters should be consigned to eternal infamy.

It affords some consolation, after this gloomy picture, to know, that Vaccination is established on too solid a basis, to be shaken by the despicable opposition which is here raised against it ; and that there is no civilized country, into which it has not been introduced. In France, the practice was adopted with enthusiasm ; and in every part of that colossal empire, institutions have been formed and supported by the government to propagate it. Our enemy knew how to appreciate the value of his subjects ; and would not permit them to be sacrificed at the shrines of prejudice, ignorance, and interest. Similar establishments have taken place in Germany. In India, the government have given it the amplest support, and their efforts have been crowned with the greatest success.

It has also been introduced into Canton, where it was readily received and adopted. A large hos-

pital was also building by subscription ; and means were pursued for propagating this beneficial practice throughout the whole empire of China. Since the discovery of India, this is probably the first time that any Europeans have deserved, or obtained, the gratitude of the East.

Should our present ministers view this subject, with the same indifference, and the same cold-blooded apathy, as their predecessors, this country, which claims the merit of having discovered the happy preventive, will be the last in availing herself of its full advantages, and the only one from which other nations will have reason to fear the re-introduction of a disease, which for many ages has been the most dreadful scourge of mankind.

If in this Letter you meet rather with censure, than applause, you must attribute it to my having adopted the maxim

Judex damnatur, cum nocens absolvitur.

THE END.

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