

## **A tribute to the memory of Dr. William Hawes / [William Hawes].**

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A TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF DR. WILLIAM HAWES.

THIS truly benevolent Physician was born at Islington, Nov. 28, 1736; and received the early part of his education in his native village, at the seminary of honest John Shield; and completed it in St. Paul's School. He was afterwards placed with Mr. Carsan, an ingenious medical practitioner near Vauxhall; and, on the expiration of his apprenticeship, was for a short time an assistant to Mr. Dicks, in the Strand, whom he succeeded in business; and, by his application, and unwearied attention to his patients, acquired a considerable degree of reputation and affectionate esteem. In May 1759, he married an amiable woman, by whom he had a numerous family, and who survives to lament his loss.

In 1773, he became deservedly popular, from his incessant zeal in calling the attention of the publick to the resuscitation of persons apparently dead, principally by drowning; plans for which, for 30 preceding years, the Editors of this Miscellany had been recommending and encouraging. [See vol. XLIV. *Preface.*]

In this he encountered much opposition, and some ridicule. The practicability of *resuscitation* was denied. He ascertained its practicability by advertising rewards to persons, who, between Westminster and London Bridges, should, within a certain time after the accident, rescue *drowned persons* from the water, and bring them ashore to places appointed for their reception, where means might be used for their recovery, and give immediate notice to him. The public mind being thus awakened to the subject, greater exertions were made by individuals than had ever before been known; and many lives were saved by himself and other medical men, which would otherwise have been lost; and Mr. Hawes, at his own expence, paid the rewards in these cases for twelve months, which amounted to a considerable sum. His excellent friend Dr. Cogan, (then somewhat known to the publick, and since much better known, by several most valuable publications), who had long turned his thoughts to this subject, remonstrated with him on the injury which his private fortune would

sustain from a perseverance in these expences; and he at last consented to share them with the publick. Dr. Cogan and he agreed to join their strength, and each of them bringing forward 15 friends to a Meeting at the Chapter Coffee-house, in 1774, the HUMANE SOCIETY was instantly formed. In the following year, an admirable Sermon was preached in recommendation of it by the late Rev. R. Harrison, at St. Bride's Church. From this period the weight and organization of the infant Institution devolved in great measure on Mr. Hawes; whose undeviating labours have, it is hoped, established it for ever; and without which, there would very probably not have been at this time a similar establishment in Europe, America, or India; where Humane Societies have now multiplied with every great stream that fructifies the soil of those different regions.

In 1774, he published, "An Account of Dr. Goldsmith's last Illness," whose death he ascribed to the improper administration of a popular medicine; and from this unfortunate event he deduced many useful cautions respecting the exhibition of powerful medicines.

In 1777, appeared his "Address on Premature Death and Premature Interment;" which he liberally distributed, in order to awaken attention in the public mind, against the too early interment of persons supposed to be dead, before it was clearly ascertained that life was totally extinct. This performance had been suggested to his mind, even prior to the establishment of the great object of Resuscitation which he afterwards so successfully pursued; and which, in effect, the following declaration confirms:

"At a General Court of the Directors of the Humane Society in 1776, Dr. Towers sat as Chairman; and, after congratulating the Society on a variety of successful cases of astonishing recoveries, he thus proceeded:

"To the well-known humanity of his (Mr. Hawes's) disposition, and to that activity of benevolence for which he was so remarkable, this Society, in a great degree, owed its origin. The reasonableness  
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and utility of an Institution of this kind had been very early seen by Mr. Hawes; and therefore he had laboured to promote it, with a diligence and an ardour that would ever do him honour. Indeed, before the establishment of this Society, he had publicly advertised rewards, for notice to be brought him of any persons in such situations (within a reasonable distance from his own habitation) as those who are now the objects of this Institution; which was the strongest demonstration of his solicitude to promote so benevolent a design; and that afterwards, by joining with his worthy colleague, Dr. Cogan, in adopting the necessary measures for establishing the present Institution, he had performed a real service to his Country."

In 1780 was published, his third edition of an "Examination of the Reverend John Wesley's Primitive Physick;" in which the absurdities and dangerous remedies recommended by that venerable and (on many other accounts) respectable Writer were acutely exposed by a combination of irony and serious argument.

In 1780, or 1781, he removed to Palsgrave Place; and commenced practice as a Physician; the degree of Doctor of Medicine having been conferred upon him some time before.

In 1781, Dr. Hawes published "An Address to the Legislature, on the Importance of the Humane Society;" and, by his steady perseverance, and personal endeavours, he lived to see most of his objects realized, as conducive to the restoration of suspended animation.

About the same period, appeared his "Address to the King and Parliament of Great Britain; with Observations on the General Bills of Mortality."

These useful and interesting publications gradually raised the reputation of the Author to the notice of many learned, as well as benevolent, characters.

In the same year, he was elected Physician to the Surrey Dispensary; and about the same time, commenced his Medical Lectures on Suspended Animation; and was the first, and perhaps the only, person that ever introduced the subject as a part of medical education; which he elucidated under the following heads:

I. To instruct the younger part of the Faculty how to preserve human life in every critical circumstance, wherein the vital powers are liable to be suspended; and to urge the importance of the enquiry, on every principle of Christianity, national policy, and humanity.

II. To consider the sundry derangements which suspend the action of the principal vital organ, the brain, the heart, or the lungs; together with the various means for restoring their respective functions,

III. An inquiry (so far as relates to the present subject) into the effects of the animal, vegetable, and mineral poisons; their deleterious power in suddenly destroying the vital functions; and the most approved methods of preventing or correcting their baneful effects, when received into the human body.

IV. The modes of recovering persons from syncope, inebriation, trance, drowning, suffocation by the cord, or noxious vapours, intense cold, or lightning.

V. Important reflections on still-born children, and the most efficacious modes of restoring vital action.

VI. The various symptoms of apparent death, which sometimes supervene in acute diseases, but which might frequently be surmounted by suitable measures, speedily adopted and vigorously pursued; and lastly, the usual signs of death considered, and those which are *certain* distinguished from those which are more equivocal, &c.

These Lectures were closed by a proposal of bestowing prize-medals, suggested by the ardour of his mind, and founded by his munificence; and in October 1782, the gold medal was awarded, by four respectable Physicians, to Dr. Richard Pearson, of Birmingham, and the silver medal to a writer whose paper was signed *Humanitas*. Since that period similar prize-medals, bestowed by the Medical Society, have given rise to the invaluable works of Pearson, Goodwin, Coleman, Kite, and Fothergill.

In 1782, Dr. Hawes removed to Eastcheap; and (having been elected Physician to the London Dispensary in 1785) to Bury Street, in 1786; and to Spital Square in 1791.

In 1793, when the manufactories of cottons had so far superseded those of silks, as to occasion temporary want, and even beggary, among the artisans in Spital-fields, Dr. Hawes singly stood forward; and, principally by his activity, 1200 families were snatched from ruin. His public address on that occasion is worth preserving:

#### SPITAL-FIELDS WEAVERS.

*We have been requested to insert the following Letter, written by Dr. HAWES to a popular Clergyman; being convinced, that the humane tendency of it will excite the compassion of such as possess the ability of relieving the miserable. Distress in this Country needs but complain, and Relief makes an immediate appearance. The same generous minds who so lately gave the wretched Emigrant protection—who laudably made provision for the Widow and Orphan of the brave Warrior, and are yet employed in yielding ease and comfort to those who still survive to protect our liberties and property, will not suffer a numerous body of useful Artisans,*



*Artisans, through the caprice of Fashion, to perish for want of the necessaries of life.*

“REV. SIR,

“Permit me to address you on the present occasion, and to return you my most sincere thanks for your voluntary exertions in behalf of the distressed Weavers.

“Believe, Sir, it is not in the power of language to describe their long and continued miseries; miseries not brought on by idleness, intemperance, or a dissolute course of life; but human wretchedness, absolutely produced by the want of employment.

“My profession obliges me daily to be an eye-witness of the severe distresses, trials, and afflictions, of these much-to-be-pitied of our fellow-creatures. Whole families, *without fire, without raiment, and without food*; and, to add to the catalogue of human woes, three, four, and five, in many families, languishing on the bed of sickness.

“I am sure, Sir, you will believe me when I declare, that such scenes of complicated woe are too affecting to dwell upon: and, therefore, shall conclude, with my most earnest wishes, that, by your pleading in their behalf, other Divines may be animated to the same pious undertaking; as I am certain that public benevolence will prevent the *premature death* of many, will restore health to numbers, and afford the staff of life to thousands. I am, Rev. Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

“W. HAWES, Physician to the London Dispensary.

“*Spital Square, Nov. 16, 1793.*”

In 1796, Dr. Hawes favoured the Public with his great work, intitled, “*Transactions of the Royal Humane Society, from 1774 to 1784,*” which was dedicated to the King, by Royal permission.

For a considerable part of this Article we are indebted to the European Magazine for June 1802, in which a good portrait was given of Dr. Hawes; with a character of him, warm from the heart of one who tenderly esteemed him, and who thus feelingly anticipated the chasm occasioned by his passage to the grave: “The Writer of these lines hardly dares to indulge a hope, that upon some contemporary who may survive him, the spirit that actuated the archetype may descend. At this time [1802] he is about 65 years of age; possessing his usual flow of spirits among his friends, and society in general; but, with all his usual cheerfulness, if a subject be casually started in his company that excites pity and demands succour, he is instantly metamorphosed into another being—his eyes sparkle—his whole body appears in motion—he rises from his chair—runs up to the individual who represented the case of human

woe—draws him to the corner of the room—and instantly opens his purse, with a request to convey his mite to the object of distress; or take his address, for future investigation and subsequent aid. In the street, the Writer who directs the pen of anecdotes over these pages hath often seen him hasten up to a poor object, press something into the cold hand of misery, and as hastily pass out of sight, like a shadow, to prevent his being known by the receiver, or thanked by his gratitude: it has, however, been occasionally noticed, and been found to constitute an amplitude of succour, that must have surprised, as well as gratified, the supplicant—surprise, heightened by ignorance of the donor, and gratitude, augmented by the degree of unexpected liberality. Surprise and gratitude must be still more elevated, were it known, that this benefactor is the father and grandfather of a large progeny; in the circle of which, however, he is happy in their affection, and, like an antient Patriarch, can rejoice in their esteem. I am not aiming at regular biography, but cursory characteristic anecdote; which I mention and claim as an apology for introducing age before infancy. In youth, liberality is predominant, if not proverbial; but it is avarice that most generally accompanies old age; and happy, and indeed great, must be that mind that can triumph over this worst imbecility of advancing years, and, like Dr. Hawes, open the heart, whenever want appeals to its tender auricles; which in him have a portal, and through which the warm blood of humane affections is preserved in a constant pulsation, and a warm stream of beneficent action.

“Absorbed as he has been in promoting and extending Humane Societies over the Globe, the avenues of his active beneficence are not dried up or contracted by them; for his hand is in his purse whenever the appeals of Misery touch his heart, or the importance and wants of philanthropic Institutions are presented: his time is no less in unison than his activity of mind, in devoting both to private committees and public meetings in the promotion of private and public Charities.

“The numerous instances of his promoting the public good, naturally raised the reputation of so distinguished and beneficent a character, both at home and abroad, and occasioned his name to be enrolled as an Associate or Honorary Member in several Literary Societies; a NAME that will be enrolled among the great characters who have been the benefactors of mankind; and the mind that has influenced that name will ascend to be enrolled among congenial spirits, bearing this passport engraven on the wings that shall

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shall enable it to mount upwards: "The sick and the prisoner he visited, the poor he fed, widows and the fatherless he consoled and comforted, and the apparently dead he raised to life:" but that the period of departure from works here, to rewards hereafter, may long be protracted, is the wish of all those who have experienced the undeviating friendship, the cheerful society, and the rational conviviality, of the living HAWES!"

Such was, in 1802, the lively and the faithful portraiture of a good and worthy man; who, on the 5th of December 1808, having just entered on the 73d year of his age, completed a well-spent life. His heart overflowed with the milk of human kindness; he was totally without guile; and self never entered into his contemplation.

There was a simplicity in his manners, the result of an innocent and unsuspecting heart. Without possessing, or affecting to possess, any very superior literary talents, he contrived to furnish to the publick an acceptable work in his "Annual Reports."

His practice had been considerable; and his medical knowledge was respectable. In the Resuscitative Art he was eminently skilled.

He was an honorary member of the Massachusetts Humane Society; and of many others, at Edinburgh, Manchester, Bath, &c. &c. and a vice-president of the London Electrical Dispensary.

The ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY is a shining and an eminent proof of his philanthropy; an Institution which has been found highly useful, and to establish which he employed many years of his life.

The moment in which one of the regular Anniversaries of the Society were at an end, he began to meditate plans for the success of the ensuing year. The nomination of succeeding Stewards, the augmentation of the list of regular Subscribers, and the obtaining of Churches and Preachers for the benefit of his favourite Institution, were never out of his sight; and the Writer of this Article is confident that the not being able to obtain for that purpose the grant of the churches of two or three opulent parishes, which he had long been anxiously soliciting (particularly that of *Islington*, where a very large proportion of

the Society's rewards is unavoidably applied) was a circumstance that gave him more uneasiness, and preyed more upon his mind, than can easily be imagined. So much indeed did the Humane Society engross his attention, that his own immediate interests appeared to him to be subordinate considerations. He was always ready to afford both his pecuniary and his professional assistance to distress. And his name ought to be recorded among those who added to the character of the Nation, by the establishment of an Institution founded on the most benevolent principles, and which has been a source of renewed happiness to many who might otherwise have sunk into wretchedness, arising from the untimely loss of their nearest relatives.

He died in peace with every one, and never had an enemy. His remains were deposited, on the 13th, in the new burial-ground at *Islington*, attended (in three mourning coaches) by his three sons, his grandson, his son-in-law Mr. Gurney; two other relations, Mr. Bennett and Mr. Townsend; and five of his oldest friends, Dr. Lettson, Mr. Nichols, Mr. J. Beaumont, Mr. Milward, and Mr. Jennings. Mr. Addington, to whose medical skill and friendship, both in his last illness and on preceding occasions, he was much indebted, was prevented attending by a professional engagement.—The mournful train was augmented by an handsome testimony of regard and respect from twenty-nine other friends, Managers and Directors of the Royal Humane Society; who volunteered their attendance, and joined the procession at their own expence. These were, Rev. Dr. Fly; Rev. Mr. Pridden; Rev. Mr. Postan; Deputy S. Goodbehere, Esq.; Messrs. Angel, D. Beaumont, Booth, Braine, S. Chamberlain, W. Chamberlain, Cramont, T. Cranage, J. Cranage, Evans, Flower, Kamacher, Lane, Leach, Newby, J. B. Nichols, Norris, Ogborn, Peacock, Phené, Powell, Robinson, Ross, Sharp, and Terrey. The Rev. Mr. Sanders was prevented from attending by domestic affliction.

Farewell, departed Spirit! Thy name and thy works will be recollected with gratitude on earth; and thy prayers and thine alms have happily preceded thy departure to the Throne of Grace!