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ROYAL JENNERIAN Soc.

1805



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Mr URBAN,

June 14.

AS I consider your Miscellany not only as containing an epitome of science; but likewise as a record of events, of which future generations may instructively avail themselves, I have presumed to request the insertion of the account I now transmit of the third festival of the Royal Jennerian Society. Future ages, which will only know the Small-pox by name and history, may turn over your pages, and peruse an accurate relation of the rise and progress of the Society instituted for the purpose of exterminating the most fatal disease that ever visited the earth, and contemplate with national pride and gratitude that an English JENNER was the happy discoverer of the means of its extirpation. Those superficial insinuations of its being a bestial disease, and other unfounded notions respecting an animal, one of the cleanest around us, and one of the most healthy in its products, affording food suited for every period of life, and from its udder salubrious milk for infants, as well as a remedy for them derived from the same source against the Small-pox, will no longer influence the ignorant, or alarm the timid. That some mistakes may have arisen from the introduction of improper matter, or from some constitutional cause, may be admitted; and indeed, considering the numbers who have been inoculated in almost every part of the world by practitioners little acquainted with the subject of Vaccination, it is matter of surprise that so small a number of failures have occurred, which probably future experience will prevent.

Friday, the 17th of May, being the birth-day of Dr. JENNER, and fixed by the rules for the Festival of the Royal Jennerian Society, between two and three hundred of the members and friends of the Institution assembled at the London Tavern; among whom were the Earl of Berkeley, Lords Grantley and Dursley, General Comte de Witz, and many other persons distinguished for their rank and benevolence.

His Royal Highness the Duke of York had expressed his intention of honouring the Society by taking the Chair; but, upon dinner being announced, Benjamin Travers, Esq. one of the Trustees, begged leave to read

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the following letter from His Royal Highness to the Earl of Berkeley:

“ My dear Lord,

“ I take the earliest opportunity of acquainting your Lordship that, since I had the pleasure of seeing you, I have received His Majesty's commands to attend him at the review of the Artillery at Woolwich on Friday next; in consequence of which I have to regret that it will not be in my power to dine with the Jennerian Society on that day; as I had intended, as I could not possibly be there in sufficient time.

“ May I request your Lordship will have the goodness to express to the Society how sorry I am that I am prevented from attending the meeting upon this occasion, of an establishment so highly useful and beneficial to the country, and to humanity in general.

“ Believe me ever, my dear Lord,

most sincerely yours, FREDERICK.

“ The Right hon. the Earl of Berkeley.”

Mr. Travers then moved that the Earl of Berkeley be requested to take the Chair, which was agreed to with great and universal applause.

After dinner, the company were entertained by *Non nobis, Domine*, performed in most excellent style by Inledon, Leete, Hill, and Taylor.

The King and Queen as the Patron and Patroness, the Princess of Wales and the Princesses as Vice-patronesses, and the Prince of Wales and other Vice Patrons, were then proposed. After which the health of the Duke of Bedford, President, was given.

Mr. Murray, the Secretary, then stated to the meeting, that the Duke was unfortunately prevented from attending; and read the following very handsome letter from his Grace:

“ Sir, *Stable Yard, May 17, 1805.*

“ I have to lament that unavoidable circumstances prevent my attending the Annual Meeting of the Royal Jennerian Society this day; and the more so, as His Royal Highness the Duke of York honours the Institution by taking the Chair.

May I beg of you to offer my apologies to His Royal Highness, and to assure the Society of my unvarying zeal for its interests; and my earnest and anxious hope that its progress may be uninterruptedly successful in the accomplishment of the great and laudable end it has in view. I am, Sir, your obedient humble servant,

BEDFORD.”

“ To Mr. C. Murray, Secretary to the Royal Jennerian Society.”

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The next toast proposed was "Dr. JENNER, the Father of the Vaccine Inoculation." This was received with the most rapturous enthusiasm; and when the Doctor rose to speak, such were the loud acclamations, and repeated bursts of applause, that it was long before he could be heard. When silence was procured, he addressed the company with that artless simplicity and dignity of manner, which equally distinguish his language in speaking and writing. After thanking the noble Lord in the Chair for proposing his health, and expressing the obligations he was under to the company for receiving it in a manner so very flattering to his feelings, Dr. Jenner apologized for his absence at the last Festival, which, he said, arose from unforeseen circumstances; "but now," he said, "I meet you, gentlemen, with a heart exulting at the rapid manner in which I perceive Vaccination is spreading over the earth. If we direct our eyes to the Continent of Europe, we shall there find it universally adopted; if to the Continent of America, we shall see that there it is as generally and successfully practised, from its Northern to its most Southern extremity. In India, the rapid manner in which it has spread through all the European settlements must be a cause of general exultation. We find that Establishments for the extermination of the Small-pox have been formed under the wisest regulations in Bengal, Madras, Bombay, and Ceylon, and that great multitudes of people of every description have received the benefit of our prophylactic." Dr. Jenner then mentioned, as convincing proofs of the power of the Vaccine to overcome the Small-pox, a late communication from his friend Dr. De Carro at Vienna, a city where that disease had committed its usual devastations for many centuries past. Dr. De Carro states that, in the year 1804, the bills of mortality exhibited two deaths only by the Small-pox, one the child of a boatman, who caught it on the Danube; the other a child sent previously infected from a distant part of the country to the Foundling Hospital. This was not the only account of the kind he had received; the cities of Berlin and Geneva having to boast of being in like manner freed from the destructive and loathsome monster. Dr. J. then said he would not trouble the assembly by going into farther details

of the happy progress of the Vaccine abroad, which he could do to any extent; and, under all these circumstances, he was firmly of opinion that our labours in exterminating the Small-pox would eventually be crowned with success. He then concluded by thanking the Society for their kind attention in selecting this his natal day for the celebration of their Annual Festival.

This was succeeded by the following pathetic ballad*, which was delivered in a very harmonious style by Mr. Jeans.

THE BLIND BOY OF THE VILLAGE.

Tune, "The poor Black Boy," in *The Prize*.

I once saw sunshine! ah the day!

My morn of life as morn was gay;

All then was joy.

But now my day is clouded o'er,

The blessed light I see no more;

A poor blind boy.

When to our vale the Small-pox came,

To seize on many a tender frame,

And health destroy;

From head to foot one grievous sore:

My life was spar'd—light I deplore,

A poor blind boy.

No friendly JENNER then could say

How sure the raging pest to stay,

Mankind's annoy.

'Twas then unknown the Cow did bear

A cure that should hereafter spare

A poor blind boy.

Ye tender parents, hail the guest

That comes to stay the deadly pest

That kills your joy.

The gracious gift, O! do not spurn,

Left you lament with fond concern

A poor blind boy.

To me it fooths the bitter smart,

Diffusing bliss into my heart,

Without alloy;

To think no brother hence shall wail,

Or have to tell the mournful tale,

A poor blind boy.

But, though of sight I am bereft,

Yet many a comfort I have left,

My song t' employ.

To Heaven, through JENNER, do we owe,

A blessing to prevent the woe,

A poor blind boy.

Soon afterwards, Benjamin Travers, esq. one of the Trustees of the Royal Jennerian Society, informed the company that he had received some appropriate verses from his friend Dr. Lett-

* Communicated to the Treasurer, by Dr. Lettsom, as the composition of the Rev. James Plumtre, of Clare-hall, Cambridge.



son, the author of which was an American; and, as he had no doubt of their affording general satisfaction, he would read them for the gratification of the company.

To Dr. JENNER, on his invaluable
Discovery.

JENNER! permit a Muse unknown to fame
To twine a scanty wreath around thy name.
Proceed, and prosper in the generous plan
Of mitigating woes of suff'ring man.

While gentle Peace exhales her fragrant
breath,

'Tis thine to blunt another dart of Death!
In Pity's service bear a noble part; [heart:
Nor check the ardour of thy glowing
To quench the burning pang, the fev'rish
groan, [throne.

Must sure be incense sweet at Mercy's
Go on; secure that Heaven thy views will
bless, [success.

And crown thy efforts with the wish'd
At length the slaught'rous rage of War
must cease, [Peace.

Ah! then, go forward in the works of
In foremost rank, with spotless flag un-
furl'd,

Publish thy mission to a list'ning world.

Behold! our plains luxuriant catch the
sound, [round;

And spread with joy the grateful tidings
Midst hardy sons of Northern lands begun,
They reach the climes that own a burning
sun;

O'er the blue mists of Alleghany rise,
Mingling with purest gales of Western skies;
Down the bold stream of wild Ohio roll,
And fill with pleasing awe the farmer's soul;
Diffusing balmy comfort far and wide,
Float on the waves of Mississippi's tide.

E'en midst the forest's dark and gloomy
round, [resound,

Where yet the woodman's axe did ne'er
The future mothers, as their babes they
kiss,

Shall breathe a prayer to Heaven for
JENNER'S bliss.

Mr. Travers then most fully entered into the rise, progress, and future views of the Society, with a perspicuity, manner, and animation, which it is not in our power to convey, whilst it riveted the attention of a listening audience; the substance of which, as nearly as could be recollected by the writer of this faint detail, was as follows:

"The first step we took," he observed, "when resolved to establish this institution, was to engage the patronage of the King, Queen, and other branches of the Royal Family, who respectively became its Patrons and Patronesses; and whatever the difficulties in its first formation, like the Sun at its rising, which is often

shrouded with a thick mist, which its meridian strength and brightness disperses, and afterwards diffuses light and health and joy throughout the universe; so this Society, in a little more than two years, and at a period when upwards of 2000 persons, upon an average of the last 50 years, had fallen victims to the Small-pox within the Bills of Mortality, had effected a reduction in the deaths in the first of 800, in the second year of 1400, and, upon an average of four months, of 1700 in the present year; and had it not been for the injudicious conduct of the Hospital at Pancras, which, by inoculating persons with variolous matter, and turning them loose into society, counteracted these benevolent exertions, a much larger decrease of deaths might have been expected."

The impression made upon the company was very observable, and honorable to their feelings as men and citizens; and we cannot but agree with him that this dangerous practice should be immediately discontinued; for, while infection is kept alive by inoculating variolous matter, it will be utterly impossible to exterminate the Small-pox.

Mr. Travers was afterwards very happy in several strong and impressive appeals upon this subject, in reply to Mr. Highmore, Secretary to the Small-pox Hospital; and abundantly convinced us of the necessity of adopting the most rigid regulations respecting Inoculation of Variolous matter.

"Is it," said he, "probable, that, provided the Pancras Institution (Small-pox Hospital) did not exist, that a society of gentlemen would be found to set such a one on foot? I am confident that, with every exertion, they could not raise 100l. Is it then wise or expedient to continue an Institution, the necessity of which is so questionable, and the establishment so impracticable? and would such an institution be endured upon the Continent?"

Mr. Travers then took a view of the Societies which had been formed in different parts of the world for the extermination of the Small-pox, and particularly in France, patronized by Chaptal, Minister of the Interior; and urged it home to the feelings of his audience;

"That it was a national undertaking, and that every one who wished well to his country ought to step forward in its support; that, if an increase of children was a nation's strength, an axiom never to be forgotten, the rescue of children from an untimely grave produced the same effect,

effect, and was entitled to the same support."

After stating the funds of the Society, and its reliance chiefly on the benevolence of its friends, under the pressure of its unavoidable burdens; observing, "that it might be said to carry on an wholesale business, from the incessant demands for matter from every part of the world;" he concluded his animated address, in which he seemed to pour out his whole heart in favour of this most philanthropic Institution, and left such an impression on the minds of those who heard him, as cannot be soon effaced.

When Mr. Travers sat down, Lord Granley proposed his health, which was received with the most flattering marks of approbation. Mr. Ring, Dr. Walker, and others, severally communicated some interesting facts relative to the practice of Inoculation, which were very cordially received.

The Rev. Rowland Hill then addressed the Society in the following impressive speech:

"Gentlemen, We are doing the greatest honour to our own character while we are active for the preservation of human life, and for the alleviation of human woe. How far I may be thought to have a small claim to such honours from my efforts to promote the Vaccine Inoculation, I will not presume to say; but with my own hand I have inoculated 3000 people in different parts in the country. A little time ago I went down to Chatham; and, having heard that the Small-pox was raging there, and finding that some of the medical gentlemen were adverse to inoculation from motives of delicacy towards each other (while others, much to their credit, had exerted their benevolent endeavours), regardless of offending such professors, I took out my lancet, and inoculated in two days no less than 300 persons; after which the medical gentlemen became inoculators of the poor, and were completely relieved from their dilemma; and hence many lives were saved. In like manner I put a stop to the ravages of the Small-pox at Clapham, by adopting the same line of conduct, at the express invitation of the poor, of whom I inoculated upwards of 80; and also under the wing of Surrey chapel 2,800 subjects have been vaccinated. I have likewise instructed the Rev. Mr. Griffin of Portsmouth, and several other ministers, in the art of Vaccination; so that, by these aids, I may add, that upwards of 3000 persons more have been inoculated under my advice and instructions. Considering, there-

fore, myself as the inoculator of 3000, and that one out of every six would have died of the Small-pox, I can hold up my hand as the happy preserver of 500 human lives; but if I were to add to the list those who have been inoculated by my influence, I may claim 1000 more, still supposing the loss of one in six by the Small-pox, the whole amount of lives preserved by me will amount to no less than 1500!"

The reverend gentleman then, turning towards Dr. Jenner, expressed himself in an animated manner nearly in these words:

"What avails this little boast, when I stand by my very respectable Friend! I know he will allow me to call him my Friend; and an higher honour I need not claim, for he has been the preserver of the lives of millions. By him I was entirely influenced to take a part in this most happy discovery, from the high opinion I entertained of the ability and integrity of the Physician, who had preserved more lives than any other person since the existence of the human race."

Mr. Hill next remarked, "that he never knew a single instance of a person inoculated with the Cow-pock, who afterwards took the Small-pox; though he believed that some very rare instances might be produced, in which the Small-pox had afterwards taken effect; at the same time he was fully persuaded, that instances of this kind were frequent after the inoculation of the Small-pox itself; and if this was the case, the Vaccine inoculation may be considered as having obtained a complete victory over the Variolous inoculation. So zealous was he to extend the blessings of this new inoculation, that he wished the Ladies to become Inoculators; for so simple and easy was the process, as scarcely to require the aid of professional gentlemen; and though he conceived that they merited every encouragement from the wealthy; yet, that to suffer the poor to perish for want of the application of such an easy preventive, could not but be deemed a most cruel and criminal neglect."

He concluded by observing, "that as complaints had been made, by some who had spoken during this festivity, that the Clergy in general had not shewn themselves sufficiently active in promoting this most merciful discovery; that as a Clergyman, though undignified, he had exerted himself with some success, in the preservation of the human race, by promoting, by every measure in his power, the extension of Vaccine inoculation,—this odium was in some measure removed."

It would occupy too much space to detail the sentiments of each speaker who appeared upon this occasion; but we must not omit to notice the observations of John Addington, esq. who read to the meeting a most interesting address from the Rev. Dr. Booker, of Dudley; who, soon after the important discovery by Dr. Jenner, published an eloquent Sermon, powerfully recommending this inestimable practice; and whose early, zealous, and active services essentially contributed to promote it. The length of Dr. B.'s valuable communication precludes us from giving any thing more than the following extract:

"I reside (says the Doctor) in a parish that contains not less than 14,000 persons, where, in my profession of Clergyman, I have, previous to the knowledge of the Vaccine inoculation, frequently buried, day after day, several (and once as many as eight) victims of the Small Pox. But since the parish has been blessed with the invaluable boon of Divine Providence, introduced among us nearly four years ago, only two victims have fallen a prey to the above ravaging disorder. In the surrounding Villages, like an insatiable Molock, it has lately been devouring vast numbers, where Obstinacy and Prejudice have precluded the Jennerian protective blessing; and not a few of the infected victims have been brought for interment in our cemeteries: yet, though thousands have thus fallen beside us, the fatal pestilence has not hitherto again come nigh our dwelling. The Spirit of JENNER hath "stood between the dead and the living," and "the plague has been stayed." Multitudes in my neighbourhood have received the benefit of Vaccine inoculation, without any inconvenience to a single individual; and so deservedly popular is it become, that, in the course of last year, nearly 3000 had that benefit extended to them, within the space of three weeks, by one ingenious ornament of the medical profession, whom I am proud to call my friend."

Then, after deploring the fatal consequences of that prejudice which still exists in the minds of some individuals, he mentions a striking occurrence in his neighbourhood, where a woman far advanced in life, who had caught the Cow-pock when young, had twenty years afterwards resisted the infection of the Small-pox, amidst the virulent contagion of a husband and five children labouring under the utmost severity of that loathsome disease; and at

the end of another twenty years, being forty from her first receiving the Vaccine preservative, again undergoing a similar ordeal in nursing four of her grand-children, who all fell victims to the Small-pox. The Doctor then says:

"Having such abundant proof, that the efficacy of the Cow-pock is as lasting as the means are simple, may we not address the benevolent Discoverer, and in the words of the Poet, say,

*Te Mater omnis,—te lachrymabilis
Accuret Uxor, ne caducum
Orba virum Puerosque ploret,
Seu confluentis forte timet notas
Decora Virgo—tu faciem eripis
Periclinantem, protegisque
Delicias Juvenum futuras*."*

After a warm and energetic tribute to the great Discoverer of this blessing, Dr. B. adds:

"If a Roman, who preserved the life of one citizen, was rewarded with a civic crown; what reward shall be presented to Him who preserves the lives of MILLIONS? If divine Honours were paid to Hippocrates for expelling the Plague from Athens for a season; what Honours are not due to Him who absolutely exterminates a more destructive Pestilence from the face of the whole Earth? Let us not envy him his feelings; but let us participate in them, by co-operating with him in his beneficent pursuits: let us, like him, labour to save the lives of our fellow-creatures. Long may he live to enjoy his feelings! his greatest, his best remuneration;—the pecuniary one he has received accords not with the stupendous benefit. Let British Justice augment it; if not by increasing his means to do good, by adopting some plan to eternize his name. But this is already done. A grateful and admiring world has enrolled that revered name among the greatest of human Benefactors; surrounded, whenever he walks on the peopled globe, with monuments to his fame, far more valuable than those of marble or of gold,—with living monuments, fashioned by "The Hand Divine,"—with manly vigour unimpaired,—with female loveliness undespoiled of those charms which a desolating pest has so long made its prey,—with a race of beings now but little lower than the Angels, and enabled, through the aids of Revelation, to rise to an equality with those exalted intelligences in the regions of immortality and glory!"

The success of Dr. Booker's benevolent exertions, and the example which

* See Mr. King's translation, of Mr. Anley's Ode, p. 326.

they afford, we deem of the utmost importance in the cause of Vaccination; and, on introducing the subject, Mr. Addington remarked:

“That the extirpation of the Small-pox from the populous town of Dudley must be attributed principally to the unremitting zeal of the above learned Divine; who had early directed the attention of his numerous parishioners to the preventive system of Vaccination, by preaching expressly upon it, and by distributing, in the baptism of infants, a persuasive address to parents, in imitation of a practice adopted by the Clergy at Geneva; and which had been the means of totally eradicating the Small-pox from a whole district there. That Dr. B. had also taken every opportunity of conferring with his medical friends in the place, and of keeping up, in every possible way, the attention of the inhabitants to the subject.” Hence Mr. Addington noticed, “the great advantages to be derived from the assisting influence of the Clergy of all denominations, towards attaining the greatest object that ever interested mankind; as,” he observed, “it was worthy of remark, that every district or town where the extermination of the Small-pox had happily been effected, it was done through the exertions of persons of influence, especially the clergy.” And he concluded with expressing his persuasion, “that a general co-operation of the Clergy of all denominations, throughout the kingdom, with the Royal Jennerian Society, would be the most efficacious, and indeed the only means of completely effecting the great designs of that truly patriotic and benevolent Institution.”

It is a circumstance of some conse-

quence to the cause in which the Society has engaged, to state, that among the company present, were many of the first practitioners of Medicine in the Metropolis; and when, in addition to their uniform and concurrent testimony as to the efficacy of this great discovery in medical science, such men can be drawn from their pressing avocations, devoting a portion of their valuable time to “the feast of reason, and the flow of soul,” on an occasion like the present, hailing the anniversary of a day that gave a JENNER to the world; surely an enlightened Nation like ours must be yet more confidently impressed with the stability of this preventive plan, and incited to co-operate in giving it every possible effect.

Upon the whole, contemplating the vast importance of Vaccination, and the benefits of its extensive diffusion, we cannot but congratulate the publick upon the solidity with which this most excellent Institution is now established; as it has manifested the utmost activity, perseverance, and uncommon ardour for the saving of human life, and laid the foundation for the final extermination of the Small-pox, by universally disseminating the mild, uninfectious, and certain preservative against that cruel disorder. We therefore consider this Charity as deserving of the highest praise, and, in a natural as well as benevolent point of view, entitled not only to the united encouragement of all ranks, but to the attention and support of Government also, should it be necessary.

VACCINA.

