





AN APPEAL TO THE BENEVOLENT

IN BEHALF OF AN

INFIRMARY

FOR THE RECEPTION AND TREATMENT OF

POOR PERSONS

AFFLICTED WITH ANY OF

THE IMPORTANT DISORDERS

PECULIARLY

INCIDENTAL TO WOMEN,

BY

W. JONES., M.R.C.S.

SURGEON AND ACCOUCHEUR TO THE BLENHEIM STREET FREE DISPENSARY AND
INFIRMARY, AND LECTURER ON THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF
MIDWIFERY, AND DISEASES OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

With wise intent,
The hand of nature on peculiar minds,
Imprints a different bias, and to each
Decees its province in the common toil.
COWPER

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1839.

AN APPEAL
TO THE
BENEVOLENT,

&c. &c.

It is almost impossible to witness the vast amount of suffering experienced by women, without feeling an earnest desire to trace its origin, and to make use of every possible exertion for its mitigation. From the Princess in her palace,* to the peasant in her cottage all are more or less exposed to attacks of disorders, to which, the influence of their respective social position, no less than the extreme delicacy of their individual structure, renders them peculiarly obnoxious. No rank,†

* Witness our late lamented Princess Charlotte of Wales.

† The proportion of diseases peculiar to women, in hospital practice, says Sir Gilbert Blane, is the same as in private cases from which it would appear that the unfavorable influence of

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however exalted, no condition of life, however humble, can protect them at all times, from the ravage of diseases, which though often insidious in their attack, and slow in their progress, are not less excruciating in the agony they ultimately produce, nor yet less fatal in their final termination.

Among the higher classes, the various midnight scenes, the debilitating atmosphere of crowded places, the abject submission to the laws of fashion, the forgetfulness of nature's stern commands in an eagerness to enjoy the delightful society of the "favored few," or to participate in the gay and glittering routine of town indulgencies,—are so many active agents in the development of diseases, whose havoc is too plainly visible in the pale but bloated countenance, the withering form, emaciated muscles, and departing symmetry of those who are the victims of a life of pleasure. With the lower classes, the pinching wants of penury, exposure to cold and moisture, the great exertions necessary to the sup-

indolent habits, excessive delicacy and sensibility of mind and body in the upper ranks, compensate for the bad effects of hard labour and various privations in the lower orders.

port of families, are not less active agents in the production of similar diseases.

How frequently has it happened, that, under the influences of these causes, women have become the subjects of disorders from WANT OF CAUTION AT PECULIAR PERIODS, from ARISING TOO EARLY AFTER CONFINEMENT, or from NEGLECTING THE SIMPLE RULES NECESSARY TO BE OBSERVED AFTER MISCARRIAGE.

Most women, indeed, are too apt to forget their social position, and reasoning from the practice of the Aborigines* of different countries, or from the fortunate escape from injury which has occasionally been recorded of women following the camp, fallaciously presume they may with impunity expose

* The Cherokee Indians of North America, and many of the African tribes, are said never to pay the slightest attention to their individual *health*; to be moreover their own "*accoucheuses*," and to return to their usual occupations, and even undertake journies of considerable extent, immediately after their "*accouchemens*," as though nothing of the kind had taken place. Some few instances also have been related of soldiers' wives, who, when following the camp, have marched with the regiment immediately after the same occurrences.

themselves to the influences of the same causes as those against which such individuals had been fortified by their habits. This absurd reasoning has caused the misery of many a happy being,—has been the ruin of many a devoted family, and the death of many a loved object.

From these, and a variety of other circumstances, scarcely a family circle can be found, in which some one of its female members has not at some time of her life experienced some one or more of the innumerable affections peculiar to her sex.

Surely so vast a field may well employ, and loudly demands the special exertions both of the practitioner and of the philanthropist. The former to collect, collate, and compare the various forms of these diseases, and thence discover the minute shades of difference which influence their individual treatment; the latter to use his warmest benevolence in affording the means of making them the subject of distinct study.

In every other branch of science the happiest results have followed the application of individual labour to particular departments, and each has been marked by a consequent rapidly progressive improvement. Many

fallacious and absurd prejudices have gradually been dispelled, and though we cannot deny that some of them have been superseded by equally fallacious and absurd theories, yet we must admit that Truth begins to wear a less disguised form, and with the Enthusiast may be inclined to hope that the day is not far distant,—

When from the lips of *Truth* one mighty breath
Shall like a whirlwind scatter on its breeze
The whole dark pile of human mummeries,
'And then the reign of *MIND* commence on earth.

Nor has the medical profession remained stationary; the labors of our illustrious countrymen assisted by those of our continental brethren, have disclosed the simple structure of the human economy and the equal simplicity of the laws which regulate it; have shown us the absurdity of believing all diseases to originate from acridities, humours and poisons in the blood, and to be susceptible of successful treatment by one remedy only;—(an idea now only entertained by at least misguided, if not dishonest empirics), and taught us that the minute differences which influence the individual treatment of each of “the thousand ills that flesh is heir to,”

can only be recognized by collection, collation and comparison of all those different disorders which can occur in every distinct portion of the body.

The advantages resulting from division of labor, in the treatment of the various affections incidental to humanity, (which, we are told by Herodotus, was carried so far in ancient Egypt that a special practitioner could be found for almost every complaint, and that an Egyptian oculist was considered as the most valuable present which could be sent to an eastern prince,) are daily becoming more apparent; we have our Ophthalmic Institutions, our Fever and Small Pox Hospitals, an Infirmary for Diseases of the Spine, another for those of the Ear, &c. &c. In Paris we find an Hospital for diseases of the Chest, another for diseases of the Skin, and wards in the larger hospitals devoted to the reception of particular classes of complaints, such, for example, as the Womens' Ward at *La Pitie*, &c; until lately however, no attempt has been made in this country to provide a place of reception for the treatment of the numerous complaints peculiarly incidental to women, although scarcely one woman out of ten passes through life without experiencing some one or other of them,

and although thousands of women are annually sacrificed, who might be saved, did such an establishment exist.

In Paris this special study applied to this class of diseases has already been productive of great good:—many lovely and virtuous women have been restored to themselves, their families and their friends;—while many others, less fortunate in the choice of the period in which they sought relief, who, by false delicacy, had been induced to conceal their sufferings till the period had past wherein human aid could have availed them, have nevertheless had cause to be grateful for the mitigation of their sufferings, to the application of individual labour in the study of their peculiar diseases.

Even in a medical point of view, great good has resulted, inasmuch as, means have been discovered by whose aid diseases of which the existence was previously merely conjectural, and whose treatment was at best but empirical, are not only clearly demonstrable, but may also be treated scientifically and successfully. *Cancer*, for example, the most frightful, because the most formidable and insidious disease to which "frail humanity" is exposed, may by the

aid of these means be recognized at a period when its ravages are susceptible of restraint by art, and its unhappy victims are capable of being snatched from the jaws of death.

Many other formidable diseases might also be understood and properly treated, provided means were afforded for making them the subject of distinct study;—many a pallid, sickly, and dejected countenance might thus be made to assume the roseate animated hue of health;—and many a lovely object who now lives a burden to herself, an object of pity to her family, and the humble dependant on the kindness of her domestics, might be transformed into the cheerful social friend, the affectionate and provident mother, the respected mistress of her family. Most earnestly therefore do I implore every individual into whose hands this appeal may fall, whether he be professional or otherwise, to assist in the foundation of AN INFIRMARY, ESPECIALLY DEVOTED TO THE RECEPTION OF POOR PERSONS AFFLICTED WITH ANY OF THE IMPORTANT DISORDERS PECULIARLY INCIDENTAL TO WOMEN.

In truth, is not every *professional* man personally interested in the formation of such an Institution?

Could such an Institution exist for any length of time without conferring benefit on him, his family, and the public at large? Would he not daily have an opportunity of obtaining information which could never be acquired in the ordinary routine of private practice? Would not his wife, his daughters, his patients, and his friends, derive the benefit of that information? Would not many persons be rendered comparatively happy, or at least free from disease, who are now its unfortunate victims? Surely these questions cannot but be answered in the affirmative. ‡

But is the public less interested in the accomplishment of such design? No; every man, no matter what may be his station in life, who has a mother, a sister, a wife, a daughter, or any other female relative; every woman whose bosom glows with benevolence, or whose heart can feel for the sufferings of others, is bound, by all that renders life desirable, to assist in the promotion of the charitable design, seeing, that no one knows how soon it may be his own unhappy lot to have some dear relative or friend, he would wish should receive the benefit which such an institution would be calculated to confer.

It is with mingled feelings of pride and satisfaction,

that I am found an humble member of a society, (the Committee of Management of the Blenheim Street Free Dispensary and Infirmary), which is engaged in promoting the cause I have advocated, whence I presume I shall be readily pardoned, if I again and again entreat and implore every individual into whose hands this appeal may fall, to afford us his encouragement and become our supporter and friend, remembering that—

Without enliv'ning suns and genial showers
And shelter from the blast, in vain we hope
The tender plant can rear its blooming head
Or yield the harvest promis'd in its spring.

15, Lower Brook Street, Grosvenor Square.

16th May, 1839

UNDER THE ESPECIAL PATRONAGE OF

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS OF KENT.

BLENHEIM STREET FREE DISPENSARY,

AND

INFIRMARY,

1, BLENHEIM STREET, OXFORD STREET.

SUPPORTED BY VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS.

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PROSPECTUS
OF THE
BLENHEIM STREET FREE DISPENSARY,
AND
INFIRMARY.

THIS Institution, under the name of the Free Dispensary, originated in the philanthropy of a few individuals, who commenced a subscription in May 1831, for the purpose of founding an establishment where immediate and efficient relief could be procured by all applicants without distinction, and without the delay, sometimes consequent upon the necessity of obtaining letters of admission.

During the period of health and employment, the laboring classes of the population of London are ensured, by careful industry, an adequate supply to all their wants and a moderate share of humble indulgence; but in sickness, unless the hand of charity be held forth to their assistance, they fall, at once, the victims of want and destitution. Their little savings are soon exhausted in obtaining food for their families, and are generally very inadequate to obtain medical relief. Even the most provident of them have seldom laid by a sufficient fund to meet illness; for, to foretell the consequences, duration and exigences of disease, demands more foresight and information than they commonly possess. In the moment of suffering, they are therefore compelled often at the hazard of their lives, to go forth in the hope of obtaining admission into an hospital; but the hospital may be full, or they may not be able to procure tickets of admission, or it may not be the admission day; and in any of these cases, they must return home unrelieved.

To provide for patients in such a position was the chief and early intention of dispensaries. But even there relief cannot be obtained without a governor's letter; and a governor may not be at hand; it may be night, and by morning, the proper moment for relief may be past, and their lives may be lost for want of timely assistance.

The Free Dispensary was founded, in order that there might never be any delay in affording relief to cases of real disease. Sickness and poverty constitute the only introduction that is required—the only letter to ensure participation in its benefits. It has extended its beneficial influence over a wide circle, including many large parishes, and has not been deficient in contributing its share of succour to the sick poor. Nine thousand two hundred and sixty-eight patients have been relieved since its foundation and the number of applicants daily increases.

On referring to the books of the Charity, it is observable that a very great number of the affections treated is formed by those hideous maladies which disfigure the appearance, THOSE AFFLICTING DISORDERS TO WHICH WOMEN ALONE ARE LIABLE, and the diseases dependant on the process of teething. The cause of this preponderating majority of particular affections is traceable to the total absence of any Hospital or Infirmary in this Metropolis, especially destined to their reception.

Desirous of supplying the absent link in the chain of Charitable Institutions, which do honour to the capital, while they adhere to their original intention of

affording the means of relief in every form of disease in either sex, the Committee of Management of the BLENHEIM STREET FREE DISPENSARY, have added to the title of their Institution the word INFIRMARY, and propose to establish a WARD or HOSPITAL, wherein poor persons afflicted with diseases of the skin may be supplied with the requisite kinds of both gratuitously—POOR WOMEN LABORING UNDER ANY OF THE IMPORTANT DISORDERS PECULIAR TO THEIR STRUCTURE, MAY MEET WITH THAT CARE AND ATTENTION THEY IMPERATIVELY DEMAND, and have also added to their staff a Dental Surgeon, in order that the sufferings of the junior portion of their applicants may not be neglected.

As the accomplishment of their proposed object will demand the outlay of a considerable sum of money, the Committee have resolved on appealing to public sympathy for assistance, and with this view, feel confident in laying before the governors of the Free Dispensary and the Public generally, the object and design of their Institution, and the reasons which have induced them to undertake its management, fully convinced, that, among such warm supporters of useful charitable establishments, the voice of universal benevolence will not be disregarded.

Resting their claims to public patronage on the universality of their Institution, (to whose benefits affliction and poverty constitute the only necessary recommendation) the good they have already effected even with very limited means, the consequent rigid economy with which their Establishment has hitherto been conducted, and the benevolence of their present intention in proposing an extension of its sphere of utility, the Committee humbly, yet confidently appeal to the generosity of their countrymen for assistance in the promotion of their charitable design.

Within the past year 1968 patients have been relieved, of whom 355 were afflicted with disease of the skin—232 LABOURED UNDER THE IMPORTANT DISORDERS PECULIARLY INCIDENTAL TO WOMEN, 39 were attended in their "accouchemens,"—185 suffered from the usual disorders of dentition, and the remaining portion was composed of mixed cases.

During a period of five years since the foundation of this Institution, 9268 individuals have partaken of its benefits. The whole amount of expenses incurred has been under £570.

Subscriptions and Donations will be thankfully received by the Treasurer, Sir Walter Farquhar, Bart.; Messrs. Herries, Farquhar and Co., Saint James's Street; the Hon. Secretary, E. Jennings, Esq. 5, Chancery Lane; the Members of Committee; the Medical Officers; and by the Collector, Mr. Parker, who will attend at the Infirmary, every day at 12 o'clock.

RULES AND REGULATIONS.

I. THE Charity consists of Patronesses, Presidents, Vice Presidents, Governors, Treasurer, Hon. Secretary, Committee of Management, and Auditors.

II. Every person subscribing one guinea per annum shall become a Governor, and entitled to vote at all elections of officers. All annual subscriptions become due on the nearest quarter day.

III. All persons subscribing ten guineas or making up that contribution within the year are Governors for life.

IV. Every person making a collection of two guineas annually to become a Governor, or twenty guineas in one year a Life Governor.

V. A medical officer shall be in attendance daily at twelve at noon, to see and prescribe for patients.

VI. Every Governor to have the privilege of sending annually one woman to be attended during her confinement, one person to the Hospital, as soon as it shall be established, and an unlimited number of patients to the Dispensary with letters of recommendation.

VII. Sick persons in the lower classes of society, on presenting themselves, are to receive immediate attention, without the necessity of any recommendatory letter.

VIII. Patients bringing letters of recommendation are to be first attended to.

IX. To prevent imposition on the Funds of the Charity the medical officers to have at all times the right of withholding relief from such applicants as may be proved to be improper objects.

X. A general Annual Meeting shall be held on the first Tuesday in the month of May in each year; at which meeting five Governors shall constitute a Board; and one week's notice of such meetings shall be advertised in one or more of the daily papers.

XI. A Committee of Management consisting of twenty members shall be appointed at each general Annual Meeting.

XII. The Committee of Management shall meet on the last Tuesday in every month, and take into consideration all matters respecting the well-being of the Charity; and if it appear to them expedient to rescind any of the Rules or Regulations, or to substitute or add new ones, they shall be empowered to do so, subject to the approbation of the first general meeting. Five to form a quorum.

XIII. Three Auditors shall be chosen from the Committee of Management; and no interested person shall be nominated.

XIV. They shall examine the several accounts, and order payment of them, and shall lay before the Annual General Meeting a statement of the receipts and expenditure of the Institution.

XV. The accounts shall be audited once a month, and no account to be paid without the signatures of a majority of the Auditors, and the signature *ex officio* of the Hon. Secretary.

XVI. The Secretary to attend all meetings and committees, at the appointed hours; and the proceedings of the Committee of Management to be entered in a book provided for that purpose.

XVII. The receipts given for the subscriptions to this Institution to bear the signature of the Hon. Secretary for the time being, and a request to be printed upon each receipt that without such signature no monies be paid.

XVIII. The Collector to attend every meeting of the Committee and pay over all subscriptions received by him, and exhibit the receipts remaining on his hands.

XIX. All officers becoming vacant are to be filled up by election.

XX. Ladies only are to be allowed to vote by proxy.

N. B. -CLINICAL LECTURES will be given at the Institution once or twice in every week, as soon as the beds can be procured; to which Medical Gentlemen in actual practice will be admitted by leaving their cards.



