

THE
 VACCINE CONTEST:

OR,

“ MILD HUMANITY,
 “ REASON, RELIGION, AND TRUTH,

“ AGAINST

“ *Fierce, unfeeling Ferocity, overbearing Insolence,
 “ mortified Pride, false Faith, and Desperation.*”

It may be right to premise, that the curious TITLE to the sub-joined Dialogue is borrowed from the Hero of anti-vaccination. A Clergyman, residing in a village near London, is supposed to be deeply distressed and apprehensive, lest his remaining children should die of an epidemic small-pox ; he, therefore, comes to Saville Row, and consults Dr. Bragwell on the steps necessary to be taken : but, before the conclusion of his discourse, a town-Surgeon enters the room, and joins in the conversation ; by which means, the Rev. Gentleman, having previously been dissatisfied with Dr. Bragwell's indecorous behaviour, is fully convinced that “ mild Humanity, Reason, Religion, and Truth,” unite in favour of Vaccination.

PARENT.—Most renowned and learned Doctor Bragwell : I am the curate of a populous parish, and the afflicted parent of a numerous family. My first

darling babe was snatched away by the small-pox, after Suttonian inoculation. I have lost two others, by the natural disease; and am now in danger of being unhappily bereaved of all the rest (just returned from school) by an epidemic small-pox, which rages fatally in our neighbourhood, especially among persons who have cried down Vaccination. Having heard, Sir, of your great exertions and disinterestedness in ascertaining the truth, amidst “the continual hurry of a most extensive practice,” I trust you will forgive my anxiety and freedom, in thus craving your opinion on an important question, viz.—Whether I should follow the advice of my honest Apothecary, who recommends me to let him immediately vaccinate the dear children, and who has humanely offered to inoculate for the Cow-pox *gratuitously* through our whole village.

DOCTOR.—“Greasy horse-healed project! The sooner Cow-pox infatuation is abandoned *in toto*, so much the better for society. The credulous Faculty have been imposed on, until TRUTH hath opened their eyes to conviction.”

PARENT.—Good Sir, how fortunate that I consulted you! I thankfully acknowledge this providential interference. I only wish to know the real truth; and should be ever obliged to you to explain wherein “the Faculty have been imposed on.” But, give me leave, Doctor Bragwell, to add, that our Royal Princes, Noblemen, Bishops, “Clergymen, Ladies of Rank, and many others, the warmest

“ and well-intentioned friends of humanity and philanthropy, have united with great zeal, vehemence, and alacrity, to promulgate, recommend, and extend the utility of this novel Cow-pox practice.” Nay more, it is said that the Small-pox is quite banished from particular towns, by this simple means: and I am informed, on the best authority, that the Rev. Rowland Hill has vaccinated nearly five thousand persons with his own hand, and directed the vaccination of several thousands more; without so much as one unfavourable case, or failure!! This particular anecdote I have learnt in the stage-coach, as I came to town, from an intimate acquaintance of Mr. Hill; and it cannot, therefore, be called in question. But still, learned Sir, I am all attention, to hear what facts and reasons there are against this new practice, in other quarters.

DOCTOR.—As for the great folks, I answer, that “ puffing letters, and letters from humane and benevolent Lords, prove nothing. When men are so uninformed, or have become so abandoned as to pervert truth, it is high time for the learned in the Faculty to awaken from their torpid lethargy. Those will be considered the greatest enemies to society, who longest persist in spreading the criminal and murderous evil.”

PARENT.—With great deference to your superior judgment, let me ask, if those Noble Lords,

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Ladies, and Reverend Gentlemen, may not bear witness to what they have seen with their own eyes, perhaps in their own families and neighbourhood, and wherein they cannot easily be deceived? I do not here presume to contradict *you*, Doctor Bragwell, who, doubtless, understand the subject perfectly; but I merely desire to learn, how the affirmation of such respectable and impartial eye-witnesses can be got rid of? If there were no friends to this practice but medical men (I beg pardon for the suggestion), some uncharitable and inconsiderate people might surmise, that their testimony is rather suspicious, as they may possibly be interested; though I myself see clearly, that their pecuniary interest lies much the other way, in giving all possible encouragement to so dreadful and loathsome a disorder as the small-pox.

DOCTOR.—I perceive, Reverend Sir, that you are more inquisitive, and less easily persuaded, than my patients and hearers in general. Let me, in turn, ask you a question; “Who are those vaccinators? “Have they distinguished themselves by deep medical erudition,” as I have? “Novices have dared “to cavil with veterans in science, with those who “had long experience before any of the furious vaccinators were born! Infatuated visionists! Daring “projectors, who bid defiance to truth! It is just to “infer, that millions will become victims to small-pox, and perish by its epidemic malignity, who “are supposed secure through the imaginary infal-

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“libility of Cow-pox inoculation. Dreadful instances of Cow-pox failure, &c. are pouring in from all quarters.”

PARENT.—Respected and honoured Doctor : you really astonish and quite petrify my inmost soul ! I know not what to say ; except that I came here desirous of learning the whole truth, good or bad. Pray, Sir, for mercy sake, tell me all you know ; and do not let me return home, without being furnished with the most unanswerable facts and arguments.

DOCTOR.—“Irrational and destructive practice ! Wild, light-headed adherents, who have distinguished themselves for ignorance !” Their cause is “supported by subterfuge, evasion, and criminal proceedings.”

PARENT.—Oh ! Sir, God forbid. You harrow up my feelings ! Proceed, Sir, I entreat, and tell me every jot and tittle ; though you do not yet detail any precise facts, that I might lay hold of, for the conviction of such of my parishioners as are carried away by error and prejudice.

DOCTOR.—“It is a most glaring tyranny, and inhuman in the extreme, to force vaccination on the poor, *nolens volens*, in most parishes throughout the united kingdom ; but MURDER WILL COME OUT !”

PARENT.—Nothing can palliate such conduct, if it be true, but the fullest persuasion that the Cow-pox is a beneficial discovery of universal importance ;

as, indeed, I had been hitherto disposed to imagine it was. But, go on, Dr. Bragwell.

DOCTOR.—“ The world did not require Cow-pox ; it was forced, contrary to inclination, into it. The Cow-pox was forced into the world, with the utmost vehemence. It was too hot to hold : therefore the refined artists struck briskly, while the iron was hot. Many men of the strongest passions were first seized with this Cow-pox *mania*. Some were so tyrannical and insolent, as to force parents to comply with the project.”

PARENT.—How zealous ! How active, in extending vaccination ! I feel these remarks keenly, Sir : I know well what anxiety tender parents must experience ; but you will presently explain yourself more fully on this delicate point.

DOCTOR.—“ They exceeded in zeal even the chimerical *Illuminati*, Swedenborg and his enthusiastic *raving-mad* followers ! Despotie, inhuman tyranny ! All was violence, blaze, uproar, and tumult ! Parliament sanctioned the experiment ; and parents, affectionate, unsuspecting parents, were cajoled to receive beastly diseases, and to sacrifice their innocent infants, whether they would or not !”

PARENT.—Did not any honest man exclaim against such proceedings ?

DOCTOR.—“ Reason was trampled on ! Truth, *mild Truth*, stood astonished and silent, during the violence of this furious storm, and hid her virtuous

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“ head. Earth trembled ! and heaven profusely shed
 “ tears !”

“ I have been in some vaccination storms ; and
 “ have had the buttons of my coat torn off, cloth and
 “ all, to convince me of the infallible excellence of
 “ cow-pox. I have seen some vaccinators redden
 “ like a flame, with fury ; the lips quivering, the
 “ eyes starting out of the head, with flashing streams
 “ of fire ; the mouth foaming, and tongue pouring
 “ forth a torrent of hard words, like a thunder-
 “ storm ; the fist clinched like a pugillist, ready to
 “ accompany the violent wrath, with other knock-
 “ down arguments.”

PARENT.—And how did you bear all this ?

DOCTOR.—“ Mild investigating philosophy
 “ quits the scene, and leaves the field of battle to the
 “ BEDLAMITES. Virtue, inestimable virtue, is its own
 “ reward !”

PARENT.—You did right in not rendering evil
 for evil, and railing for railing. Truth needs not
 the aid of such rancour or bitterness.

DOCTOR.—“ Truth is mild and gentle : false-
 “ hood is furious, revengeful, abusive, and malicious.
 “ Vaccine fury must cool, before some vaccinators
 “ return to justice, truth, or reason. Mild huma-
 “ nity, reason, religion, and truth, meet now in
 “ combat, against fierce, unfeeling ferocity, over-
 “ bearing insolence, mortified pride, false faith, and
 “ desperation. Fury, rage, and despair, are com-
 “ monly united to the worst causes. The most ex-

“cellent physicians ARE ALWAYS MODEST, CANDID,
“and UNASSUMING.”

PARENT.—I much approve your just description of an upright medical character, as well as your account of truth and falsehood. It is a pity there should be any personal abuse or illiberal invective on either side ; but truth will finally reign.

DOCTOR.—“Facts are stubborn things, and
“must ultimately prevail. It is necessary always to
“know whether a man be a matter-of-fact-man, a
“strict adherer to NOTHING BUT TRUTH.”

PARENT.—Most certainly ; for if we once convict a person of habitually concealing, exaggerating, or distorting facts, we must necessarily reject what he says, however gravely or peremptorily he affirms a thing to be true.

DOCTOR.—“Truth, absolute truth, never re-
“quires the props of low cunning, sophistry, or
“deception.”

PARENT.—I should be extremely sorry to hear that professional gentlemen, embarked in so good a cause, condescended to use these unlawful weapons, for defending the truth.

DOCTOR.—“A delicacy of sentiment, a regard
“for the honour of the art, and the characters of
“the erroneous, should ever prevent personalities.
“The greatest respect is due from one regular
“practitioner to another ;” because “they all rank
“as gentlemen in this country, and too much ho-

“nour cannot be paid to so liberal and learned a profession.”

PARENT.—Excellent sentiments! I admire this liberality and politeness, worthy Doctor.

DOCTOR.—“Truth is the object of my inquiry; and to sacred Truth alone should contending parties make their appeal, and submissively abide by her decision. It has been my uniform conduct, through life, to detect fallacy, and to enforce *evident truths*. When a boy, in 1757, I never suffered any hypothesis, or system, or idle speculation, to enter my mind; and all my writings and lectures tend to these important purposes, however they may have offended those who hate truth. It is lamentable to see a concourse of sagacious vaccinators sitting in partial judgment, raising questions, perplexities, and doubts, and making inquiries into abstruse hidden points; and at the same time, daringly controverting and evading the most decided and *evident truths* militating against vaccination. What has truth and demonstration to fear? Nothing. If vaccination be not tremblingly afraid of truth; if it stood on the firm basis of truth, it would not cavil, controvert, nor wax warm.”

PARENT. Pray, learned Sir, how would you maintain the truth, against *opposers*, without “controverting” what they might advance? But, I should gladly hear from you what are “the most decided and evident truths” you speak of, “militating

“against vaccination.” Having never met with your candid account of this vaccine practice, which the public newspapers and posting-bills announce, I beg the favour of you to resolve my doubts; lest, on parting from you to-day, I should follow the advice given me, to vaccinate my dear children without delay: for delay is highly dangerous, in their critical situation.

DOCTOR.—Although “I have no time for controversy,” I wrote my last book “as a small tribute of gratitude for the unbounded confidence I have enjoyed among all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, during the whole period of my professional life; amidst the most active scenes in medicine, which perhaps ever fell to the lot of one man. The rapid sale and universal approbation with which the two former editions of my work have been received, induced me to produce a third edition, from a clear conviction that all mankind may benefit by attending to the truths and reasonings therein promulgated. To which are added my modes of treating the beastly new diseases produced from Cow-pox, explained by two coloured copper-plate engravings; and above five hundred dreadful cases of small-pox after vaccination, or cow-pox mange, cow-pox ulcers, cow-pox evil, or abscess, cow-pox mortification, &c. with my certain, experienced, and successful mode of inoculating for the small-pox, which now becomes necessary from cow-pox failure, &c.”