

JENNER'S CRITICS.

MR. G. H. DARWIN (Albert Park, Didsbury) writes to us that, in view of the great interest in the discovery by Professor Koch of his lymph and the want of success (so far) of the remedy, he thinks the enclosed account of Jenner's troubles and disappointments to give to the world the very great success of vaccination, copied from accounts in some old writings in his possession, will be of interest:—

It was in the year 1775 Dr. Jenner began to investigate the nature of cow-pox. His attention was first excited by noticing that amongst country people whom he was called upon to inoculate, many resisted every effort to give them the small-pox. These patients he found had undergone a disorder contracted by milking cows affected with a peculiar eruption on their teats. He inquired into this, and found that this disease had been known among the dairies from time immemorial, and that a vague opinion prevailed of its being a preventive of the small-pox. This opinion, however, was comparatively new, for all the old farmers declared they had no such idea in their early days—which was easily accounted for, as the common people were rarely inoculated for the small-pox till the practice became extended by the Suttons, so that the people in the dairies were seldom put to the test of the preventive process of the cow-pox.

In the course of his investigation he found that some who had undergone the cow-pox felt the influence of an inoculation with the variolous matter. This damped his ardour, and more especially as he found, on making inquiries amongst the medical men in the neighbourhood, they all agreed that the cow-pox could not be relied on as a preventive of the small-pox. He found, though, on making further inquiries, that the cow had different varieties of spontaneous eruptions upon her teats, and that whatever sore was communicated to the hands of the milkers obtained the general name of "cow-pox." Thus, then, a distinction was made between the true and the spurious cow-pox. This difficulty being overcome, another painful check was given to the aspiring hopes of Jenner by the discovery that even amongst those who had undergone the true cow-pox there were some yet liable to receive small-pox.

He renewed his laborious investigations of the subject, and at last discerned that the virus of cow-pox was liable to undergo progressive changes, and that when applied to the human skin in a degenerated state it would produce the ulcerative effects in as great a degree as when it was not decomposed, but that when its specific properties were lost it was incapable of producing that change upon the human frame which is requisite to render it insusceptible of the variolous contagion. So that a person might milk a cow one day, and, having caught the disease, be for ever secure, whereas another person might milk the same cow next day, and the virus might act so as to produce a sore and yet leave the constitution unchanged and unprotected.

It was during this investigation that Dr. Jenner thought that the disease might be propagated first from the cow, and finally from one human being to another. He made the first experiment on May 14th, 1796, on a lad of the name of Phipps, who was vaccinated from the hand of a young woman of the name of Sarah Nelmes, who had been accidentally infected by a cow. On July 1st following the boy was inoculated with small-pox matter, and it proved he was perfectly safe. This case inspired confidence. After this a number of children were inoculated in succession one from the other, and, after several months had elapsed, they were exposed to the infection of small-pox; some by inoculation, others by variolous effluvia, and some in both ways, but they all resisted it.

After this there were larger experiments, and when at length it was satisfactorily proved that the inoculated cow-pox afforded as complete a security against the small-pox as the variolous inoculation, Dr. Jenner made it known to the public without either disguise or ostentation. This treatise, entitled *An Enquiry into the Causes and Effects of the Variolæ Vaccinæ, a Disease discovered in some of the Western Counties of England, particularly Gloucestershire, and known by the name of the Cow-pox*, appeared in 1798, in a small quarto of 75 pages.

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BOOKS, Etc., RECEIVED.

- Transactions of the Sanitary Institute. Vol. xi. London: E. Stanford. 1891.
 An Introduction to the Diseases of Infancy. By J. W. Ballantyne, M.D., F.R.C.P.E. Price 10s. 6d. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd. 1891.
 The Surgeon's Pocket-Book. By Surgeon-Major J. H. Porter. Fourth Edition: revised and edited by Brigade-Surgeon C. H. Y. Godwin. London: Charles Griffin and Co. 1891.
 Clinique Chirurgicale. Par U. Trélat. Tomes I et II. Paris: J. B. Baillière et Fils. 1891.
 On Varicocele. By William H. Bennett, F.R.C.S. London: Longmans, Green, and Co. 1891.
 The Maybrick Case. By Alexander William Macdougall. London: Bailiere, Tindall, and Cox. 1891.
 Diphtheria, its Nature and Treatment. By Robert William Parker. Third Edition. London: H. K. Lewis. 1891.

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