

In the year 1754, the Governors moved into the present hospital with six hundred children, but they soon found out the unpleasant fact that they were supporting them at an expense of five times the amount of their income. In their distress they applied to Parliament for aid, which voted them £10,000 after much consideration; but they accompanied the grant by ordering the Hospital to take in all infants that might be brought to them, and country parishes were also ordered to be opened, and baskets were hung at the gates of the hospital, in which the hapless foundling was deposited, and a bell was rung in order to give notice thereof. Bills were posted through the streets, apprising the public of their privilege, who, as may be readily supposed, were not slow to take advantage thereof—the workhouses especially. On the first day the basket was brought into use, upwards of one hundred infants were put into it; and it is stated that women would proceed to the gate, strip their babies naked, put them into the basket, ring the bell, and then run off. In the first, second, third, and fourth years a total of more than fourteen thousand infants were brought to the hospital. The expense of the charity thus far amounted to nearly £200,000; and in 1760 Parliament revoked the order for indiscriminate admission, and placed under the charge of the numerous children whom their ill-advantaged invitation had brought to the hospital. Warned by this terrible experience, the Governors began to work on a new system. They still accepted in 1801 that might be brought if a sum of £100 was given with it—but even this privilege they felt it wise to abolish in 1801. Since that period, the rules of the hospital have been considerably altered for the better—the experience of the managers having taught them many practical lessons of which they have not been slow to avail themselves. The object of the Governors is to preserve the life of the child, as well as to hide the shame of the mother, and dismiss her with the admonition, "sin no more."

The annual revenue of the hospital is about £12,000 a-year, and with this sum 400 boys and girls are maintained and educated from their infancy until the fifteenth year. No infant is received older than twelve months, and the charge is given to each child when it is brought into the hospital, and it is then sent into the country to be nursed; and when it is three years old it is then returned to the hospital. The children all receive a good plain education. The boys are apprenticed to various trades, and some of them being instructed in music, and drafted into the army and navy. The girls are taught sewing and household work, and put out as domestic servants.

Handel, the musician, was a great benefactor to the hospital; and endowed it with a magnificent organ, and frequently performed his oratorio of the *Messiah* in the chapel.

Captain Coram's fortune appears never to have been large. Two years before his death he discovered that he had lost all his means. His friends thereon bestirred themselves to raise him to independence by subscription; and, in conjunction with Sampson Gideon, a benevolent Jew, an annuity of £170 per annum was raised for his support. In their turn the good old man might not be offended. Dr. Brocklesby broke to him the project. His answer was—"I have not wasted the little money I once had in self-indulgence or vanity, and I am not ashamed to confess that in my old age I am poor." Coram only received the annuity for two years, for he died on the 26th of March, 1751, aged eighty-four, when the hospital which preserves his memory was in course of erection; and his body was the first to be laid in the stone catacombs of the chapel. There, also, Lord Tenterden—the Canterbury barber's boy, who rose to be Lord Chief-Justice of England—was buried in 1832.

AN UNLUCKY PHYSICIAN!

(6.)—DR. JOHN ARBUTHNOT, a celebrated physician, a Scotchman by birth, was educated in the University of Aberdeen, where he took his medical degree.

After finishing his education, Arbuthnot proceeded to London, where his extensive learning and conversational talents introduced him gradually into good society; and among his associates were Pope, Swift, Farnell, and Gay, and other wits of the period. In 1709 he had the good fortune to be at Epsom when Prince George of Denmark was suddenly taken ill, and being called to attend him, his treatment was so successful that the Prince, from the time of his recovery, employed him as his regular physician. Arbuthnot was also appointed physician-in-ordinary to Queen Anne; but it is related that ere this good luck had occurred to him, he had settled at Doncaster, and endeavoured to get a practice in that town. But unfortunately for Arbuthnot's prospects, the place was so healthy that it contained scarcely any sick inhabitants. He therefore determined to quit the field so ill-adapted for the display of his professional skill. "Where are you off to?" cried a friend, who met him riding post towards London. "To leave your confounded place," was the answer; "for a man can neither live nor die there!"

But to arrive at wealth was not among Arbuthnot's faculties; for after the queen's death his practice decayed. Only a few weeks before his death he wrote—"I am as well as a man can be who is gasping for breath, and has a house full of men and women unprovided for."

Arbuthnot's health failed under his habits of intemperance. He died in straitened circumstances in London, in the year 1735. It is said of him that "he was one of the greatest wits of his time, and that his humour was without any mixture of ill-nature."

ELOQUENCE DEFEATED.

(15.)—LORD CHATHAM (when Mr. Pitt) on one occasion made a very long and able speech in the Privy Council, relative to some naval matter. Every one present was struck by the force of his eloquence. Lord Anson (the circumnavigator), who was no orator, being then at the head of the Admiralty, and differing entirely in opinion from Mr. Pitt, got up, and only said these words:—

"My Lords, Mr. Secretary is very eloquent, and has stated his own opinion very plausibly. I am no orator, and all I shall say is, that he knows nothing at all of what he has been talking about."

This short reply, together with the confidence the council had in Lord Anson's professional skill, had such an effect on every one present, that they immediately determined against Mr. Pitt's proposition.

WILKIE'S "BLIND FIDDLER!"

(18.)—OLD Mrs. Wilkie, the mother of David Wilkie, (the celebrated painter, and who was knighted by William IV.) loved to be asked questions about her son "Davie." A friend inquired one day whether he had early displayed much talent in drawing—

"Aweel," said she, "I mind that he was as scrawling and scratching, I did na ken what; and he had an idle fashion o' making likenesses and caricatures like of all the folk as came. And there was an auld blind man, Willie, the fiddler, just an idle sort of a beggar-man, that used to come wi' his noise, and set all the women servants ajeering wi' his scratching and scraping; and Davie was as taking o' this pair bodie into the hoose, and gieing him a drap o' toddy; and I used to cry shame on the lad for encouraging such lazy vagabonds about the hoose. Weel," pursued the old lady, "but ye maun ken he was an ill-favoured, daft sort of a creature—that pair blind bodie—weel eno' in his way, but not the sort o' folk to be along wi' Davie; yet the lad was always a-saying to me, 'Mither, gie's a bawbie for pair blind Willie!' This, sir," she added with a sigh, "was when we lived at the Maunce. A-weel, sir, they told me it was many a year ago that pair bodie bodie was gane hame, sir—that Davie had painted a grand picture; and he wrote me to go to Edinburgh to see it; and I went, and sure eno' there was pair old Willie, the very like o' him, his fiddle and a'. I was wud wi' surprise; and there was Davie standing, laughing at me, and saying, 'Mither, mony's the time that ye ha' heard that fiddle to the toon o' The Campbells are coming!'"

Wilkie's "Blind Fiddler" is now in the National Gallery. His other pictures are of world-wide renown.

In the year 1848 Wilkie went to Constantinople, by the command of Queen Victoria, to paint the portrait of the Sultan. This was his last and fatal mission. On his return, on board the *Oriental* steamer, after having touched at Malta and Gibraltar, he was taken suddenly ill, and died in Gibraltar Bay, aged fifty-six, June 1, 1841; and on the evening of the day on which his death took place, the last sad office of committing his body to the deep was rendered necessary by the strict orders of the authorities, who could not allow it to be brought on shore.

As a man, Sir David Wilkie had the character of being mild and unassuming; as an artist, no difficulties could daunt him, nor could any labour be too great for him to undertake with a view to the attainment of excellence.

COWPER'S "JOHN GILPIN."

(21.)—THE world-renowned poem of "John Gilpin" was composed by WILLIAM COWPER—the most popular poet of the generation," as Southey has designated him—under the following circumstances:—

It was founded upon a story told to Cowper by Lady Austen, to relieve the poet's depressive melancholy—from which he greatly suffered. Lady Austen had remembered the tale from her childhood, and its effects on the fancy of Cowper had an air of enchantment, for he told her the next morning that convulsions of laughter, brought on by his recollection of her story, had kept him waking during the greatest part of the night, and that he had turned it into a ballad. It found its way into the newspapers, and a popular actor of the day recited it in his public readings.