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DR. ROBBINS'

DISCOURSE

TO THE

HUMANE SOCIETY.

JUNE 14th, 1796.



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Washington, D.C.



A  
DISCOURSE  
DELIVERED BEFORE THE  
HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE  
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS,  
AT THEIR SEMIANNUAL MEETING,

JUNE 14th, 1796.

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By CHANDLER ROBBINS, D.D.  
MINISTER OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN PLYMOUTH.

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“This my Son was dead, and is alive again.” *Luke, xv. 24.*

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B O S T O N :  
PRINTED BY THOMAS FLEET, JUN. AT THE BIBLE & HEART CORNHILL.  
MDCCXCVI.

*AT a semi-annual meeting of the HUMANE SOCIETY,  
of the COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, on the second  
Tuesday in June, 1796,*

*VOTED, That the first VICE-PRESIDENT, Honourable  
Judge PAINE, Reverend President WILLARD, THOMAS  
DAVIS, Esq; and AARON DEXTER, M.D. be a Committee  
to wait on the Reverend Dr. ROBBINS, and return him the  
thanks of this Society for his ingenious and pathetic discourse  
this day delivered at their request, and solicit a copy of the  
same for the press.*

*A true Copy of Record,*

*Attest.*

*JOHN AVERY, Recording Secretary.*

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TO THE VICE-PRESIDENTS, TRUSTEES, AND MEMBERS  
OF THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS,

THIS DISCOURSE

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY THEIR BROTHER,

THE AUTHOR,



A

*DISCOURSE, &c.*

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**W**ITHOUT any claim to medical knowledge—or offering an apology for seeming to intrude upon the province of the Physician; I shall, at the call of the HUMANE SOCIETY, submit to this respectable audience, a few observations, which the occasion has suggested: Encouraged at the same time, by this consoling reflection, that the friends of humanity are never strangers to candor..

FROM the nature and design of this Institution, as well as from an article in the regulations of the society, it might be expected, and there would seem, indeed, to be a propriety, on the present occasion, that the speaker should  
select,

select, for his theme, some subject, connected with, what is termed, philosophical anatomy—which would lead him to consider the wonderful construction of the human frame—to trace the admirable wisdom and power of the great Creator, in the curious formation of its various parts—in the wise adjustment of the organs essential to life—and in the whole contexture of the animal system; thereby leading our minds from nature, up to nature's God; and exciting us, with pious admiration and reverence, to acknowledge with the Psalmist, that, truly “we are fearfully and wonderfully made.”

THIS branch, however, seems more immediately to belong to our brethren, the friends of philosophy and the *medical* art. They have, accordingly, on these anniversaries, gratified the public, by displaying no less philanthropy than ingenuity, in their essays on this subject.

To *our* profession it belongs, in harmonious concurrence with them, yet in another way, to promote the same general design, by pointing out the duties, and urging the obligations of religion and morality; and by exciting our fellow men, to all those acts of benevolence and humanity, which have for their object, the alleviation of the miseries—the preservation of the lives—and the promoting the comfort and happiness of mankind.

WHATEVER

WHATEVER diversity of nation, or language—of manners, occupation or circumstances, may exist among men—or, however they may differ in their habits, or profession—in their political or religious opinions; yet, as *human* beings, we are all under the common law of benevolence and love; from the obligations of this law, we can never be absolved, while society exists; and while reason distinguishes man from the lower orders in creation. For nature teaches, what christianity confirms, that the whole human race are BRETHREN. They constitute one family—are derived from the same common Parent, the Creator and FATHER of all. In what way then, can we more suitably express that friendly affection, which such a relation implies and enjoins, than by a cheerful readiness to every act of kindness and beneficence towards one another; and especially, by flying to the relief of the distressed, and employing every means in our power, to comfort our brethren when in adversity.—

For it is written, in

PROVERBS, XVII CHAP. 17th VERSE.

“A FRIEND LOVETH AT ALL TIMES, and a BROTHER IS BORN FOR ADVERSITY.”

Striking words!—and full of useful instruction!—Be this our present theme. And may it be our highest ambition, in our social and individual capacities, to realize the text in practical life—to exemplify the divine maxim, in all our conduct.

THE

THE lesson here given us, is short. Do the words require any particular explanation? It is barely possible their meaning may be misapprehended: Especially, as the same mode of expression is used in the sacred writings, to convey a very different idea from that in the text—viz. to signify one who, from his very *birth*, seems appointed to adversity and sorrow. Thus we read, “Man is *born to trouble*, as the sparks to fly upward.” This phrase, though similar in words, yet differs widely in its import, from the former; as the connexion of the passage will evince. The meaning of our text cannot be that “a brother is born for adversity,” in his *own person*; but for the aid and comfort of others in their affliction and trouble.

THE idea may be illustrated by a thousand familiar instances in common life. How frequently do we say, of an affectionate and dutiful SON, he was *born* for the solace and support of his parents in their declining age?—Of a WASHINGTON, how common and how just the remark, that he was *born* to lead the armies—to preside in the councils—and to be a chief instrument in promoting the independence, peace and glory of AMERICA.

THESE observations, it is presumed, are sufficient to illustrate and fix the meaning of our text “*A brother is born for adversity.*” Only, it will be remembered, that we are, by no means, to confine the term *brother*, to children derived  
from

from the same immediate parents ; any more than the term *neighbour*, to those in the immediate vicinity : Which contracted sense, our Savior, has expressly disapproved, when, in answer to a certain querist, he has taught us to consider the whole human race, as included in that friendly appellation. By the same rule, we are warranted to consider our fellowmen of every place, and every description, as our *brethren*—to feel ourselves under obligation to universal benevolence ; and particularly, to lend them every aid in our power, when they are under adversity. For *this* were we BORN—for *this* as one important design of our Creator, were we placed in society—For *this*, did the Parent of the universal family implant in our breasts, the tender, social affections—In fine, for *this*, hath he bestowed upon us the bounties of his providence ; that, as faithful stewards, we may dispense them, as opportunities arise, for the relief and comfort of our suffering brethren.

AND can we ever be at a loss for opportunities, or objects, for the exercise of this beneficence ? Where can we turn our eyes, but subjects of distress, of want or misery present themselves to our view ? Whose piteous condition cries, in language irresistible, for commiseration and assistance from their fellowmen.

To attempt an enumeration of the various kinds of adversity to which our brethren of the human race are incident, would

be a task, as endless, as it would be painful. We find, that no class of men are exempted—no situation in life, however elevated by prosperity, is secure against the strokes of adversity and various woes. It would be strange, indeed, if *personal* experience hath not produced conviction of this sorrowful truth, in every breast. And stranger still, should any have become so callous to human miseries, as not to have felt the most painful sympathy at the sufferings of others.

SUCH were the sympathetic feelings, which, at first, gave origin to HUMANE SOCIETIES, and to *this* in particular. Sensations, too powerful to be suppressed, stimulated a number of benevolent minds, a few years past, to form this Institution. Since which period, many others, actuated by the same generous principle, have been added to the number. What an honor, my brethren—what a privilege is it to be enrolled as members of a SOCIETY, whose professed object is the relief of suffering Humanity!—In comparison with such an honor, what are all the boasted titles of royalty—or the orders of nobility or knighthood, but empty sounds—or glittering baubles, for the amusement of children?

It may seem strange, in contemplating this subject, that the institution of *Humane Societies*, the most truly noble and godlike that ever originated in the wisdom and benevolence of man, should, yet, be of so modern a birth. Until with-

in the period of an hundred years, it is presumed, they were wholly unknown. In ages past, a bare proposition to attempt to reanimate a breathless subject, would, no doubt, have excited, not only surprize, but even ridicule. But thanks to the great author of our beings, so numerous, and so well attested are the evidences of the fact, that they have equally established the principle, and astonished the world. But, if the world have been astonished at the history, only, of these things, what must have been the feelings of those, who have been *personally* interested in these tender scenes? They may be imagined—they can never be described.

To have a child—or brother—a fond parent, or an intimate friend—perhaps the partner of our bosoms, unexpectedly restored to our embraces, after we had, in apprehension, taken a final farewell of them, as to this world; we can easily conceive, must occasion such a flood of joy, such a transport of pleasure, as nearly to dissolve the human frame. Yet, how many have experienced this inexpressible delight and satisfaction, since the formation of *Humane Societies*, both in Europe and America? So great we are told, was “the success of the society established in Great Britain in 1774, that within ten years from its first institution, out of 1300 persons, apparently dead from drowning, 790 were restored to their friends and their country.”—And have not the humane exertions of our own society, though yet in its infancy,

infancy, been crowned with a success fully equal to our reasonable expectations ; and such, as must have given the most heartfelt pleasure to its benevolent founders.

WHAT new wonders, my brethren, do we behold, continually rising in our American world, under the providential government of the great SUPREME! What a surprising progress of the human mind, in improvements for the benefit of mankind! We have seen with astonishment, the efforts of genius in *individuals*—We have seen *societies*, formed for cultivating the fields of science—for encouraging *philosophical* researches—for promoting the useful arts of *agriculture, navigation* and *commerce*—and for advancing *manufactures* of various kinds.—Institutions we have seen established, for rescuing from oblivion, *historical events* and *anecdotes*, which while they conduce to the benefit, will afford a pleasing entertainment to posterity.—We have seen, likewise, with pleasure, societies formed for the noble purpose of carrying the glad tidings of the GOSPEL to heathen countries, and extending the blessings of its salvation, to barbarous nations.—In a word, we have beheld regular institutions for making further discoveries and improvements in the *healing art*, a science of the greater importance, as it is so nearly connected with the lives of human beings.—But when, my brethren, or where, till within the present century, have we seen or heard of societies formed for—I will not say raising the dead—This  
would

would be going too far ; and is the prerogative of JEHOVAH alone—but for *rekindling the vital lamp*, after it had been, to all appearance, totally extinguished ?—for calling back to life and enjoyment, a human being, who, apparently, had breathed his last ; and who, in former ages, would have been consigned, without hesitation or hope, to the mansions of the Dead !—Humanity drops a tear at the painful reflection, that, in all probability, thousands have, in this way, met an untimely grave, and (as a brother has justly observed before me) have been “ literally buried alive.” More painful still, is the reflection, should we admit the idea, which is at least, possible, that they may have “ suffered all the horrors of inevitable death, attended with a consciousness of their own terrible situation.”

BUT we will draw a veil over so distressing an idea, and only lament the involuntary ignorance of our predecessors.—Such was the wise decree of Heaven, that to after ages was reserved the important, the pleasing discovery, that life is not to be despaired of, even after all voluntary motion has ceased, and a total suspension has taken place, of all the animal functions. With what grateful admiration should we adore that all-gracious and merciful Being, who has communicated such a singular discovery to the world ! And with what assiduity and zeal should we endeavor to make still further improvements upon it, as it may doubtless be carried to a much greater degree of perfection.

MEDICAL studies and disquisitions belong, indeed, more immediately, to a distinct order in society ; but in their consequences, every class of citizens is or may be very deeply interested. For instance ; a bold theorist in medicine, fond of originality, and of treading an unbeaten path, may push his investigations, and carry his experiments so far, in order to ascertain a favorite speculation, that the result may prove fatal to the unhappy patient ; who dies a victim to the rashness and folly (to call it by no severer name) of the too adventurous physician.

How common is the observation, that among all the professions, none is more useful or more dangerous, than that of *medicine*. Useful, in the hands of the wise and skilful ; but dangerous in the extreme, in the hands of quacks and impostors. It must therefore, give great satisfaction to the friends of humanity to observe those rapid improvements in the healing art, which, of late, have been made, and are still making, in this country ; and the laudable exertions which are used, to guard the profession from the intrusion, and the mischievous effects of ignorant pretenders.

WHILE with pleasure, we contemplate this important subject, have we not sometimes, almost become proselytes to an opinion, which has been advanced, “ That in some future period a remedy will be found out for all the diseases and pains

pains to which mankind are now subject." The idea is a pleasing one. But I believe, after all, it must be conceded, that there is more benevolence, than solid, rational ground for such a conjecture; and that, when medical improvements shall have arrived at the highest degree of perfection to which human sagacity can attain, the law of mortality will still baffle the power of medicine; and the human body must fall a victim to the universal destroyer Death. For experience confirms, what inspiration teaches us, that "there is no discharge in that war"—And that "it is appointed to men once to die." Hence we find, after the utmost exertions to ward off the stroke, death, uncontroled by human art—and deaf to the cries of surrounding friends, is continually making his ravages among us; and our dearest connexions are torn from our sight—and sometimes, with circumstances attended with affecting aggravations,

ON this occasion, the *Humane Society* would express their grief, and their sympathy with their fellow citizens, at the recollection of the unusual number of shipwrecks, and loss of the lives of so many of our *seafaring brethren*, on this coast, since our last anniversary. Ah! poor sailors! arrived within sight of their native shore—fondly imagining the dangers of the voyage were over—preparing to fly to the arms of their families and friends—Dreadful Reverse! at once, to have all their hopes lost, and themselves whelm-

ed in a watry grave ! O ! how does humanity weep at the sad recital ! weep, that it was not in her power to reach forth her benevolent arm to rescue them in the agonies of death, and snatch them from the relentless waves !—But—*God* was there ! Let this consideration quiet our minds, and hush to silence every repining thought ! Let it calm the grief of their surviving friends ; whose hearts have been rent with anguish, at the unexpected and awful catastrophe ! Yes, afflicted friends !—when all other hopes were gone, HEAVEN saw their situation—He knew their sorrows, and heard their cries. And, O comforting reflection ! He was both “able” and willing, even at the “*eleventh hour*”—at the last moment, “to save to the uttermost,” their immortal, their better part. And that he did so, we have the fullest assurance, from his own word, if, with their dying breath, they cast themselves upon his infinite mercy, through the atoning merits of a gracious Redeemer : Whose language, in such a case, to each of them, was, “To day thou shalt be with me in paradise.”—

AMONG all the sons of adversity, few, (I believe it will be allowed) have a juster claim to the humane attention, and timely exertions of their brethren, than that valuable class of men, our *seafaring* friends. Their employment, eminently useful and important to society, is, at all times, hazardous—peculiarly so, in the severity of winter. Their sufferings

sufferings at that season, especially when coming upon this coast, it is well known, are oftentimes extreme. Of their dangers, few can form any tolerable idea, who have never, in any degree, experienced them. It may naturally be supposed, the speaker is a very incompetent person to attempt a description of the dangers and sufferings to which seamen are exposed. He freely acknowledges it. Yet he imagines he can, in some small degree at least, conceive of them. And, could he suppose it might tend to excite greater compassion, and kindle a warmer flame of generous philanthropy in the breasts of this humane assembly, towards that enterprising race of men—Or, were he assured that the introduction of an occurrence so *personal*, would be excused, on such an occasion as this, he would willingly explain himself.

THE candor of his brethren, will, however, indulge him so far as to say, he should have reason, while he lived, to reproach himself with the basest ingratitude to HEAVEN, were he ever to forget the horrors of a dismal night, not long since; in which, fifteen souls, besides himself, were exposed to momentary destruction in this bay, and not far from the entrance of this harbor; in one of the most violent storms of snow, that this country has ever witnessed. The darkness of the night increasing the terrors of the storm, the company impatiently waited for day; hoping to discover some means of relief. But alas! when day light appeared, we might with propriety, say, in the language of scripture,

“Behold the morning was as the shadow of death !” The growing violence of the storm rendered it as impossible to discover the land, as if it were midnight. Unable to keep the sea any longer, no alternative now remained, but to run the vessel for the shore, fall where it might. And when, by general consent, this was determined upon, as the last resource ; orders were by the master immediately given. And now a few moments must decide our destiny. Gracious Heaven ! what a solemn interval ! In dread suspense what the event would be ! The apprehension in each one’s mind was, perhaps never before, so real, that in all probability, we should soon know, some of us at least, what the agonies of death by drowning were—and what, to launch into the presence of our Maker, God !

THE moment, at length arrives, when HEAVEN propitious, appears for our relief. The vessel falling between two ledges of rocks, struck upon a sandy bottom ; but with such violence, and at the distance of more than an hundred yards from the shore, that it was apprehended she would soon go to pieces by the fury of the surf. Instant recourse was therefore had to the boat—and though it was with the greatest difficulty, and the attempt extremely hazardous, yet, by this means, through the mercy of God, every soul was, finally, landed safe on the shore.—Little did we imagine, however, the dangers which still awaited us. Wet and cold—on a desolate beach—without any shelter—

shelter—the storm increasing—not knowing the shore on which we were landed—or what course to steer for a house. In this situation we roamed about a mile, when we discovered a small, miserable *hut*, without an inhabitant, erected by some gunners and fishermen, for a temporary convenience. In this, we sheltered ourselves for a while, from the violence of the storm—till at length, by means, to us wholly unexpected, which I forbear particularly to mention (having been, I fear, too long already, in the detail) we were all happily relieved from our suspense; and after travelling four miles, in that exposed condition, we arrived, under the conduct of a guide, to a lonely, but hospitable family,\* the only dwelling house on the Peninsula; where we received every attention our situation called for, and which humanity and friendship could bestow.

THIS incidental narration, it is hoped, will find an apology in the candor of this audience—and that it will be viewed, as not altogether foreign from the present occasion; as it naturally suggests to us the following remarks.—

It exhibits, at least, a small picture of the distress and dangers to which our seafaring brethren are exposed on this coast, especially in the stormy months.

It confirms the propriety and importance of the measures our Society have adopted (and which, I am told, were suggested by this very disaster) in providing small HUTS, with  
 a Mr. Burgis, keeper of the Light-house on the Gurnet, near Plymouth.

with suitable accommodations, in different parts of our shores, for the comfort of those unhappy persons who may meet with similar misfortunes.

It reminds us, generally, of the necessity of using every possible means to alleviate the sufferings, and prevent the loss of the lives of shipwrecked mariners.—The small building which proved so seasonable a refuge for the distressed company before mentioned, was, indisputably, the means, under GOD, of preserving the lives of some, if not the whole of that company: As it would have been impossible for them, in *their* situation, to have reached the nearest inhabited dwelling—which was not less than five miles distant; and the course obstructed by creeks; the waters of which were not sufficiently frozen, to admit of a passage over them.

AND while upon this subject, I would beg leave to submit to the Directors of this Society, whether the increasing the number of these small houses, in other exposed parts of our coasts, might not prove of essential benefit, in answering the charitable purposes of the institution. The hapless sailor, my brethren, may bless you, as long as he lives, as the means, under providence, of rescuing from death, a life, infinitely dear to HIM, and a life, which ought to be precious to every member of the community.

I AM sensible, our funds, though happily increasing, are not yet sufficient to embrace every object to which the Society would, with pleasure, extend their beneficence. Other-  
wife,

wife, I am persuaded, every species of human distress, within their knowledge, would command their aid. But, from what we have already received, and from the confidence we have in the liberality of our generous and humane fellow-citizens, we flatter ourselves, the Society will soon be able, from the encrease of their funds, to gratify their own, and the wishes of the public, by extending their benevolence to other objects, than to those, to which, for want of that aid, their exertions have hitherto been confined.

AND since we are not this day pleading our own, but the cause of distressed humanity, we may be allowed to say, when we look around, and behold so numerous and respectable an assembly of our fellow citizens, convened with us on this occasion, we are persuaded we shall have a pleasing evidence, that they possess, not that cold charity, whose language is, "*Be ye warmed, and be ye clothed*"—but that they will rejoice in an opportunity to gratify the benevolent feelings of their hearts, by contributing, as far as in their power, for the relief of their brethren in adversity.

AND while in our social capacity, we faithfully apply the benefactions of the public, and endeavour to deserve the character by which this society is denominated; let us, as individuals, at all times act, agreeably to our theme, as *Brethren* to the human race. Let us be solicitous to do all the good we can, serving God and our generation, according to his will. And, to animate and excite us to a faithful discharge  
of

of our duty, let us remember, this is not our abiding place: That we must shortly pass off the stage of life, as we have seen others, who have gone before us—and that we must, each one, render an account of all our conduct, to the supreme Judge, who will “reward every man, according as his works shall be.”

BUT—what is this, that arrests our attention here? that seems to damp, in a degree, the joy of this day—to cast a gloom over the pleasures of this ANNIVERSARY!—Reflection bids me pause a moment—and asks, Where is the MAN, who hath so long *presided*, with such affable and pleasing dignity, at the head of this Society? Whence is it that his seat is, this day, empty?—Alas! RUSSELL, the humane, the generous, is no more! The silent tomb—that abode of darkness, hides from our view, his mortal part—and his “spirit has returned to God who gave it.”

Ah! my brethren! Could virtue—could distinguished philanthropy and benevolence have rescued their faithful votary from the grave, RUSSELL had still survived, and his cheerful presence added joy to this solemnity, Could the exquisite grief of the solitary *partner*—could the anguish of affectionate *children*—or the sorrows of a venerable *parent*, bowed with age and affliction—could the tears of tender *connexions* and numerous *friends*—could the undissembled lamentations of the *widow* and the *fatherless*—in a word, could the cries of the *poor* and *indigent*, whose wants were  
supplied

supplied by his bounty—whose sorrows were relieved by his munificence—could these, unitedly, have availed to avert the sudden, the fatal stroke ; their friend—their benefactor had not, so soon, fallen a victim to the king of terrors.—The steady patriot—the encourager of arts and science—the patron of every liberal and humane institution—the friend of virtue and religion—the man whose generous and judicious charities have extended his fame, and have given lustre to the name of RUSSELL—would still have lived to bless his country and his friends ; and to confirm the truth of our text, that “ *A friend loveth at all times, and A BROTHER IS BORN FOR ADVERSITY.*”

But, cease ye mourners ! HEAVEN is just—is merciful ! And, for distinguished benevolence and virtue, HEAVEN has insured a more glorious recompence of reward, than the tears of friendship—the eulogies of mortals—or all the riches and honors that earth can bestow. And that blessed SAVIOR, whose needy friends have been relieved by pious charity, will say to their benefactors, in the last, great day, “ Inasmuch as ye have done it, to THESE MY BRETHREN, ye have done it unto me.”

To close the subject—let it be our earnest care to imitate the example of those, who have gone before us in the paths of religion and humanity—above all, the example of HIM who loved the race of man so well, that he, not only risked his own to save the lives of others (which many  
have

have *humanely* done) but who actually lost, or rather gave up his own life, to recover us from death, and procure for us a final resuscitation to an immortal life of happiness and glory.

THE time of our continuance in the present state of being is short. The dictates of wisdom and prudence unite with the solemn counsels of Revelation, to admonish us, to provide in season, for our last remove. How important the subject!—And O! how supporting is the thought, that when all human means shall fail—when the last efforts of friends and physicians shall prove ineffectual—and the stroke of death must put a period to our present *mode* of existence—the GOSPEL OF CHRIST discloses a remedy for our better part—and opens a bright scene of glory beyond the grave, for all the sincere followers of the Lamb. And as this GOSPEL contains the strongest reasons for our faith, and the most powerful motives for the practice of Religion; so it furnishes us with the surest and most solid grounds of support, under the afflictions and sorrows of the present life; and assures us, that when this short state of trial shall close, they who are truly wise, shall enter upon a new, a holy and permanent state of existence—where objects of distress shall no more pain their hearts—where life, free from every bitter ingredient, shall be enjoyed in highest perfection, and through an endless duration. For “there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying—and all tears shall be wiped from their eyes.” AMEN.



*The Trustees have received the following Communications  
since their last Publication.*

## I.

*LETTER from William Hawes, Register of the Royal Humane Society  
in London to the Corresponding Secretary.*

LONDON, June 23, 1795.

SIR,

IT is with great pleasure I embrace the present opportunity to present to the Humane Society of Massachusetts a richer harvest than usual, viz.

The 1st Vol. of the Transactions of the Royal Humane Society.  
Doct. Fothergill's Essay on the Suspension of vital Action.  
Rev. Doct. Rennell's Anniversary Sermon.  
Annual Report, &c. &c. &c.

To the philanthropists of that life saving Institution there is every reason to hope that some of the above will afford infinite satisfaction; and there is almost a certainty that the interesting subject of suspended animation will in process of time be advanced, very much advanced by the Gentlemen of the faculty of the Massachusetts Humane Society. It is hardly necessary for me to add what pleasure your copies of annual discourses afford me, and the active friends of our Society; and that we hope to be constantly favoured with the same. Our views are in every respect the same—the preservation of life and the advancement of medical knowledge. Such views will ever unite our Societies in the most permanent bonds of friendship.

I am, Sir, your's most respectfully,

WILLIAM HAWES,

*Rev. Dr. Parker, Corresponding Secretary  
of the Humane Society of Massachusetts.*

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II.

## II.

*Letter from Mr. Zebina Stebbins, of Springfield, dated January 6, 1796, to the Corresponding Secretary, upon an unsuccessful attempt to resuscitate a Child,*

SPRINGFIELD, 8th January, 1796.

SIR,

I HAVE now to communicate to the Society an unsuccessful attempt to resuscitate a child of Mr. Henry Rogers of West-Springfield, some time in August last, about thirty months old. He was playing about the mother, while washing on the bank of the river, she went up to the house, and supposed the child followed her. She thinks in about 15 or 20 minutes, the child was brought up to her drowned. It must have waded into the river beyond its depth, as there was no boat or any thing of the kind, from which it could fall. A young man, named Patrick Morgan, being below, saw something floating down on the surface of the water of an uncommon appearance, swam out about three rods, where the water was at least ten feet deep, and brought it on shore. I happened that moment to walk down to the river, on the opposite shore, heard the cry of a child being drowned. Suppose I crossed the river and was with the child in 15 or 20 minutes. On viewing it and enquiring into the circumstances and time it had been in the water, had no do doubt of being able to restore it to life again. I had the assistance of several exceeding good women in the operation. We stripped it immediately, put it into soft blankets on a warm bed, began moderate friction on the back, breast and limbs with flannels sprinkled with warm spirits, ointed the temples, applied volatiles to the nose, threw up tobacco smoak into the body repeatedly. A tobacco pipe was first made use of without much success: I then took the stalk of a seed onion, cut the least end to enter a clyster pipe, then cut it nearly off at the bulge, leaving a part to operate as a hinge, then filled the bulge with strong tobacco, put a small coal on the top of it, then shut the tube, and by blowing in at the end could throw up large quantities of smoak. I mention this, that should it so happen that no instrument is to be had for that purpose, one of this kind may answer nearly as well.

When I first saw the child, I thought I had an opportunity of doing credit to the Society, as the body was not cold or the limbs stiff, or the blood settled, as is common. Soon after the friction was begun, it discharged a considerable quantity of white frothy matter from the nostrils, which continued almost the whole time of the process, which was about three hours, when the body grew cold, and the limbs stiff.

There must have been some fatal circumstance attending it's drowning; what it was am at a loss to conjecture; it could not have been wounded in falling into the water; and why it should swim on it's face

on the surface of the water for so long a time? It is probable that it did not sink at all, or continue under water long, from the distance that it had floated down. Why such a quantity of frothy matter should issue from the nostrils, and no mucus from the mouth? There appeared to be an entire collapion of the vessels, particularly of the lungs. I attempted to inflate them sundry times with a good tube, but could not raise the chest. After every means had been used without any appearance of success, I thought of an immersion in warm water, to take off the contraction; but as it had never been mentioned by the Society, to my knowledge, it was not put in practice.

It appears to me that every thing recommended by the Society was judiciously applied, as we had the assistance of Doctors Brewer and Lathrop, during part of the process.

I make this communication in hopes some gentlemen will inform what more could have been done, with a probability of success.

I am, Sir, with much respect,  
your humble servant,

ZEBINA STEBBINS,

Rev. SAMUEL PARKER, D. D.

### III.

*Vote of the Trustees, February 1. 1796.*

AT a meeting of the Trustees of the HUMANE SOCIETY, February 1. 1796, *Voted*, That this letter be committed to the Medical Gentlemen of the Trustees, to consider the circumstances of the attempt to resuscitate said child, and to give their sentiments upon the subject; and that the Corresponding Secretary be desired to return the thanks of the Trustees to Mr. STEBBINS, for his communication, with the opinion of the Medical Gentlemen upon the subject.

JOHN AVERY, jun. Sec'y.

### IV.

*The Committee appointed by the Trustees of the Humane Society to answer a Number of Queries contained in a Letter from Mr. Zebina Stebbins of Springfield, Report,*

THAT as to the circumstance of the subject's floating for some time as represented in said letter, the same has been often noticed in cases of *children* whose cloathing being loose, served the purpose,

pose, by its expansion on the surface of the water, of supporting the body; aided perhaps in some measure by a quantity of air retained in the lungs, and possibly a less specific gravity than in the solids of an adult.

The discharge of mucus from the *nostrils* rather than from the *mouth*, seems also not to have been an uncommon occurrence in instances of *submersion*, and may perhaps be accounted for from the structure of those cavities, the quantity of mucus with which they are naturally furnished, and which must be greatly increased, by the violent efforts of respiration necessarily attendant on cases of this kind; in consequence of which, the air becomes entangled in its passage through them. And it is to be observed that the *frothy substance* collected about the nose, and formed by the air forced out from the lungs in the agitation of the body, has a more free course towards the *nose* than the *mouth*, where accordingly it is rarely found.

The Committee are farther of opinion, that the methods used in the case under consideration, were extremely judicious; and applied with a perseverance that does honour to the humanity of the gentleman who directed them, and of all those who were concerned in their administration.

The use of the *warm bath* has often been recommended by foreign societies; yet it is obvious, that the *length of time* necessarily required to prepare it, will generally preclude that *early application* upon which success in the means of resuscitation so much depends.—It may not however be useless to observe, that we consider the *impairing of heat* in an apparently dead body, to be an essential part in the process for restoration, and therefore, conceive it highly important, to employ the means *most easy of access* on such occasions, for the purpose of communicating it; and as *dry warmth* \* most usually comes under this description, we should certainly in the first instance invariably have recourse to it. From the moment the accident is discovered, however, it might be highly prudent to be getting the warm bath into a state of preparation, but we presume *with this indispensable precaution*, to keep the water sufficiently warm to act as a stimulant upon the body, or it may do harm by relaxing the system, and thus counteracting the general indications.

JOHN WARREN, per Order.

\* A bath of warm ashes, or sand, has been frequently recommended; and if readily to be obtained, is certainly well adapted to the purpose.

## V.

*Doctor James Thacher's Letter to the SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT.*

DEAR SIR,

PLYMOUTH, 1st June, 1796.

**P**ERMIT me through you to communicate the following statement and observations to the Humane Society.

A young man about 17 years of age, after having performed a very fatiguing day's labour, was observed in the evening to eat voraciously of animal food at supper, and having retired from the family, he was some time after found under a tree in the orchard, exposed to the cold air, and deprived of every appearance of life. Being called to visit him I found the body in a state of total inaction, the animal powers, the senses, and voluntary motion had ceased, and the vital functions seemed to be suspended, there being no symptom of the vital principle remaining, except now and then a small tremulous interrupted pulsation of the artery at the wrist.

Previous to my arrival, a medical student had commenced the resuscitating process, which consisted of friction, warm and stimulating applications, volatiles, &c. In a course of these we persevered with unremitting assiduity about one hour and an half, and had the satisfaction during the process of observing frequent symptoms of recovery. Bladders filled with water, heated to a considerable degree, and applied to the axilla had the immediate effect of exciting muscular motion; they were continued till he had so far recovered as to be able to set up in bed, when perceiving that he was exercised with great pain and distress about the region of the stomach, I administered a full dose of emetic tartar, which had the happy effect of relieving that organ of the load, which doubtless had been the offending cause.

Sudden death has been the fate of several persons in this vicinity within these few years past, and it is to be lamented, that for want of proper intelligence the means of resuscitation have in almost every instance been neglected. A remarkable case having recently occurred induces me to make some observations on the subject.

Captain Joshua Briggs of Wareham, in a moment of perfect health, and while on an arbitration, was arrested by the stroke of death, or became a subject of suspended animation. A Physician was sent for, but being informed on the road that the person had expired, he returned without visiting the body—so peculiarly equivocal were the appearances after death, as to delay the interment of the body for several days longer than the time appointed for the purpose. But notwithstanding strong doubts were entertained

entertained whether death in reality had closed the scene, or the uncertain appearances of it only were present, yet unfortunately, no measures were pursued upon this interesting occasion, from which the friends could derive satisfaction or hope of success; removing the body from the coffin into a warm bed, was all that their judgment suggested, until the more solemn office of consigning it to the grave.

The powers originally assigned by the allwise Creator to perform the vital functions, may be impaired or suffer a temporary suspension from various causes, which cannot be investigated, and from which the ambiguous appearances of death may be induced. Besides submersion, hanging, suffocation, &c. instances have occurred of suspended animation in consequence of syncope, intoxication, extreme heat and cold, falls, blows, infants suffocated in bed, &c. Under these misfortunes the sufferer has a claim upon our best endeavours, and these should in no case be withheld. If the feelings of humanity have been shocked by the reflection, that some unfortunate persons have been wrapped in shrouds before the vital flame was totally extinguished, yet we may indulge the consoling idea that hundreds have been rescued, by the hand of beneficence, from so horrid a fate. The benevolent mind is now animated by well authenticated facts, tending to establish the important principle that in all instances of sudden, or apparent death, every possible exertion should be scrupulously applied, with a view to reestablish the vital functions, nor should success be despaired of till it be fully ascertained that death is complete.

The cause of humanity has received a noble acquisition in the establishment of the Humane Society of Massachusetts; the importance and utility of it are engraven upon the heart of the shipwrecked mariner, and others, who have been nearly interested in the affecting scenes contemplated by the institution. As it will accord with the principles and views of the institution, that the advantages of it should be dispensed to all classes of people, permit me to query, whether it is not expedient that printed directions, describing the most eligible process to be pursued in all cases of sudden death, should be posted up in those remote towns, where they are yet destitute of the necessary intelligence, and not wholly divested of prejudice and superstition.

Wishing every degree of success and prosperity may attend the Humane Society, and the exertions of each member of it,

I am, with due respect,

Your most obedient and very humble servant,

JAMES THACHER.

Dr. John Warren.

## VI.

*Mr. John Bulkeley's Letter.*

LISBON, 6th Feb. 1796.

SIR,

I WAS this day honoured with your letter of the 2d December in behalf of the President and Trustees of the Humane Society of Massachusetts, established solely for the promoting the laudable cause of humanity. I feel myself happy in the honour of being elected a member, and shall ever be ready to promote its benevolent purposes; and having met with this opportunity of Capt. Joseph S. Abraham, of the Schooner Bilboa, bound directly to your port, I have sent by him for the purpose of the institution, one hundred Spanish dollars, as you will find by his bill of lading.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your very humble servant,

JOHN BULKELEY,

Samuel Parker, D.D. Boston,

*Corresponding Secretary of the Humane Society,*

## VII.

*Dr. Anthony Fothergill's Letter.*

BATH, Feb. 20, 1796.

MR. PRESIDENT and GENTLEMEN,

YESTERDAY I was favoured with your testimonial, announcing me a member of the Humane Society of Massachusetts, for which unexpected honour, and the polite terms in which it was conveyed by your Secretary, please to accept my most grateful acknowledgments.

If any efforts of mine can be thought to contribute in the smallest degree to the common cause in which we are embarked, or to merit the attention of so learned and respectable a body, be assured it will afford me the sincerest pleasure.

That "the preservation of life and the advancement of science may ever unite our societies in the permanent bands of friendship" is the ardent wish of, Gentlemen, your obliged and obedient Servant,

A. FOTHERGILL.



DONATIONS

## DONATIONS received since June 1795:

	<i>Dollars:</i>
FROM Hon. Thomas Russell, Esq; for a Cabinet for the Books, Papers, &c. belonging to the Humane Society,	10
Mr. Thomas Bulkeley, of Lisbon, resident in Boston, an honorary member,	50
John Bulkeley, Esq; Merchant in Lisbon, an honorary member,	100
	Dollars 160

## PREMIUMS adjudged by the TRUSTEES.

<i>1795.</i>		<i>Dollars:</i>
June 22.	To Robert Rogers, for saving the lives of four Boys overset in a small boat where the water was 7 feet deep,	5
Aug. 3.	To Nathaniel Trench and son, for saving the lives of Henry Emmes, John Emmes, J. Snelling and William Harris, who were overset from a small boat in the harbour of Boston, and would have perished, but for the said Trench, &c.	8
Octob. 5.	To Boston Jackson, a Negro man, for saving the life of a young man near Lewis's wharf, when in danger of drowning,	4
Nov. 2.	To Henry Powars, for saving the life of a child of John Franks from drowning in water 7 feet deep,	4
	To Francis French, for saving a child of Mr. Francis,	3
	To Daniel McLane, for saving a child of Mr. Mason, near Goldsbury's wharf, on the 14th October last,	4
	To Joseph Costello, for saving the lives of two children, one of Mr. Dwyer, on the 3d of October last, the other of Mr. Green, on the 12th of October last,	5
	To Mercy Norcross, for saving a child of Nathaniel Spear, apparently dead when first taken from the water,	5
Decem. 5.	To John Deluce and Daniel Spear, for their exertions in saving the life of a man who appeared deranged in his mind, in danger of being drowned at a distance from the shore, the tide flowing in, &c.	3
<i>1796.</i>		
Feb. 1.	To Patrick Morgan, for bringing on shore the body or a child of Henry Rogers of Springfield, related in Mr. Stebbins's communication,	5

April

		Dollars.
1796.		
April 4.	To Benja. Howard, for a signal exertion in saving the life of a child of William Minzee at Russell's wharf,	3
June 6.	To Timothy Pike and Joshua Barrett, for resuscitating a person of 70 years of age, who had fallen into the water in passing over the causeway, &c.	3
	To Ephraim Mann, for saving Joseph Withington, who fell out of his canoe on Dorchester neck, &c.	3
		<hr/>
		Dollars, 55

*State of the Treasurer's Account for the Year past.*

		Doll.	Cts.
1796.			
June 8.	To Premiums paid, - - - - -	55	
	To 1000 dollars Massachusetts 5 per cent stock at 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ .	808	33
	To expences of music & house for the annual Discourse,	17	50
	Thomas and John Fleets account for printing General Brooks's Discourse, Notifications, &c.	61	40
	To repairing Hut on Lovell's Island, per S. Adam's acco.	21	16
	To a Cabinet for repository of papers, &c.	10	
	To repairing Hut on Cape Cod, per Eph. Harding's acco.	14	17
	To supplying several Huts with necessaries, per Thomas Knox's account,	9	66
	To Stationary, - - - - -	1	50
	To average expence of this Society for music and printing Dr. Warren's Eulogy on the late President, as assessed per Committee.	40	
	To 545, 15 Massachusetts 5 per cent stock, at 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ .	438	38
		<hr/>	
		Dollars, 1477	10

*Contra Credit.*

		Doll.	Cts.
1795.			
	By Balance of last year's account, - - -	538	12
June 10.	By Collection this day, - - -	205	75
July	By Interest on State Notes, July 39 21		
	1796, January 39 21		
		<hr/>	
		78	42

E

By

	<i>Doll. Cts.</i>
By Interest on 6 and 3 per cents, July	26 94
Octob.	26 94
1796, January,	26 94
April	26 53
2 per cent prin.	28 84
	136 19
Dividend in Union Bank, Octob.	16 56
1796, April,	18 40 <sup>c</sup>
	34 96
Two quarters dividend on Malden Bridge,	8 25
Subscriptions from July 1, 1795 to June 11, 1796,	283 73
Donations. Hon. Thomas Ruffel for Cabinet,	10
Mr. John Bulkeley of Lisbon,	100
Mr. Thomas Bulkeley, at Boston,	50
	160
Balance due to the Treasurer,	31 68
	1477 10

*Property in the Hands of the Treasurer.*

6 per cent Stock of the United States,	1413 33
3 per cent ditto,	708 83
Deferred Stock, ditto,	334 58
Union Bank Stock,	368
Massachusetts 5 per cent Stock,	2113 71
	Dollars, 4938 45

One Share in Malden Bridge.

The above appears to be the state of the Treasurer's accounts, as audited by us the Subscribers, June 14, 1796.

JOHN DEMING, }  
WILLIAM BROWN, } Committee.

*OFFICERS*

*OFFICERS of the Humane Society, chosen Dec. 1795.*

Hon. THOMAS RUSSELL, Esq; President.	
JONATHAN MASON, Esq; First Vice President.	
JOHN WARREN, M. D. Second Vice President.	
REV. SIMEON HOWARD, D. D. Treasurer.	
REV. SAMUEL PARKER, D. D. Corresponding Secretary,	
JOHN AVERY, Esq; Recording Secretary.	
Rev. JOHN LATHROP, D. D.	} Trustees.
Rev. PETER THACHER, D. D.	
Rev. JOHN CLARKE, D. D.	
Doct. THOMAS WELCH,	
AARON DEXTER, M. D.	
NATHANIEL BALCH, Esq; .	

*Members deceased since the last Publication.*

Hon. Thomas Russell, <i>President,</i>	Mr. Joseph Russell,
Mr. Jonathan Freeman,	Capt. Isaac Smith, <i>Malden,</i>
Mr. Algernon Sidney Howard,	

*Members admitted since June 1795.*

Rev. Thomas Baldwin,	Doct. Nathan Hayward, <i>Plymouth,</i>
Rev. Joseph Barker, <i>Middleboro'</i>	Mr. Barnabas Hedge, <i>Plymouth,</i>
Doct. Zaccheus Bartlett, <i>Plymouth,</i>	Rev. John Thornton Kirkland,
Mr. Benjamin Callender,	Mr. Caleb Leach, <i>Plymouth,</i>
Mr. Gardner Leonard Chandler,	Rev. John Mellen, <i>Barnstable,</i>
Mr. William Davis, <i>Plymouth,</i>	Mr. Eliphalet Pearson, <i>Cambridge,</i>
Rev. Timothy Dickinson, <i>Holliston,</i>	Mr. Chandler Robbins, <i>Hallowell,</i>
Mr. Thomas Greene,	Mr. Daniel Russell,
Capt. Abraham Hammett, <i>Plymouth,</i>	Doct. William Shelden, <i>Springfield,</i>
Ebenezer Hancock, Esq;	Rev. Thomas C. Thacher, <i>Lynn,</i>
Mr. John Hancock,	Capt. Joseph Thomas, <i>Plymouth,</i>
Mr. Benjamin Haskell,	

*Honorary Members.*

John Bulkeley, Esq; <i>Lisbon,</i>
Mr. Thomas Bulkeley, <i>Lisbon,</i>
Anthony Fothergill, M. D. <i>Bath, G. B.</i>
Mr. Edward Goodwin, <i>Bath, G. B.</i>
William Russell, Esq; <i>Philadelphia,</i>



*Summary of the Method of Treatment to be used with Persons  
apparently dead from drowning.*

**C**ONVEY the person to the nearest convenient house, with his head raised:—Strip and dry him as quick as possible; clean the mouth and nostrils from froth and mud—if a child, let him be placed between two persons naked, in a hot bed—If an adult, lay him on a hot blanket or bed, and, in cold weather, near a fire—in warm weather, the air should be freely admitted into the room.—The body is next to be gently rubbed with warm woollen cloths sprinkled with spirits, if at hand, otherwise dry:—A heated warming-pan may be now lightly moved over the back, properly covered with a blanket—and the body, if of a child, is to be gently shook every few minutes:—Whilst these means are using, one or two assistants are to be employed in blowing up tobacco smoke into the fundament, with the instrument provided for the purpose, or a tobacco-pipe, if that cannot be had—the bowl filled with tobacco, and properly lighted, being covered with a handkerchief, or piece of linen, so as to defend the mouth of the assistant in blowing: Bathe the breast with hot rum, and persist in the use of these means for several hours. If no signs of life should then appear, let the body be kept warm several hours longer, with hot bricks, or vessels of hot water, applied to the palms of the hands, and soles of the feet, and this for a longer or shorter time, as the circumstances of the case may dictate.

☞ The Trustees of the **HUMANE SOCIETY** of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts have procured five sets of *Tobacco Machines*, for the recovery of persons apparently dead, from drowning, suffocation, &c. and have deposited them, for the relief of the unfortunate, in several parts of the town of Boston; one with *Dr. L. Hayward*, in Newbury Street—another with *Dr. Warren*, in South School Street—a third with *Dr. Dexter*, in Milk Street—a fourth with *Dr. Townsend*, and the fifth with the *Rev. Dr. Latbrop*, North Square.













