

The Birth of the Vaccination Fraud

by Walter S. Hadwen M.D.

Dr Hadwen was a passionate opponent of Jennerian smallpox vaccination in England around 1900.

It is clear that Jenner never possessed anything that would be recognized today as a medical qualification. At the age of 16 he was apprenticed to a country surgeon and apothecary, and at 21 he was sent for two years as a pupil to Dr. John Hunter, of London, who undoubtedly was the **most eminent surgeon of his day**, and, like Jenner himself, a keen naturalist.

At 23 Jenner returned to his native village and started to practice as surgeon and apothecary. Here he remained for 17 years, just a plain unqualified country surgeon and apothecary, unknown to the world at large, but keeping up a correspondence with Hunter on a variety of natural history subjects.

At the end of this period he made his first bid for fame.

In 1787 he sent a paper on "The Natural History of the Cuckoo" to the Royal Society, and, as a result, with Hunter's influence, he was elected F.R.S. The paper contained a number of commonplace facts and some others, which Jenner stated to be from his own observation. The latter turned out to be **purely imaginary**, Jenner having accepted the report of a youthful nephew on the incidents he described.

The coveted fellowship, therefore, appears to have been obtained by something very nearly approaching **fraud**.

Three years later he applied to St. Andrew's University for an M.D., and as St. Andrew's in those days was no more squeamish about granting degrees than some of the so-called American Universities are today, so long as the fees are forthcoming, Jenner became Dr. Jenner for the modest outlay of **£15**.

Later on in life, after several applications, he was also granted an MD by the University of Oxford, though this was not until after his discovery had been generally adopted.

As for the discovery itself, it appears to have been founded upon what Dr. Hadwen calls a

"superstition among the dairymaids of Gloucestershire that a person who had suffered from cowpox would never have smallpox."

Jenner appears to have bethought himself of testing the Dairymaid's superstition, and with this object he inoculated a boy named James Phipps with lymph from a vesicle on the hand of a dairymaid suffering from cowpox in May, 1796.

In July of the same year he inoculated the same boy with smallpox by what Dr. Hadwen calls the "bogus Suttonian method," which "afforded no evidence as to protection."

Yet it was upon the strength of this **solitary experiment** that Jenner had launched his discovery upon the world, **claiming that cowpox was a prophylactic against smallpox**, while to give some

sort of scientific color to the claim he labeled cowpox with the name "Variolae Vaccinae" (smallpox of the cow).

On the later developments and time exploitation of vaccination there is no need to dwell at any length. Jenner obtained both cash and credit. He received £30,000 in grants from Parliament for his wonderful discovery, and all classes, medical and lay, tumbled over themselves in their desire to do him honor, though even then there existed a few skeptics who asked for better proof of the claims made for time new prophylactic.

That those claims could not be fully substantiated was proved when he was called upon to attend the son of Earl Grosvenor, who was suffering from confluent smallpox, although vaccinated in infancy by Jenner himself.

He thereupon **modified his claims** for the protective powers of his cowpox vaccine, and he was content to assert that vaccination had modified the disease so that his patient's life was preserved.

What strikes me as most remarkable about the whole story is the **ease** with which Jenner got his theory accepted.

It is true that medical research was a very different thing in the early days of the nineteenth century from what it is today ; but even then the picture of the whole of time Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons swallowing the theory of an unqualified country apothecary, based on one **totally unreliable** experiment, seems scarcely credible.

Jenner's personal bona fides is a different matter. It is unquestionable that he obtained his Fellowship of the Royal Society by humbugging that learned body with his yarn about a cuckoo; but that he deliberately set himself to humbug the whole of the public as well as the medical profession 'with his "Variolae Vaccinae," I hesitate to believe.

I should imagine that he was one of those unscientific researchers who, like the spiritualists, are on the look out for facts to fit their theories, instead of first making sure of their facts.

His methods were those of the quack, but of the self-deluded quack. But how any real scientist can accept his theories today seems astounding, except under the supposition that they have been supported by later and more conclusive experiments.

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DR. MERCOLA'S COMMENT:

Another 70 year old article that provides some insight into the person who actually developed the smallpox vaccine. I thought readers might enjoy this piece of history.

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