

**THE HISTORY AND DESIGN  
OF THE FOUNDLING  
HOSPITAL: WITH A  
MEMOIR OF THE FOUNDER**

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The History and Design of the Foundling Hospital: With a Memoir of the Founder by John Brownlow

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**JOHN BROWNLOW**

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THE AUTHOR OF THE HISTORY OF THE

THE HISTORY AND DESIGN  
OF THE  
FOUNDLING HOSPITAL,  
WITH A  
MEMOIR OF THE FOUNDER.

BY  
JOHN BROWNLOW,

SECRETARY OF THE HOSPITAL.

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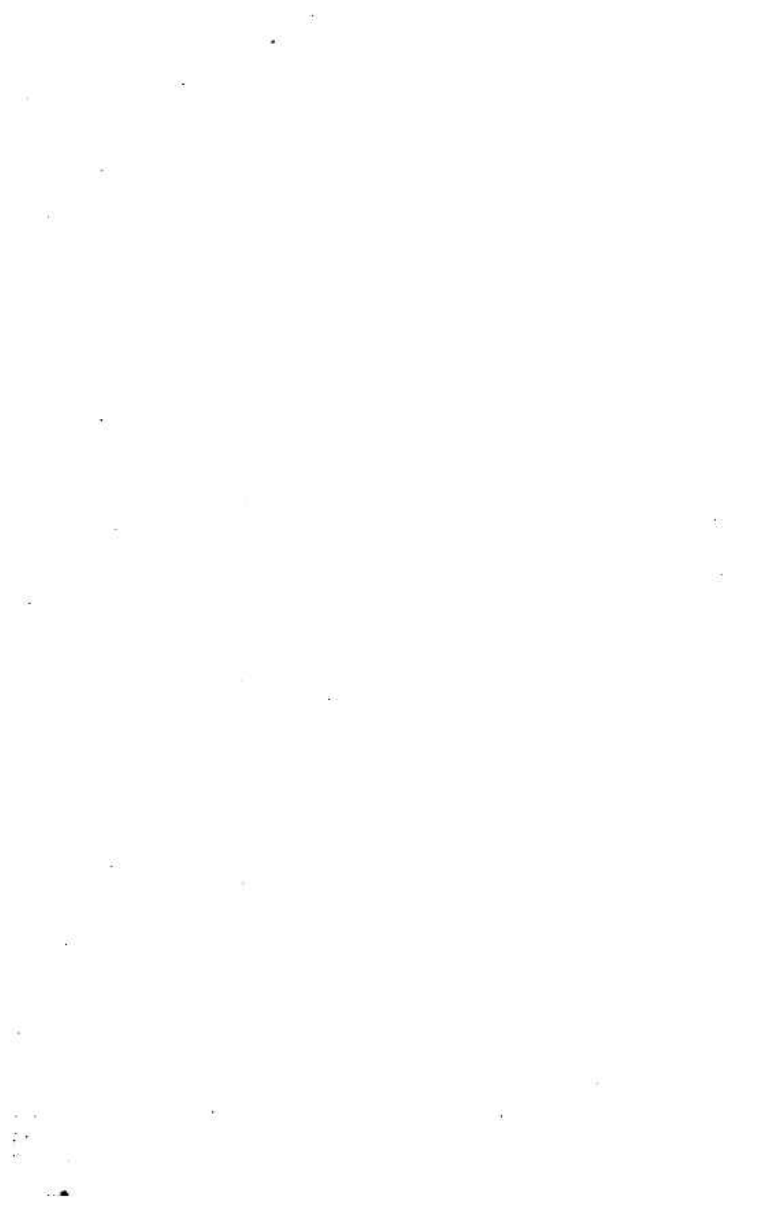
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THE HISTORY AND OBJECTS  
OF THE  
FOUNDLING HOSPITAL.

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It is related, that when Captain Thomas Coram, the Founder of this Hospital, resided at Rotherhithe, about the year 1720, his avocations obliging him to go early into the city, and return late, he frequently saw infants exposed and deserted in the public streets; and as there was but one step in his active mind from the knowledge of an evil to a desire for remedying it, he immediately set about inquiring into the probable causes for so outrageous a departure from humanity and natural affection.

He knew, what every man who studies the human heart must know—that the motive to such a dereliction of maternal duty must be beyond the ordinary casualties of indigence. He was not long in discovering the true source of the evil. He found that it arose out of a morbid morality, then possessing the public mind, by which an unhappy female, who fell a victim to the seductions and false promises of a designing man, was left to hopeless contumely, and irretrievable disgrace. Neither she nor the offspring of her guilt appear to have been admitted within the pale of human compassion: her first false step was her final doom, without

even the chance, however desirous, of returning to the road of rectitude. All the consideration which was given to her condition, was the enactment of laws to bring her to *punishment*, after she had been driven to the commission of the worst of crimes: for the error of a day, she was punished with the infamy of years; and although her departure from the path of virtue, so far from being the consequence of a previous vicious disposition, might have been brought about by an artful scheme of treachery, she was branded for ever as a woman habitually lewd. These evils necessarily increased the quantum of crime in society, according to the manner in which they operated upon the unfortunate individuals under their influence;—still no one stepped forward to provide a remedy. The legislature, from time to time, condemned the unhappy wretch to capital punishment who should, in the madness of despair, lift her arm against the child of her guilt; but it never once considered the means which both parent and child might be saved from destruction: yet, by a strange perversity, those very laws bore on the face of them evidence of the necessity and justice of some more Christian proceeding. In all of them, the crime for which the punishment was awarded, is stated to have been committed from a desire in the mother to “*avoid her shame*.” Surely the woman who would make so great a struggle to preserve her reputation, as to break the natural ties which bind parent to offspring, who is willing to forego the endearments which are the fruits of her situation, by either sacrificing or deserting her child, cannot,