John Coakley Lettsom Encyclopedia Article

John Coakley Lettsom

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John Coakley Lettsom

1744-1815

English physician and Quaker philanthropist who founded the Medical Society of London in 1773. Lettsom was one of Britain's most distinguished physicians and a friend of the American physicians Benjamin Rush and Benjamin Waterhouse. It was Lettsom who called Rush the "American Sydenham." In 1799 Lettsom sent a copy of Edward Jenner's paper on cowpox vaccination to Waterhouse, who published an account of Jennerian vaccination in an American newspaper. Lettsom's publications include *History of the Origin of Medicine* (1778) and papers on alcoholism, chlorosis (anemia) in boarding schools, and the value of drinking tea.