

A concise economical plan of the family medical institution for administring advice and medicines : to families and individuals, possessing small fortunes and moderate incomes : upon liberal, safe, honorable and easy terms, at their own habitations intended to operate as a security from dangerous delays, unscientific bewildered practice, and injudicious prescription / by James Smith, M.D.

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A CONCISE
ECONOMICAL PLAN
OF
THE FAMILY
Medical Institution

FOR ADMINISTERING
ADVICE AND MEDICINES;
TO FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS,
POSSESSING SMALL FORTUNES AND
MODERATE INCOMES:

Upon Liberal, Safe, Honorable and Easy Terms,

At their own Habitations and respective abodes intended to
operate as a security from dangerous delays, unscientific
bewildered practice, and injudicious prescription.

BY JAMES SMITH, M. D.

"Vis Unita Fortior."

New-York, Printed by T. Kirk.

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ECONOMICAL PLAN, &c.

AS Health is one of the greatest blessings we can enjoy, every method whereby it can be preserved when present and restored when lost, in all wise and well regulated States has been considered one of the first objects of the social art. Fame, Wealth or Honor, without the possession of it, will be rendered to the possessors of them almost nugatory blessings. As it gives a relish to all our other enjoyments it must be a matter of the first importance, when mankind are misled in things respecting its preservation. To remove the veil from the eyes of the deluded and devise the means which connects the preservation of an obscure individual, with the general preservation, by bringing so great a blessing equally to the cottages of the poor as to the palaces of the rich, will merit the applause and gratitude of all who are interested in the common felicity. An active compassion, which interests itself in all the afflictions of the human race, has induced the author to submit a new mode to public inspection; whereby we mean to exercise the duties of our profession as nearly conformable to the ancient usages and prevailing existent circumstances, consistent with the dignity of a liberal profession and the general interest of the public will admit. It is presumed the utility

and integrity of the intention will obviate every objection to the novelty of the design, and defend the authors from the odium of popular prejudices, and shield them from the shafts of detraction ; as it is meant without intending to injure other practitioners of respectability : to correct the errors of a compound system, which, the practice and experience of civilized nations have found to be subversive of all order, decency and public safety. As the wisdom of our legislature has devised for the security of property, the best means for regulation of the practice of the law by the exercise of distinct functions, we were encouraged to hope from the calamities which we have lately experienced, and the president's speech ; a profession equally honorable and useful would not have escaped their most tender regards, and that the necessity of our scheme would have come recommended and enforced by the wholesome provisions of guardian laws, as one of the most effectual means of avoiding the objections made to a non-compliance with ancient usage and preventing in future the mortality we deplore.

WE refer our readers to the arguments in favor of the utility of this institution which have already appeared through the medium of the public prints, and will be still further illustrated by a solemn address, which, will shortly meet the eye of a candid public, as soon as the object in view becomes matter of general contemplation. The ill grace with which the author has incurred the censure of a divine principle, by indulging a spirit of egotism, it is confidently hoped operating on candor, will be considered in the light of

a natural defence against malignant aspersions propagated with all the rage of the most vindictive malice during the reign of the late Epidemic, and as naturally resulting from the nature of a scheme of diffusive utility, principally intended for the relief and instruction of that middle class of society, who, from a want of competent aids during illness, are most exposed to the mischievous consequences of empirical practice and the delusive arts of ignorant presumptuous ambition.

WHATEVER share of public confidence other practitioners have a right to assume, or are entitled to expect from exercising their talents after the old mode, we do not conceive ourselves equal to the task of performing the functions of Physician, Surgeon, Man-midwife, and Apothecary, in one person, and as incompatible with that duty we owe to the great public to which we belong, whose interests are blended with our own. We presume not to proscribe rules for others, nor wish to depreciate their respective merits in the public eye, being content with being permitted to prescribe rules for ourselves. Characters may exist the omnipotency of whose genius in this progressive age of mental illumination, who, may be able fully to embrace the whole talents necessary for a compound practice, but we have our doubts if such do really exist, as neither our experience or the history of medicine have yet informed us what age or country has claimed the honor of giving birth to such prodigies of human intellect or universality of medical talents. *Non omnia possumus omnes* : with different talents formed we variously excel. When too many

objects engross our attention, all will be neglected, and we can be perfect in none. Dazzled by the blaze of such curiosities which form an epoch in the natural history of man, we shall bow with submissive respect and veneration when we find munificent nature shall produce a phenomenon without an example in the old world, and profiting by the wisdom of ancient experience, endeavour to walk in the beaten track which wiser men have trod with the most beneficial effects to themselves and the society to which they belong.

THIS institution will be under the direction of Doctor James Smith whose claims to public attention must principally rest upon the merits of thirty-four years practice, joined to the education he received under the patronage and direction of the celebrated Doctor Fothergill which was the most extensive and liberal, and not confined to any single university. A previous university education laid the foundation of his Medical researches.

By the advice of one of the first physiologists of the age, the practice of Pharmaceutical Chemistry too often neglected in the education of a Physician preceded the study of the science. In the year 1759, he left America, and immediately upon his arrival in London by the advice of his patron became private dissecting pupil, and resident in the house of Doctor William and Mr. John Hunter, universally acknowledged, as a Surgeon and Anatomists, to hold the rank of unrivalled eminence in all Europe. He at the same time entered perpetual Physicians pupil at St. Thomas and Guys hospitals, which at that period

were pre-eminently distinguished, and received additional lustre and fame from the genius of an Akenfide, and the ingenuity of a Ruffel. The Lectures of M^r Lauren and Fordice in Chemistry and Midwifery, were not neglected. That no means of medical instruction might be omitted, he afterwards pursued his studies regularly for many years in the universities of Edinburgh, Leyden and Paris. The names of Munro, Cullen, Whytt, Rutherford, Hope, Young, of Edinburgh, Albinus, Gaubius, Van Royan and Albinus the younger of Leyden, Astruc, Roel, Petit and Farraing, of Paris, who, in the different branches of medical science, were deservedly esteemed the most eminent professors in Europe, swell the list of his preceptors; most of whom had received their education under the tuition of that great luminary of medical science, the illustrious Boerhaave, before whose time this science for two thousand years, was what the poet says of Chaos: *Rudes indigestaque moles*, a rude and undigested mass wrapt up in cabilistical mysteries, and enigmatical obscurities from whence no sure or certain light could be drawn to found a rational practice upon: and who, by the uncommon vigour of his penetrating genius, laid the best foundation for the curative indications.

HAVING completed his education in Europe he returned to America, and in the year 1767 began to give in Kings College, Lectures on Chemistry, with a view to the introduction of a Medical School in this city upon the best plans established in Europe, which laid the first foundation of that institution from which

Source so many beneficial advantages have been derived to the public. He was appointed in the origin of that establishment the first professor in Chemistry and Materia Medica, and had given his introductory lectures in Chemistry when Sir Henry More, whose affluence and virtues had formerly raised him to the supreme magistracy of the Island of Jamaica, presented a more lucrative and ample field for regular practice and exertion of his utility. After four years residence in a climate where the late Epidemic is endemial a temperament bending under the pressure of too much nervous sensibility, compelled him after having experienced three different attacks of the Nervous Cholic and Yellow Fever, to quit that station and return to England, and seek an establishment in the County of Surry. Frequent consultations resulting from an extensive practice, and a blended union of the talents, genius, learning and experience of the most eminent of the London Physicians in that vicinage, afforded during the space of twenty-eight years many distinguishing peculiarities favorable to the advancement of medical knowledge, beyond the reach of the ordinary means of a collegiate education, or more limited experience.

IN the year 1785 he was appointed physician under the authority of an act of parliament, to prevent abuses in the hospitals for the reception of lunatics. When a lucrative and honorable post was to be filled by the death of Dr. Spence, his open disavowal of the Principles of the court system, which gained him the friendship of a Chatham, Lansdown, and Camden,

the friends of America, did not preclude him from the patronage of an Honflow, Amhurst, King, Granley, Liverpool, or Pit; who, under their own inspection had witnessed the recovery of the under Secretary of State, and the first servant of a royal Dutchess, whose maladies had baffled the skill of the first in the list of medical fame among the king's physicians. It was a matter of no importance to them whether the physician to be elected had advocated or opposed their ruinous and destructive policy during the storms of our revolution, was rocked in his cradle in Pearl Street, or St. James's. The splendor of high rank was lost in the character of gentleman and eclipsed by a liberality doubly refined from the populer lees of party animosity. The indefinite genius of man, they well knew was not to be confined within the narrow limits of professional ability or private interest. Or that, it could rest with torpid apathy an inactive spectator, when the most portentous events had shook potentates from their thrones and decided the fate of empires. The experience of Fothergill the friend of American Rights, and similar instances innumerable in Britain had taught them what some have yet to learn, that the character of politician and physician were not incompatible with each other, and that it was natural to suppose when our liberties were violated the latter would be suspended until they were recovered by the fortitude of a Washington, and the bravery of America. Such baneful follies sway only the tools of party, who laugh at the dupes of their ambition. Of what import is it to the

patient whether he is raised from the bed of languishment by the advocate of peace or war. Whether he conceives the grand interests of his country will be best promoted by the olive branch or the sword. Whether the decrees of unerring wisdom are to be accomplished by the agency of an infidel nation or the worshippers of the sage of Nazareth, who, in the course of mysterious providence, frequently employs different instruments to execute his designs. Whether when sunk under the pressure of a malignant disease he is relieved by an active poison judiciously dosed, or lime water and milk, mercury or antimony, bark, opium, or steel. In an art of rational conjecture, who are to be the judges of the propriety of these means but physicians themselves. Miserable is the condition of that people where men who are not bred to the profession presume to decide upon the merits of those whose whole lives have been employed in strenuous efforts to obtain skill upon the broad basis of the most liberal education. Are such presumptuous blockheads to be informed, the weakest stomachs will digest iron, which will elude the powers of a strong one : that the most invaluable remedies do principally, consist in the fortunate combinations of the most active poisons which taken into the stomach are changed by a chymical process, carried on within the system into the mildest remedies. *Contraria contrariis medentur.* That medicines which will eat the proud flesh of an ulcer or dissolve a metal are by a known law of the animal economy, innoxious when taken into the stomach, and that to destroy the confidence of a def-

ponding patient, in the opinion of his Physician, is a direct violation of an evangelical precept. In vain may universities instruct :—In vain may the legislature interpose its authority, if such practices are suffered to continue with impunity ; especially at a time when a desolating pestilence was depopulating the land with unexampled rapidity.



PHARMACUTICAL

part, will be under the inspection and superintendency of Doctor James Clarke, with proper assistants who will constantly attend at his dispensary opposite St. Paul's Church, compound and dispense the medicines prescribed, receive letters of recommendation, keep a register of the patrons of this institution and subscribing Families, and give early notice when and where their attendance will be required, which will be speedily attended to. Those who wish to be more particularly informed of its objects, will receive every information by signifying their desire of a personal interview.

CONDITIONS.

Every person who would wish to take the benefit of this institution, will be attended at the moderate price of TWENTY SHILLINGS a head per annum. Medicines will be charged at half price, agreeable to the medical rates established by general custom. As different persons in the same family may

be divided in their choice of medical assistance, any number belonging to the same family will be admitted to the full benefits of this institution, or be permitted to withdraw their subscription when it shall no longer suit the conveniency to continue the same, by paying in their quarterly subscriptions. Non subscribers will be charged in proportion to the usages established by other practitioners of credit and reputation, which will put the institution upon the same footing with ancient usage, and answer all the objections, which, have been hitherto made to the physician from a spirit of innovation or unwillingness to yield to fashions of ancient prejudice.

As the benefits to the practitioners must be supposed to arise from constant employ, and the number of the same in proportion to the sick rules for preserving health, preventative remedies against the yellow fever, and other diseases incident to the season and climate suitable to the different temperaments, age, sex, and constitutions of the subscribers, will be administered and inculcated, and occasional domiciliary visits made conducive to that end, which will obviate the necessity of a removal into the country during the reign of the epidemic, or at least mitigate the violence and mortality of the disease from want of timely aid and judicious prescription.

THE *proflactic* or preventative cure, is the first duty of the physician. Every season of the year from the vicitudes of the atmosphere produce their correspondent effects. Local and universal, sexual and infantile diseases require different means of prevention, ven-

ienti occurrere morbo is the primary object of our plan, which nothing but a mistaken œconomy will defeat. The human frame like every mechanic machine is constructed by the Supreme Architect, to last for a certain period of time, and like it liable to have its actions or functions impeded from pre-disposing or occasional causes, and disease produced. The whole man from his birth is a disease. Wholesome rules when observed will obviate the effects of those noxious causes and health be preserved till the lamp of life is exhausted by age, and the wheels of nature worn out. The facility of the cure will mostly depend upon timely aid and rational practice founded upon scientific principles ripened by long experience, and a regular instruction in the knowledge of diseases, equally beneficial to the patient and physician.

As the medicines will be furnished at half price agreeable to the medical rates established by general custom at the expense of the institution, no profits can be derived from that source, therefore none will consequently be prescribed but of the best kind to secure the reputation of the Physician, procure speedy relief to the patient, diminish the fatigue of protracted cure, and taking more medicine than is necessary to prevent a relapse. The expence of the Physician, being limited to a certain sum, must obviously operate as an effectual remedy to these evils, and increase the confidence of the patient in the integrity of the Physician. As dangerous relapses must discredit the institution, the patient will not be neglected in dangerous and acute cases, or prematurely forsaken until he is

effectually secured by a radical cure ; and to convince the employers of the pre-eminent utility of the scheme.

If any doubt should arise in the mind of the patient of the necessity of a union of councils in cases of emergency, consultations with regular bred physicians will at any period of the disease be approved of, divested of indecent pride, pertinacious obstinacy or arrogant self-sufficiency the invariable concomitants of ignorance untamed by experience.

The Physician holds it as an opinion that consultations under the influence of malignant animosities will render very little benefit to the patient when to the disgrace of the art, the laws of decency, morality, and humanity are not preserved.

Those who are blest with opulence, who may not chuse to take the benefit of this institution themselves by reason of previous engagements, may subscribe for the indigent to whom they are charitably disposed.

COUNTRY patients inclosing the accustomed fee, established by general consent, may send a state of their case drawn up with accuracy and precision, post paid, and will have their medicines at half price, or prescriptions sent them by the first conveyance.

ONE fourth of the annual subscription to be payed, if requested, every quarter. Let it be in general observed that the above scheme is placing physic upon the same footing with the Clergy. If the means of moral instruction which teach us supreme love to the Deity and universal benevolence to man, like the blessings of light and air, are equally dispensed by the

Clergy to the opulent and beggar, why should not the best means of restoring or preserving health be equally within the reach of every rank of citizens, without any regard to the accidental circumstances of poverty or opulence.

To bring back the practice of Physic to its primitive purity—To shorten the duration and diminish the expence of diseases—To obviate the danger of ineffective efforts, to relieve from incompetent aids and neglect of fleeting opportunities, once lost never to be regained—To wrest from the hands of the illiterate the edged tools of physic, rendered still more necessary by the late introduction into the practice of physic of the more active poisons of the Galenic and Chymical remedies, drawn from the vegetable and fossil kingdoms—To remove the fatal effects of rivalry in skill, and contradictory practice, from avarice, jealousy, or opposite interests between the Apothecary and Physician.—To break down the dangerous ascendancy of self-confident Quacks and undistinguishing nostrum-mongers—To restore the dignity of a liberal profession and most useful of all arts from the thralldom and insolent usurpation of confederated impostors, to the extinction of medical science and injury of talents—To introduce a harmonious uniformity of design which shall vibrate like cords in unison between all the branches of the medical art.—To combine science with art, ripened by experience, uniting the genius, learning and sagacity of the physician to the activity, fidelity, and industry of the apothecary.—To confine their varied talents to one object, whereby

each will become more perfect in the execution of their respective parts.—To bring the benefits of all conjoined down to the straitened circumstances of those who under the pressure of large families, expensive necessary establishments, increased and increasing taxes, and other insurmountable difficulties are unable to call in the timely aid of the able experienced physician.—To rescue from distress the worthy and indigent individual and restore the drooping victim of unheeded malady.—To point out the necessary requisites to the successful practice of the art of distinguishing, preserving and healing diseases, are the principal objects of this institution.



*Mon: Malet et
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