

**Cautions and advice to the public, respecting some abuses in medicine, through the malpractices of quacks or pretenders to the medical and surgical arts / by William Jackson.**

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**Publication/Creation**

[London] : Printed for the author, and sold by H.D. Symonds, [1787?]

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1834

CAUTIONS AND ADVICE

TO THE

P U B L I C,

RESPECTING SOME

ABUSES IN MEDICINE,

Through the Malpractices of

QUACKS OR PRETENDERS

TO THE

MEDICAL AND CHIRURGICAL ARTS.

By WILLIAM JACKSON,

MEMBER OF THE CORPORATION OF SURGEONS OF LONDON, &c.  
LATE SURGEON IN THE ARMY, AND NOW A PRACTITIONER  
AT ISLINGTON.

“Ne Sutor ultra crepidam.”

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SYMONDS, BOOKSELLER, PATERNOSTER-ROW

Price Two SHILLINGS.

Entered at Stationers-Hall.



CAUTIONS AND ADVICE

TO THE

REPUTABLE

APRIL 1850

ABUSERS IN MEDICINE

Through the Malpractice of

QUACKS OR PRETENDERS

TO THE

MEDICAL AND SURGICAL ARTS

BY WILLIAM JACKSON

MEMBER OF THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF LONDON, &c.  
LATE FELLOW IN THE ARTS, AND FELLOW OF THE SOCIETY OF PHYSICIANS  
AT LONDON.

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PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, AND SOLD BY  
LEWIS, BUNNELL, & CO. 15, N. B. ST. N. W.

Price Two Shillings

London: Printed by G. & C. B. 15, N. B. ST. N. W.

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P R E F A C E.

**H**EALTH is the greatest blessing that we can enjoy in this transitory life; without it, riches, splendour, nor any worldly acquisitions, can produce neither happiness nor content. If this be admitted, it is presumed that an attempt to preserve it from those who are daily lying in wait for its destruction, will not be considered as unworthy of public notice.

The Intention of the following Sheets is directed to this end.—Medical Impostors are numerous in this country; and I am inclined to think, that multitudes fall a sacrifice to their temerity and ignorance. This evil, however, appears very little regarded, and men, in every respect unqualified for what they profess, are suffered to sport with the lives and constitutions of their fellow creatures, while they themselves acquire fortunes at the



expendence of humanity. Quacks are a disgrace to the practice of medicine, and the encouragement they experience in this kingdom, is obviously the encrease of their number. And as the desire of health and ease is so innate in us, it is astonishing that such numbers of afflicted persons will so inconsiderately commit themselves to the management of persons who are so badly qualified to restore them to health; they more frequently aggravate maladies, and render those difficult and complex, which by a judicious method, might easily have been remedied.

I have often regretted, that no one has taken up this subject, which I consider as of the highest importance to the Public, and to the welfare of Society. This omission, perhaps, may have proceeded from a suspicion that a Publication of this kind, from a Medical Practitioner, would not be favourably received; and that the Author, instead of correcting the abuse, might incur censure and ridicule. From advocates for Quackery, I acknowledge, these might reasonably be expected. But, how-  
 ever



ever such a consideration may have influenced others, I have ventured to deliver my thoughts upon this subject; and I flatter myself, that there are many in the world, whose sentiments are not materially different from mine.

I have not the vanity to suppose, that any thing I can say on this Subject, will have influence over the majority of those who are advocates for Quackery, sufficient to induce them to relinquish their faith; but I shall consider myself amply rewarded for my trouble if I shall have been instrumental in preventing the destruction of a few individuals.

It is not my intention to enter into a minute detail on the various quack medicines, and specifics, sold under pompous titles and fictitious names, at Booksellers, Perfumers, &c. nor do I mean to assert, that they are all composed of ingredients which have deleterious qualities. But this I can truly affirm, that most of them are inadequate to the cure of those diseases for which they are recommended. The diversity of constitutions, and symptoms, in  
 2 different



different persons, labouring under the same disease, which will ever be attended to by a judicious practitioner, must render the administration of any specific, at best, very precarious; and I am firmly persuaded, that many of those certificates where they are represented as having performed miraculous cures, would, upon minute investigation, be found, if not false, at least very much exaggerated. It is my intention to confine myself chiefly to those abuses in medicine which are most liable to be productive of fatal consequences to mankind.

I suspect that a publication on Quackery, coming from one of the Faculty, will be differently received; by some it may be considered as the effect of prejudice and malevolence; by others, as proceeding from vanity or interested views. But I hope to be believed, when I declare, that neither of these motives have influenced me. No person can be more capable of judging of the fatal effects that may often result from the injudicious treatment of diseases, than medical men.

There-



Therefore, I hope, that the more candid, and sensible part of my readers, will reflect upon the importance of the subject; and I flatter myself, they will expect no farther apology from me, for intruding upon the public my sentiments, with a view to admonish mankind to avoid such rash practitioners, from a full conviction of the inaccuracy, and falsehood of their doctrines, and the dangerous tendency of their practices.

When I first resolved to publish my sentiments on this subject, I intended to annex some observations respecting the errors which are committed in the management of children,—but as this is a subject which I consider equally as interesting as the present, and the little time I can at present devote from my professional pursuits, does not afford me sufficient leisure, I therefore must reserve that object for another opportunity. Errors in the management of children, through the misconduct of some parents and nurses, are certainly pernicious to society, and the encrease of population.

Through



Through the whole of this Pamphlet, I have endeavoured to express myself as clearly, and explicitly as I am able.—I am aware, that there is great room for criticism ; but I hope, that the importance of the subject, and the goodness of my intention, will be considered as some compensation for any defects that may be found in the execution. The dread of illiberal aspersions, or malevolent criticism, will never deter a man of integrity from doing whatever he can to promote the public good ; I am therefore under the less anxiety concerning the fate of this Pamphlet, which I submit to the candor and impartiality of those who are enemies to Quackery and Deception.

ADVICE

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A D V I C E, &c.

**T**HE numerous Empirics, or Pretenders to the Sciences of Medicine and Surgery, which this nation is infested with, usually called Quacks and Mountebanks (of the former both male and female) the ravages they must unavoidably commit on the constitutions of many of its inhabitants; and the infamous impositions and deceptions they are daily practising on the credulous part of mankind, particularly on the inferior classes of people, who have no money to spare; and on whose health and recovery, the support and maintenance of a family frequently depends; calls loudly for redress, and for the interference of the magistrates: by whose strenuous exertions the public might



be rid of a set, whose practices are truly dangerous, and principles highly notorious.

I am really concerned when I reflect, how such caitiffs are allowed to continue to massacre their fellow creatures with impunity; who, had they their just deserts, should be taken into custody, and properly \* punished for their base presumptions: whose sole aim is to defraud the public of their money; and they often deprive them of what is more valuable. But this does not appear to be considered a circumstance worthy of notice. Many other illegal, though less important proceedings, which have been intruded into society, are prohibited: but one, in which the lives and health of mankind are so materially concerned, and which ought

\* When any mountebanks appeared in Montpellier, the magistrates had a power to mount each of them on a meagre miserable ass, with his head to the ass's tail. In this condition they were led throughout the whole city, attended with the shouts and hooting of the children, and the mob beating them, throwing filth and ordure at them, reviling them, and dragging them all about. See Dr. Tissot's *Avis au Peuple*. Vol. ii. Chap. 33. p. 276. Sect. 621.



to be a principal consideration, is entirely overlooked: therefore they are permitted to continue their iniquitous practices unmolested.

I should imagine, it would require very little reflection from every enemy to impositions and defrauders, (were they to turn their thoughts to this subject) to convince them, that a regulation in this particular, would be productive of very salutary effects. And by putting a stop to so glaring an evil, of so dangerous a tendency, would preserve numbers that fall sacrifices to ignorance and misconduct. Nor would it be found so difficult a task to effect, as some may conceive it to be.

Many things (though apparently difficult) are to be effected, when persons of authority are zealously inclined to eradicate evils: and it is high time they should receive some information on this, so essentially hurtful to society. But while the minds of mankind continue infected with prejudices and superstitious notions, and while such characters are considered qualified for what they profess, such a re-



formation, I allow, will be impracticable. But if mankind were to divest themselves of this opinion, and not so easily be prevailed upon to yield up their senses, health, and money to such impostors; I am inclined to think, they would exert their efforts to prevent what so nearly concerns them, as the abuse of medicine; nor do I apprehend, they would be at a loss to establish a plan for abolishing Empiricism. For those who are inspired with principles of humanity, and a sympathetic feeling for the sufferings of others, would not be backward in a cause so generally interesting.

The numerous puffing advertisements, that daily appear in the News Papers, and the variety of hand-bills that are offered to the public in all quarters of the metropolis, evidently shew the encouragement and support of quackery; and the credulity of mankind, in reposing a confidence in such ignorant and unworthy characters; whom, void of remorse of conscience, honour, or honesty, frequent opportunities are afforded them to prey upon the con-

stitutions



stitutions and properties of those whose lot is so unfortunate as to fall under their hands.

Perhaps, most of my readers may have had the curiosity of perusing some of these boasted advertisements and handbills, therefore must have perceived that many of them affirm, that their nostrums are infallible cures in a variety of diseases, and in every stage of a distemper, without any regard to age, constitution, sex, or any particular circumstances that may attend individuals. Others more modestly confine themselves to one disease; or perhaps two or three only, therefore less liable to be so universally destructive.

To believe that any medicine is capable of curing every disease indiscriminately, must be rationally to consider that each disease proceeds from one and the same cause, and that the diversity of the symptoms requires no variations in the mode of treatment. But those who suppose (which must be obvious to every reflecting mind) that different diseases, and the same disease in different persons, proceeds from  
various



various causes ; that different causes produce different effects, and consequently require different methods of treatment, I think cannot hesitate in acknowledging the falsehood and absurdity of such pretensions, and the dangerous tendency of such practices. And whoever advertises any medicine as an universal remedy for all diseases, is an impostor ; as no such remedy can exist : a little reflection on the opposite causes of diseases, must convince every rational person of the absurdity of such an attempt. Can any one expect to cure a dropsy, which proceeds from too great a laxity of the \* fibres, and a thin dissolved state of the blood, by the same remedies that are made use of to cure an inflammatory disease, as a † pleurisy or ‡ peripneumony, where the fibres are tense and rigid, and the blood too thick and

\* Fibres are simple thread-like bodies serving to form other parts.

† Pleurisy is an inflammation of the membrane that covers the lungs.

‡ Peripneumony is an inflammation of the substance of the lungs.

viscid ?



viscid? and yet in those hand-bills and advertisements you may often see diseases mentioned of as opposite a nature, to be cured by the same sovereign remedy.

But if it is allowed, that diseases arise from different causes, that their characters are various, that alterations take place throughout their progress and duration; that they are susceptible of complications; that changes occur from seasons, sexes, different epidemics, and other causes; that these circumstances render it indispensably necessary to alter the medicines, to augment or diminish the dose of any particular substance in the form of the prescription, or wholly to remove it, and substitute another: which evidently shews how hazardous it is, to have them directed by unskilful persons. It requires great industry and perseverance to investigate the true causes of diseases, and the proper means of obviating them: therefore the skilful management in the quantity or dose of any medicine, adapted to the particular circumstances of each individual, can only be acquired by a very extensive experience.



experience. Those are facts, which I think will be acknowledged by every learned unprejudiced man; and nothing but the most determined obstinacy and ignorance can contradict them.

It is really a melancholy reflection, that so great a part of mankind should so rashly have recourse to such private executioners, or their boasted specifics, when afflicted with diseases; whereby they not only expose themselves to the most iniquitous frauds and impositions, but place their constitutions and lives into the hands of a merciless charlatan, who has no character to lose, and who obtains a livelihood at the expence of the constitutions and lives of those who are so unfortunately misled, as to be drawn into his snare. Being lost to every sense of honor and integrity, he assumes the air of importance and wisdom, which he is ill qualified for, and presumes to administer remedies for diseases, whose real causes, nature, and proper mode of treatment he is as ignorant of as his patients. Blinded by credulity, his employers attentively listen to



his jargon, swallow his nostrums, and comply with his directions; till time and disappointment detect the fraud, which few are found to be ingenuous enough to confess. Whether this proceeds from an unwillingness to acknowledge they have been imposed upon, or from a wish to see others imposed upon; or from whatever motive, I will not pretend to determine: but it is not uncommon, for persons to declare that they have received benefit, when it clearly appeared they were in the same situation (and perhaps in a worse) than on their first application to them. Such conduct must certainly be considered disingenuous, and pernicious to mankind.

It is not the inferior classes of people only that become the dupes of Empirics; it is not uncommon for persons of rank and wealth to be caught in this snare, and to confide in their opinions; and sometimes after having consulted the most able and judicious physicians.

It is astonishing, that persons of education and good sense should suffer them-

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selves to be so greatly imposed upon, as to be prevailed on to suppose, that it is in the power of those who practise physic and surgery at random, without education, and without understanding the principles of the art; and to imagine that they are capable (however the patient may be situated) of effecting more than the man, who is qualified in every particular for the practice of the professions alluded to. This is to prefer ignorance and falsehood to learning and veracity. Such an opinion I consider to be the greatest mark of disrespect that can be shewn to so truly respectable, and valuable characters, as I consider ingenious physicians to be, men of honor and integrity; who only ought to be considered the just subjects of our confidence: who will not hesitate in acknowledging, that they cannot effect what they perceive impossible; while the quacks, with unbounded assurance, promise to complete what they do not understand, without considering whether it is practicable or not. How very opposite is the conduct of those two characters! The



encouragement this herd meets with from the higher classes, will ever influence the lower classes of people in their favour and confidence. They will not desist from persuading them, as long as they can extort a shilling from them, that they are upon the eve of being cured, although they have not afforded them a jot of relief; till, from length of time, and consumption of cash, those poor deluded people experimentally find out, that they have been infamously cheated; if their diseases have not been greatly aggravated, through loss of time, and pernicious medicines.

It is much to be regretted, that the Public in general are so regardless of their welfare, as to pay so little attention to the reputations and abilities of those under whose care they entrust themselves; as their recovery must depend upon a judicious mode of treatment; and who frequently apply to persons, who are as unacquainted with the nature of their diseases, and the right method of treating them, as their patients. Erroneous treat-



ment must be the consequence; maladies are aggravated instead of remedied, nature is interrupted instead of being assisted; and far better would it be, if the disease were left to her efforts only: who will frequently readily co-operate with remedies calculated for the removal of disease, and preservation of our existence; and constantly endeavour to counteract the ill effects of those that have a tendency to our destruction; but whose favourable interpositions are frequently overpowered by the rude shocks she so frequently sustains: her endeavours at length become languid and exhausted, and mankind falls a sacrifice to ignorance and knavery.

I am much concerned to be under the necessity of asserting this melancholy fact, that many of the human species perish by neglect, or mal-treatment; whom, if their distempers had been early attended to, or had they been placed under the care of a skilful and discerning practitioner, who would have administered proper medicines suitable to the nature of their cases, and virulence of their symptoms;

by



by which means the ravages of diseases being counteracted and subdued, the afflicted patients might have been restored. But by delivering themselves into the hands of ignorant impostors, their diseases are attacked by nostrums totally unapplicable to the nature of their cases, and probably composed of deleterious qualities; by which their maladies are greatly aggravated, and situations rendered more unsupportable. But allowing that the medicines they administer should be in their nature so simple, as to be entirely inoffensive, so as to be incapable of aggravating the symptoms, or affording any benefit; allowing this to be the case, they then prove so far pernicious, that the afflicted person depending on the efficacy of a medicine which is possessed of none, much valuable time is lost, symptoms increase, and become violent; the disease advances with rapid strides, and the patient and friends are convinced of the fallacy, but frequently when too late. They then apply to the man of judgment, when there is nothing in his power to do,  
but



but to pass the doleful sentence ; that the favourable opportunity has passed by, and he can only consider himself the Undertaker's harbinger.

It is natural for mankind to have an anxious desire for the prolongation of their existence ; and in many respects, they endeavour to avoid what they conceive will have a tendency to impair their health, or destroy the vital principles. But many there are, who are not capable of distinguishing the safest paths from the dangerous ones ; and in no instance does this appear more clear than in the present.

The highwayman, or footpad, who accosts a man on the highway, and robs, and perhaps murders him, has the chance of defending himself, or being assisted by the arrival of other travellers. But the man who intrudes himself on a sick person, as one skilled in the practice of physic, who is entirely ignorant of the science, and the disease which he undertakes to treat, is a more dangerous character than either of the former, and equally deserving of punishment.

That



That a lying, impudent, knavish impostor, should elevate himself on a scaffold, in a public situation, surrounded by spectators, listening to the great encomiums he is bestowing upon himself, or by his assistant, whom he has employed and tutored for that purpose; whose assertions are readily credited by his auditors; particularly on seeing a few poor deluded persons, whom he has persuaded into his confidence, and the management of whose cases he publicly exhibits, extolling his own fame in the treatment of them; asserting a multiplicity of falsehoods concerning their situations before their applications to him: in short, he wishes to be considered a wonder of the age, or a \* supernatural being, possessed of superior talents to any other man: such are called

\* Many attempt, knowing the objections that may be advanced on their never having received a medical education, to elude them, by prevailing on their auditors to believe, that they possess a supernatural gift, which is far superior to all human knowledge. In what light such pretensions will be considered by a man of sense, and void of superstition, it is hardly necessary to insert.

mounte-



\* mountebanks. Many of those vagrants travel about from one county to another, to different villages, and country towns, to decoy simple rustics, who are fond of novelty, and easily prevailed upon to believe every lie, and to be charmed with every deception, that such base fellows consider their interest to practise upon them.

Others, nominated Empirics, Charlatans, or Quacks, who reside in cities and towns; some of them (particularly in London) rent spacious houses, entitle

\* The credit of this market, this fair hunting doctor, surrounded by five or six hundred peasants, staring and gaping at him, and counting themselves happy in his condescending to cheat them of their very scarce and necessary cash, by selling them, for twenty times more than its real worth, a medicine whose best quality were to be only a useless one; the credit, I say, of this vile, yet tolerated cheat, would quickly vanish, could each of his auditors be persuaded, of what is strictly true, that, except a little more tenderness and agility of hand, he knows full as much as his doctor; and that if he could assume as much impudence, he would immediately have as much ability, would equally deserve the same reputation, and to have the same confidence reposed in him. Dr. Tissot's *Avis au Peuple*, Chap. xxxv. p. 270. Sect. 613.

them-



themselves Physicians of Dispensaries, and keep their equipages. Others \*, not quite so fortunate, and probably possessed of less cunning, are necessitated to live in a more humble way. The former having by stratagem devised more speedy and effectual methods of deceiving and defrauding the higher ranks of people of their cash; perhaps by being possessed of a greater share of assurance, or by being more intriguing fellows than the latter, and better skilled in the art of deception: while the latter must be content to prey upon the more needy and laborious part of mankind.

I have heard men, whose understandings (by their conversation on other subjects) I should have imagined would have taught them less credulity, highly extolling some of those characters, relating instances of wonderful cures performed by them; and even affirming, that they considered them more skilful and meritorious than the regular practitioner.

\* I am well informed, that there are at this time in London persons of this description, who practise as physicians, that have been originally blacksmiths, farriers, cobblers, and tinkers.



Now the numbers that apply to these impostors, that some of them should not recover is almost physically impossible, and I acknowledge it to be sometimes the case; but yet it is not less certain, that they are dangerous and destructive characters. Such cures, when they do happen, cannot be in consequence of the skill of a set of men, who are neither acquainted with the nature of diseases, the quality of the medicines they administer, nor the circumstances necessary to be considered. Allowing then, that their nostrums should accidentally succeed, I do not consider them in a more favourable view on that account, as such cures, when they do happen, must be merely the effect of chance. Their lists, or certificates of cures, if any person would take the trouble of inquiring into the particulars, would be frequently found to be mere chimeras, or forgeries, calculated to delude mankind. But if a catalogue of their murderous exploits could be annually obtained, mankind would then be inspired with such a wholesome dread of them, that they would cease any longer to be their advocates,  
and



and would be convinced of their errors, in countenancing and entrusting themselves under the hands of such a band of executioners.

It is extraordinary, that medical men of all others should be considered so dull of comprehension, as to be unable to acquire the proper knowledge of their profession, or otherwise so base and wicked, as not to practise it to the best of their judgments: and that a man, who has spent the former part of his life in pursuing quite a different employment, shall at once commence physician, or surgeon, without having ever received any instructions for the practice of so important a science. It is considered, that in other arts, and in every trade, a proper length of time is requisite, or an apprenticeship must be served, before any one is supposed to have arrived at a sufficient degree of knowledge, so as to be qualified to act for himself. If a man should attempt to persuade another, that he could mend his watch, when broken, or out of repair, or any other complex machine, who was not brought up to the trade, nor received



proper instructions, he would be ridiculed for his pretensions, and meet with no \* employment. But if a man presumes to assert, that he is capable of rectifying so very wonderful, and curiously constructed a machine as the human body, when disordered, the bait is then swallowed, confidence is reposed in him, he is countenanced and supported; and by many considered more skilful, than the man who has occupied the greater part of his life in the study of his profession.

\* Let a soldier, discarded from his regiment for his roguish tricks, or who is a deserter from it, a bankrupt, a disreputable ecclesiastic, a drunken barber, or multitudes of such other worthless people, advertise that they mount, set and fit up all kinds of jewels and trinkets in perfection; if any of these are not known, if no person in the place has ever seen any of their work, or if they cannot produce authentic testimonials of their honesty, and their ability in their business, not a single individual will trust them with two pennyworth of false stones to work upon; in short, they must be famished. But if instead of professing themselves jewellers, they post themselves up as physicians, the crowd purchase, at a high rate, the pleasure of trusting them with the care of their lives, the remaining part of which they rarely fail to empoison. Dr. Tissot's Avis au Peuple, Chap. xxxv. Sect. 614. p. 271.

It



It is indispensably necessary, that every artist should be well acquainted with the subject matter on which he works: and as there is no profession, or calling whatever, that requires a more regular and assiduous application, than the art of medicine, before any one can arrive to that degree of perfection, as to be a competent master of the science: consequently the knowledge of anatomy\* and physiology† is indisputably necessary, for either the physician or surgeon, who would wish to practise with satisfaction to himself, and benefit to the afflicted. For, how can a profession of such consequence to mankind be thoroughly understood, unless the practitioner be well acquainted with the theoretical principles of the art? which must pave the way to a knowledge of the cure of diseases.

\* Anatomy is the dissecting a human body, or separating its component parts, to discover their situations, figure, and uses; which leads to the knowledge of nature, and the cure of diseases.

† Physiology is the doctrine of the animal œconomy; or that which teaches the constitution of the body, so far as it is in a healthy state.



It is certain, that nature does not distribute her bounty equally to mankind. Some men are born with superior understandings to others, who can penetrate into matters more deeply, and comprehend more quickly and accurately. Those possessed of such shining qualities promise fair to excel others, in whatever profession or situation they may be placed; and to be serviceable to mankind, and an ornament to their country, (provided their minds are properly cultivated). Many that are born with such extraordinary talents, are not so fortunate as to have an opportunity of improving them, but they remain buried in obscurity; they often know not their own abilities, they are lost both to the world, and to themselves. Though Providence has furnished them with superior gifts, yet fortune does not always afford them an opportunity of displaying them. As good land cannot produce corn if no seed is sown therein, neither can a man of extraordinary talents exhibit them to the world, if the rudiments



ments of erudition is not inculcated in his mind.

I shall next consider the man on whom nature has distributed her gifts less bounteously, that is possessed only of an ordinary share of understanding; who has received all those advantages resulting from education, which were not accessible by the former; he therefore becomes possessed of that knowledge which the other does not arrive at, because it is not in his power to pursue the means; therefore the man of inferior genius is more perfect, because he has been better instructed. Whereas, had the other been similarly situated, where he might have had equal opportunities of acquiring knowledge, (and allowing both to have been equally industrious) he would have greatly excelled him.

It may be considered, that I have digressed from my subject, by thus endeavouring to explain, how much inferior the man of superior genius without learning, is to him of inferior genius, with the advantages of education. But I have  
been



been induced to make this comparison, in contradiction to an opinion, that I am convinced prevails among some people, which is, that these self-created Doctors are born with extraordinary talents, which enables them to attain to a knowledge superior to others, without requiring any earthly instructions, having obtained it by a supreme gift. But I wish to advise those who undertake the cure of \* diseases by this gift alone, seriously to peruse the sixth Commandment.

That the man, who, from his youth, being inspired with the desire of being brought up to the practice of physic, after having received a liberal education, previous

\* A disease is an alteration, or deviation from health of some one function of the body. How then can any one be acquainted with the ailment of this function, if he does not know all that is requisite to the due discharge of it? Therefore a disease must be known before it can be cured. For to know exactly the history of a disease, its causes, nature, and effects; a clear knowledge of such medicines as prove beneficial or detrimental, can only be acquired by the dissection of dead bodies, whose diseases have been carefully observed before their death.



to the acquisition of what is to follow, he is then placed in a situation which affords him an opportunity of receiving every information requisite to qualify him for such a practitioner; who has carefully and assiduously studied nature, and the different functions of the human body; who has accurately dissected, and discovered the structure, and uses of the various parts of which it is composed, and the causes that may predispose them to diseased alterations; who has regularly and diligently attended able professors in the different branches of the profession; who has closely visited the sick in the public hospitals, exposed to the effluvia of infectious diseases, and may truly be said to have been in jeopardy every hour; who has inquired into the history of cases, and traced them from their origin to their termination in health or dissolution; who has industriously examined every symptom and alteration that has occurred through the progress of diseases, with the effects of the medicines that has been administered, and acquires a know-

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ledge of those which have proved beneficial, and of those which have been ineffectual. In short, he carefully considers every circumstance which has attended his patient; or has happened to him by his own observations, or the information he has received from him, or from others; and by comparing them with one another, he arrives at a knowledge of the primary cause of the disease, and of the best remedies calculated to remove it. And that after several years labour, and a considerable sum of money has been expended in such pursuits, before he has arrived to a sufficient degree of experience, as to be deemed qualified for an able practitioner, he shall be considered inferior to an ignorant, illiterate knave, who is an entire stranger to this whole process.—Fatal absurdity! that such numbers should suffer themselves to be led away, without allowing themselves the liberty of reasoning upon a subject which so nearly interests them.

I have



I have remarked, that \* chronic diseases are more generally submitted to the treatment of Quacks, than those of the † acute kind; as if it were considered, that they are more peculiarly qualified for the treatment of this class of diseases than the latter, which usually fall to the lot of the regular practitioner. Now diseases of the chronic species are often so complicated in their nature, and variable in their symptoms, that they require the clearest discernment, and the nicest accuracy in the proper management and treatment of them. They are more mismanageable and difficult to cure than the acute; nor is it so easy to judge of the proper method to be pursued.

\* Chronic is a lingering disease which continues a considerable time, if not during the patient's life, as an asthma, dropsy, scrophula, or king's evil, &c.—they are sometimes owing to a natural defect in the constitution, or acquired by irregularities in living.

† Acute is a disease which terminates in a short time, or continues only a certain number of days, but not without imminent danger; such are fevers, small-pox, inflammations, &c.



To labour under a languishing, and perhaps incurable malady, at any period of life, (but particularly in youth) is certainly a very melancholy state: and to reflect, that no remedy is capable of affording any lasting benefit, but merely to palliate the symptoms, and procure a temporary relief, by which their miserable existence may be prolonged, and rendered more supportable, is, I acknowledge, of all situations, the most horrid. Persons thus circumstanced attentively listen to, and readily credit every fabulous report they hear of extraordinary cures performed upon persons, represented to be similarly situated with themselves. Solicitous of obtaining a cure at any risque, they are hurried about from one Quack to another; each promising to effect what is impracticable: until by their injudicious treatment causes often become irritated, and symptoms aggravated. Being unacquainted with the true nature of their diseases, their hopes are revived by the plausible promises of the pretender, till time and disappointment proves the fraud.



To attend on a patient whose disease is so far advanced, and inveterate, as to be beyond the reach of our aid, and when all our efforts prove ineffectual, is certainly a very unpleasent and melancholy part of practice. And to behold a fellow-creature languishing under the oppression of a direful disease, and not to have it in our power to afford him any relief, nor sometimes even to mitigate his sufferings, is a reflection of all others the most mortifying and dissatisfactory. And as hope does not desert us even in the hour of death, to see him anxiously lifting up his eyes to his physical friend, whom he considers as his only anchor in this world, being ardently solicitous (and perhaps for the sake of his family) to be delivered from that cruel tyrant Death. To see his afflicted and affectionate relations, who surround his bedside, attentively looking at the countenance of the physician, in hopes to discover by his looks some favourable omen, and that a ray of hope remains; while the physician, who is a man of too much integrity to assert what is contrary to his opinion, (however



(however his feelings may be affected by passing the sentence) is obliged to declare, that all is done which is in the power of human art to effect, and that the rest must be left to God. Such a scene must undoubtedly be, to every man inspired with a sympathetic feeling for the afflictions of others, truly dismal and affecting.

To cure diseases, and relieve those in pain, is a very satisfactory employment.— But to attend a patient through a lingering, tedious disease, without any prospect of curing him, but merely of affording him temporary ease, is a very melancholy and disagreeable task.

How very different is the conduct of the profligate Quack to the character above described; who, not being actuated by motives of rectitude, (his own interest being his sole consideration) conceives that the surest way to conceal his ignorance, and most effectually to deceive his employer, is to give the disease a new name, to disapprove of every thing that has hitherto been done; and to prevail upon him



to believe, that he alone is acquainted with the true nature of his disorder, and the remedies suitable to remove it; which he boldly promises to effect without any regard to the state of the patient, or the propriety or impropriety of his assertions; for these are not objects of his consideration. He therefore pleases his patient, and flatters his hopes, until the aggravation of his misery, or a premature death, proves his doctor a villain, (but not before his own purpose is obtained.) But if his employers would defer paying him, until he had accomplished what he promised, I am disposed to think, the fallacy would soon be at an end.

The frailty of human nature is such, that we most readily approve of that advice, which is most flattering and suitable to our own inclinations. But a physician who is a man of strict veracity, and perceives the hazardous state of his patient, will not hesitate in affirming what he thinks; and because he will neither flatter, nor deceive, less confidence is reposed in



in him, than in the man who uses both; and who, under the cloak of wisdom and experience, asserts the most egregious falsehoods. He who intimates the necessity of persevering in a strict regimen, and that time and patience will be requisite in the accomplishment of a cure, will be less attended to, than he who consults his patient's own inclinations, promises him a speedy cure, and permits him to indulge in his own taste and humour, without considering whether it be consistent with his disease or not.

There are some of these pretenders who presume to judge of a patient's disease merely by inspecting his urine; and who without seeing the person, or inquiring into the symptoms, pretend to know what the disease is, and immediately administer their medicines. If it be admitted as a fact, that they possess magic powers, or supernatural gifts, such pretensions may be verified; but if this is not credited, it must be gross ignorance to suppose, and also the greatest imposition to persuade the public, that the mere examination of  
 their



their urine does afford them sufficient information to investigate the causes and symptoms of a disease, and to be able thereby to prescribe remedies most suitable for it. The examination of a patient's urine is frequently necessary, together with the state, and other circumstances relative to the patient; as in fevers, and other disorders, where the changes produced in it may assist us in judging of the approach of a crisis\* in many acute diseases, and the alterations that may have taken place in the progress of the disease, and in forming a prognostic. But for any one to assert, that he can tell a person's disorder only by viewing the urine, common sense, I should imagine, would determine the absurdity and fallacy of such a pretension: and whoever directs any medicine, without any other information of the state of his patient than what the

\* Crisis is a change that takes place in acute diseases, wherein such an alteration is produced in the state of the patient as to determine his fate, either for recovery or death. Its approach is judged of by a thick sediment in the urine, and other symptoms.

F inspection



inspection of his urine affords, is an infamous impostor, and the person who confides in him a compleat dupe.

There are none more liable to deprive a man of his existence, than those set of Quacks termed rupture doctors; who affirm, that they have in their possession radical cures for that disease; which too many are inclined to believe. A rupture is certainly a very troublesome and burdensome affliction, and most that labour under it are very desirous of being cured, (if possible) which frequently induces them to be misled by the false pretensions of these miscreants; whereby they often expose their lives to the most imminent danger, and are subjected to tedious confinement, painful applications, and sometimes dangerous and rash \* operations:  
and

\* I saw an instance of this in a mountebank, who undertook the cure of a boy of about six years of age, for a rupture; and not only performed the operation, but castrated him: when I asked him in private, why he used this hazardous method, without trying a truss, since his tender age would have easily admitted of it, he ingenuously confessed he did it for profit: for he  
would



and if they escape with their lives, they are often left in a worse situation than they were before. Whereas, had they remained contented with their former conditions, and been satisfied with a proper truss, they might have had no increase of their malady during their lives. This disease, if properly attended to, and judiciously treated from its commencement, will require no other application, nor any operation, (unless it should be a \* strangulated rupture, which is a state extremely

would have been paid but a crown for the truss, whereas the operation brought him in ten, if not twenty. Heister's Surgery, eighth edition, Introduction, p. 15.

\* A strangulated rupture is a stricture made on a portion of the guts, or cawl, by the borders of the opening formed by the separation of the fibres, of the tendon of a muscle of the belly, called external, oblique, (from its situation and direction). This is caused by an inflammation of the gut, its being distended with air, or fæces; or an additional quantity of gut or cawl, or both, that has descended in those that were ruptured before; and as long as this stricture continues, the parts are incapable of being returned into the cavity of the belly. The patient, under these circumstances, is incapable of going to stool, the parts are painful on



extremely dangerous, and requires the immediate assistance of the most skilful surgeons) except the replacing of the gut, and the application of a well made truss. This is all that can be necessary, or will be attempted by an honest man.

being handled, or when he is in an erect posture, or on any exertion of the body, as in coughing or sneezing. If this stricture continues other symptoms succeed, as sickness at the stomach, violent vomitings, accompanied with more or less of a fever, and a quick and hard pulse. It must be attempted to be reduced by gentle means, and by placing the body in such a posture, as may favour the return of the protruded part. If this does not shortly succeed other means must be tried, as bleeding, glysters, or the fumigation of tobacco thrown into the bowels (by means of a proper machine invented for that purpose) cathartics, and refrigerating applications. If these remedies do not succeed, the symptoms soon become aggravated; and the only resource left is an operation, and no time must be lost. This operation consists in dilating the ring, or border of the opening, by which that part of the gut, or cawl, confined by the stricture is set free, and is again returnable into the belly. But if it be delayed too long, other symptoms, more fatal, ensue, such as convulsive hickups, coldness of the extremities, small, interrupted pulse, gangrene, mortification, and at last death. A further description of this operation is totally unnecessary here.

Before



Before I quit this subject, I shall endeavour to give my readers some idea of the true nature of a rupture, that they may be enabled to judge for themselves. And I hope to convince them of the inconsistency and hazard of such attempts, as a confirmation of what I have advanced.

A rupture is a protrusion of a greater or lesser portion of the \* intestines, or † omentum, or of both, the natural situations of which are in the cavity of the belly. The places where they usually appear, are in the groin, upper and fore part of

\* The intestines, or guts, are six in number, situated in the cavity of the belly, inclosed in the peritoneum, or that membrane which surrounds the whole cavity, and gives an external covering to every bowel contained therein. They are divided into three small and three large intestines, the former, which are inclosed within the latter, are named duodenum, jejunum, and ilium; the latter, cæcum, colon, and rectum. Those which most usually descend, and form a rupture, are the ilium, or cæcum, and colon.

† Omentum, or cawl, is situated on the surface of the intestines; its upper part is connected to the bottom of the stomach, spleen, and colon: it descends over all the other intestines. Its use is to lubricate the guts for their easy motions.



the thigh, and at the navel, producing an enlargement or swelling. The first is by surgeons named inguinal, the second femoral, and the third umbilical, and they are so called from their situations. They pass out from the belly through openings, which are natural to those who have not ruptures, as well as to those who have. But whichever of these ruptures it may happen to be, the protruded part carries before it that \* membrane (before mentioned) which lines the whole cavity of the belly, and forms what is called the hernial sac, or bag in which the rupture is contained. It is found to be of a greater or lesser size, and of a different thickness, according to the quantity of its contents, and to the continuance of the rupture.

There are many circumstances to be considered, which will render this disorder more or less hazardous; for the same kind of rupture, in different per-

\* A membrane is a white, broad, dilatable substance, covering or lining the various cavities of the body, the bowels, muscles, &c.



sons, is differently situated. The constitution and age of the person, the date of the rupture, its being bound, or not bound by stricture, free, or not free from inflammation, and the general symptoms that attend it rendering reduction practicable, or impracticable, ought certainly to be necessary objects of consideration, and will require a variation in the mode of treatment.

If a rupture is early attended to, by returning it into its natural cavity, and there retaining it by means of a \* proper truss, it will be the only method by which a radical cure can be effected. But those ruptures which are of an ancient date, and which have been neglected, and suffered to remain down, may have contracted such adhesions to their containing bag, as to render their return into the belly impracticable, and very dangerous to be attempted. And the patient should be con-

\* I say, a proper truss, because many of them are very ill made, and inadequate to the purpose for which they were designed; hence arises the necessity of applying to an eminent truss maker.



tented with a bag truss, unless a stricture in this case should take place, and obstruction to the fæces, which will render reduction in all cases necessary.

The cure of a rupture is distinguished into radical, or perfect, and palliative, or imperfect, and though the event is different, yet the method of treatment requisite in both is exactly the same; viz. returning the parts, and confining them by a proper truss. This in some produces a perfect cure, in others only a palliative one; and this depends on particular circumstances attendant on different ruptures, which it is not in our power to alter. To those unacquainted with the nature of a rupture, or the anatomical structure of the parts concerned in the disease, it may appear strange, that the means to effect a perfect, and an imperfect cure, should be entirely the same. But (as I have before said) to return the protruded part (if practicable) in the cavity of the belly, and to confine it there by a proper truss, is all which it is in the power of art to effect. But nature sometimes is capable  
of



of doing more; and will accomplish a radical cure in some cases, which in others is left imperfect; and this depends on certain circumstances, which it is not in the power of human art to alter. For when the parts forming a rupture are returned, an opportunity is given to the opening through which they passed, and which was consequently dilated, to contract itself, by which means a perfect cure sometimes is produced. The different applications, embrocations, and remedies, which have been, and are at this time used, are not in the reach of the parts concerned in this disease, nor can they contribute in the least to its cure. And if it has happened, that any have been cured while under such a process, it must have been owing to their long \* resting in a supine posture, or to the stricture of a proper bandage.

\* Instances have occurred of ruptured persons, who, from some disease or accident which confined them to their beds for several weeks, have been perfectly cured of their ruptures, and have never had any return of the disease.



To enter more minutely into the nature of a rupture, would carry me beyond my present design : and I hope it will be considered, that I have so far explained the subject, that the reader may perceive the absurdity and fallacy of such insignificant applications, as those which are imposed upon the public as cures for ruptures : and the rashness and barbarity of others, who undertake to perform dangerous operations, which are so unlikely to prove successful, that on the contrary they often prove fatal\*.

There is no disease which opens a more ample field for the exercise of quackery, or contributes more to its support, than the venereal, nor none that has suffered worse treatment, and made more confi-

\* No disease has ever furnished such a constant succession of quacks as ruptures have : they, who have had some smattering of anatomy, or surgery, and whose humanity has not been their prevailing quality, have adopted one of the preceding operations, or something like them ; while they who have had less knowledge, and more timidity, have had recourse to the more sneaking knavery of specific applications. Mr. Potts' Chirurgical Works, Vol. I. p. 170.



derable ravages among mankind to the last degree of decay. It would require volumes to contain the numerous instances of ruined constitutions, (not to say how many have been \* poisoned by the diabolical transactions of this nest of empirics.) Honesty and humanity are qualities which they are entire strangers to; they neither regard the sufferings of their fellow creatures, nor what effects their nostrums may produce; nor any other consideration, but money. They swarm in all

\* I should not thus have exposed these little dabblers in physic, nor attempted to disprove their bold and false assertions, published with a shameless front, to impose upon the ignorant, and seduce the credulous and unwary, had not the death of a very promising youth, (who fell a sacrifice to the ignorance of one of these impostors) given me this melancholy occasion. Besides, these men fatten upon the miseries and afflictions of other people; for they know full well that few persons can hurt them, because few or none will be willing to expose their own failings to the censure of their friends; nor do any care to let the world know they were so egregiously weak and silly, as to put themselves under the direction of such illiterate quacks. Dr. Robinson's Treatise on the Venereal Disease, p.

13, 14.



parts of London, and there is scarce a lamp-post, wall, or gate, but what has pasted on them their infamous bills; nor a public avenue, where some of their vagabonds are not stationed, to wait for the unwary, by which such numbers are ensnared and led to destruction. Their diseases are made durable instead of being removed; and here it may very properly be said, that the remedy proves worse than the disease; for if they escape with their lives, the remainder of their days (by mal-treatment or poisonous drugs) is embittered with miseries, and infirmities insurmountable. Therefore they must continue the residue of their lives (if such a state can be called living) an offensive nuisance to themselves, and to all others that come within their reach.

Happy it is for mankind, that a medicine is discovered, which is endued with powers capable of curing this virulent, loathsome disease; and this medicine is mercury \*, which, by the art of chemistry,

\* Mercury, or quicksilver, is a mineral fluid, and  
more



mistry, may be so changed and prepared, by being combined with other substances, as to be productive of very valuable and beneficial effects as a medicine, and capable of curing this malady in all its various forms. But when entrusted to the management of rash pretenders, it will prove a curse to mankind instead of a blessing, and a dangerous destructive poison. It may be considered as so many sharp instruments in the hands of raving madmen, who, not guided by reason or judgment, are incapable of calculating the dose suitable in different cases and constitutions. This only can be distinguished by an able physician, or surgeon,

more ponderous than any other. It is either extracted by art from certain ores, or found in a fluid state in the earth. The greatest quantities come from the East Indies; but there are considerable mines of it in Spain, Hungary, Peru, and Friuli. It is met with in three different forms, viz. pure, in ruddy clods, or glebes, which is cinnabar, and in stony glebes, or a mineral substance, in colour generally resembling saffron; sometimes this is blackish. This mineral is prepared into a variety of forms by chemical processes, each of which have their respective uses as a medicine.

who-



whoever else attempts it is a cheat, and a dangerous pest to society. No disease requires an earlier attention, or more immediate aid, than the venereal. Its symptoms often advance rapidly, every hour becoming more virulent: and if through quackery, irregularities, ignorance, or a false bashfulness, it be improperly treated, neglected, or suffered to proceed unnoticed, it may lay the foundation for future miseries, which never can be surmounted, and it often produces the most direful effects.

Various and tormenting are the symptoms of this raging disorder, after it has got into the habit, especially if no essential means are made use of to counteract its virulence. The throat becomes affected with offensive ulcers, the breath emits a most horrid stench; scabs, blotches, or dark copper coloured spots, and fistulous ulcers appear on the surface of the different parts of the body; violent nocturnal pains torment the patient. At length the more solid parts (the bones) become affected with caries, or rottenness, (particularly



cularly the bones of the palate, and roof of the mouth.) The shin bones are affected with \* nodes, the teeth fall out of their sockets, and sometimes blindness succeeds. The venereal venom sometimes penetrates more deeply, laying hold of the vital parts, and producing a † pulmonary phthisis, or consumption of the lungs, causing a cough, purulent expectoration, hectic fever, nocturnal sweats, restless nights, loss of appetite, ‡ maraf-

\* Node is a rising or tumor on a bone, in consequence of a confirmed lues, or pox.

† Phthisis pulmonatis, is an affection of the lungs, producing a consumption, or general waste of the whole body. In this disease the lungs are frequently loaded with tubercles, or little bags of matter, which is expectorated in coughing, and is always attendant on this disease, together with a hectic fever, wasting, night sweats, and flying pains and stiches. It proceeds from many causes, such as venereal and scrophulous virus, pleurisy or peripneumony, long continued coughs; and is readily produced by intemperance in those who are constitutionally disposed to this disease, and in those who have a particular straitness and mal-formation of their chests.

‡ Marasmus is lingering consumption of the whole body, attended with a wasting fever, and various other symptoms.



mus, and a general waste of the muscular parts of the body; the patient becomes feeble, emaciated, and racked with most bitter pains: all the solids and fluids towards the last stage are a corrupted mass. At length, being reduced to a mere skeleton, he impatiently waits the arrival of death, as his only deliverer from his torments. Such horrid scenes I have frequently seen with deep concern; and upon inquiring into the history of their cases, and the manner they had been treated, I learnt, that neglect and mal-treatment had been the sole cause of the disease terminating so wretchedly and fatally.

It is not uncommon for infants to receive an hereditary taint of this nature from their parents; which often appears at the time of birth, in the form of crusty scabs, and pustular eruptions, generally on their legs, thighs, and arms, or ulcers about various parts of the body: and if they survive, they continue sickly, weak, diseased, and commonly useless members of society; and fortunate it is, when



when death kindly removes them in their infancy from such a state of wretchedness.

It is really a national concern, to hear of so many who fall victims to this horrid malady; and though it may not directly destroy the vital principle, yet it is almost a certainty, that it cuts short the thread of life. These afflicted persons are often left to linger under infirmities, which are too deeply rooted to be eradicated; perhaps they may live to beget a half rotten posterity, but the poor innocent children suffer severely for the sins and frailties of their parents. Whereas had they (on the first appearance of their disease, or soon after) been possessed of that prudence, which would have directed them to the man who would have attentively and judiciously considered their situations, put them upon a proper regimen, and attacked their distemper with a mercurial preparation, suited to their habit of body and adapted to the virulence of the disease, its effects on the constitution might have been counteracted, and all its terrible train of evils prevented: they

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might



might have been restored to their pristine health and vigor, and not have entailed future miseries on succeeding generations. It is not unusual in such cases to defer applying to the regular practitioner, until the constitution is ruined, and until it is past the power of art to repair it. And I am much deceived, if what I have advanced on this head, is not capable of being verified by the woeful experience of many. In truth, my readers, this is more frequently the case than you may probably conceive it to be, and a truly pitiable case it is: but it ever must remain so, unless such means are devised, and executed, as will entirely defeat the authors of such calamities.

It is very common to observe, in several of their hand-bills and advertisements, that they have the effrontery to affirm, that they cure the various symptoms attendant on the different stages of this distemper, as well as many other diseases of a direct contrary nature to the former, with one nostrum. But that mankind can so far yield up their reason, as to believe that



that this can possibly be effected (when the degree of the disease is so different, and symptoms so variable in divers persons) by one single panacea, is to me truly surprizing. And yet all this is to be accomplished without any regard to confinement, or restraint in diet; as if no disease, nor conduct whatever, could possibly withstand the force and operation of their all powerful specifics.

The reader will please to recollect, that I have, in a foregoing page, endeavoured to point out the absurdity, and dangerous tendency of infallible nostrums; and the indispenfable necessity of attending to different constitutions and circumstances in each individual case. This can only be acquired by an attentive reflection on causes and effects produced in different diseases, and which is the only means to arrive at a knowledge of curing diseases. For a confined knowledge cannot qualify a man in any branch of the profession, he must have an extensive knowledge of the whole science.



Now that mankind should be induced to believe, that the venereal disease, rheumatism, gout, itch, scrophula or king's evil, scurvy, &c. are all to give way to this miraculous dose, plainly shews, how little they are disposed to think of a subject so serious in its consequences as the abuse of medicine. To enter into a minute detail on the nature, symptoms, and method of cure of these different diseases, would swell out this essay beyond my original design, and might be considered superfluous and unnecessary. Let it suffice to say (and I believe by every rational person it will be allowed) that each of these diseases has its characteristic signs, by which it may be readily distinguished from any other; that its nature, appearances, and effects, are obviously different, and that they vary in different subjects. If all this is admitted, how then can common sense coincide with their affirmations. Allowing that their compositions should be efficacious in the cure of the disease alluded to, does it also follow, that they must be capable of curing every other?

The



The absurdity of such a supposition will not admit of debate.

Many of them, apprized of the dreadful apprehensions that some persons entertain of taking mercury, consider it their interest to declare, that they cure this disease, in all its various stages, without administering a grain of it. Now these apprehensions, which many entertain of this medicine, I acknowledge are not without foundation, when it is left to the discretion of quackery: but when entrusted to the management of a prudent and careful physician, or surgeon, I can from experience and observations venture to affirm, that they are entirely groundless. It may very safely and beneficially be administered at any period of life, in this distemper, with a strict attention to the patient's strength and habit, degree of virulence of the symptoms, and the effects which it produces, which are extremely uncertain; as some constitutions can bear, and will require a greater quantity than others to conquer the disease; while others will be sensibly affected by a much smaller quantity,



quantity, and will not require so much : and this depends on particular situations in particular cases, and a greater or lesser degree of irritability in the system of different persons, which demands our constant consideration. For by a proper attention to this circumstance, the success and safety of this medicine solely depends. There is no medicine that can be depended upon to cure this distemper but a mercurial preparation, (unless it should be a gonorrhœa \* or a local affection) and those that attempt to cure it by any other method will be baffled, and the patient will be disappointed.

Great and valuable improvements of late years have been made in the administration of this medicine. Formerly pa-

\* Gonorrhœa, or clap, is a local affection from an impure coition, producing an inflammation in some part of the urethra, attended with a discharge of a purulent appearance ; but which is no other than an increased secretion of the natural mucus, that lubricates the passage changed in its consistence and colour. It is to be treated as other local inflammations, with a low diet, mild cathartics, and refrigerating medicines ; oily or mucilaginous injections : and by a strict attention to regularity and the antiphlogistic plan, it will frequently require no other mode of cure.



tients were subjected to tedious and unnecessary confinement, and severe salivations, who by experiments and observations, we are now convinced might have been cured by a milder method; and without experiencing the disagreeable effects resulting from so severe a process. For by introducing this medicine into the habit, as an alterative, in a quantity suited to the symptoms of the case (at proper intervals) which may be known by the abatement of the symptoms, and the effects produced, a certain, safe, and pleasant cure generally will be effected. I do not mean to insinuate, that every case (however malignant and untractable in its symptoms) will invariably yield to this method. I am aware, that venereal complaints, in certain habits, and from peculiar causes, under the best treatment and skill of the most able of the profession, will sometimes require the perseverance of months before they can be wholly subdued; as those situated in the manner I have described in a foregoing page, and which will admit of an exception from this last mentioned system.

There



There is a character in London, whose unlimited audacity and impudence exceeds all the rest, and whose pretensions are liable to produce as much mortality among the human race, as a pestilence, famine, or the sword. This profligate pretender (with wonted assurance) informs the public, that he is capable of curing cancers, diseased bones and joints,, mortifications, and various other diseases, indiscriminately; denies the necessity of the knife in any case whatever; challenges the corporation of surgeons to contradict his affirmations; and impertinently makes free with the names of some of the most eminent and respectable among them.

The length of the advertisement I mean (almost filling the column of a news paper) cannot have failed of attracting the notice of many: and its repeated insertion in different papers, evidently shews that numbers are disposed to credit his assertions, and entrust themselves to his management, without allowing themselves the liberty of considering, whether what he advances be practicable, or consistent with  
reason



or not. Alas ! unfortunate deluded people, I shudder to think what must have been the fate of many ; and what will be the fate of others, as long as this impostor is permitted to continue his deceptions.— But while that propensity to whatever is new and marvellous, which predominates among so many of our species, and which has raised so many illiterate persons, and noxious things into reputation, and while mankind are so ready to follow the example of others, whose conduct is the least fit to be imitated, I fear a regulation in this particular can hardly be effected. It requires but a very small share of discernment to detect the falshood of his doctrines, and the impracticability of what he undertakes. Such a character as this I consider as a most notorious cheat, on whom exemplary punishment should be inflicted, in order to deter others. For the professions of physic and surgery, when under no restraint, and subjected to no laws, nor regulations, are a most cruel scourge to mankind, and a serious national calamity. To credit the contents of such



an advertisement must be, to consider surgeons either ignorant, rash pretenders, or cruel, and inhuman savages; who, to satisfy their brutal inclinations, or from some interested motives, dismember and mangle their fellow creatures under the plea of necessity. Surely mankind are not so far prejudiced as to entertain so ignoble an idea of a body of men, who endeavour to do their duty in the best manner they are able; and to render themselves as serviceable and useful as possible. The plausible falsehoods which are inserted in such advertisements are a disgrace to a news paper, an insult to common sense, and for the security of mankind, ought to be suppressed.

I am sensible that many persons are of opinion, that surgeons often amputate limbs unnecessarily, which otherwise might have been cured, provided they had patience, and inclination to attend to them long enough; and suspect that this is most generally the case in public hospitals; and done with a view of getting rid of such cases as are likely to prove tedious and trouble-



some. But in this opinion mankind do them great injustice, and it is owing to this opinion that the character I allude to is principally indebted for the encouragement and support he meets with. Those gentlemen who fill the office of surgeons to public hospitals, are at the head of their profession, and of such eminence and abilities, that no other country can boast of a superiority in this respect. And I am certain, that their humanity is equal to their skill; and justly entitles them to the confidence of mankind. They are very far from meriting those illiberal aspersions, with which, through misrepresentation and false prejudices, they are undeservedly loaded. A long and regular attendance at the public hospitals in London, has afforded me repeated opportunities of being convinced, that the above opinion is groundless. I have always observed the greatest humanity and attention shewn by these gentlemen to the afflicted poor; and every means pursued which were calculated for the preservation of limbs and lives. And that in such un-



fortunate cases as were irremediable, and where the sole chance of preserving the patient's life depended on an operation. I have always found, that these operations were not attempted without a consultation, and without the acquiescence, and concurrence of the other surgeons of the same hospital. When they were unanimous in opinion that no other resource was left the patient, they then considered it their duty to afford him that chance; and to explain to him how unhappily his case was circumstanced, as not to admit of any other relief but by an operation. Such opinions I have seen delivered by those gentlemen with that tenderness and concern, which I think must have inspired every auditor with admiration and esteem for their humanity towards their afflicted patients.

It is a melancholy truth, that there are some diseases which are so circumstanced, that the patient has no other chance for his life but by submitting to the knife. And to determine whether the case will admit of any delay, or whether, if the  
 present



present opportunity should be neglected, another equally favourable may not offer, is a point, which requires the nicest, and most accurate discernment.—This is not unfrequently the case in compound \* fractures, where the surrounding skin, muscles, tendons, (and ligaments when the injury is received at the joints) are so crushed and lacerated, and the bones so shattered, as in cases where broad-wheeled waggons, or other ponderous bodies fall upon, or pass over the limbs;) and when the parts are so bruised and impaired, that the circulation through them is so much impeded, that without immediate amputation a gangrene, and mortification must take place, and death inevitably follow. For inflammation soon takes possession of the limbs, and an increased irritation, and action of the vessels of the whole system, would frustrate our endeavours in an operation, subject the patient to unnecessary pain, and hasten his dissolution. Whereas

\* Compound fracture, is a fracture accompanied with a wound, and sometimes with a protrusion, or thrusting forth of the bone through the integuments, or skin.



had the operation been performed immediately after the accident, and before these symptoms had appeared, the patient might have been preserved.

There are other cases which will allow of longer deliberation, but where the knife becomes at last indispensibly necessary, to afford the patient a fair chance for his life; as in joints, where the heads of the bones are enlarged, and rotten, and in putrid corrosive ulcers, where the texture of the bone underneath is greatly diseased; and where, by the profuse discharge attending it, the patient's strength is greatly exhausted, and he is become emaciated; or by the re-absorption of a virulent pus, causing a hectic fever and night sweats; if an operation is delayed, and these symptoms suffered to advance too far, until the patient's strength is too much exhausted, it will be then too late to propose an operation. These are matters which require the greatest judgment in a surgeon to determine, that he may not unnecessarily and rashly deprive his patient of a limb, or through ignorance,

or



or timidity desist from affording him the only probable chance of his preservation.

Many other cases I could mention, in vindication of the operative part of surgery; but what I have already advanced on the subject, by a moment's reflection from every reasonable man, I hope will be considered sufficient, to convince him of the necessity of the knife in many desperate accidents, and deplorable cases.

Great, and frequently fatal errors are committed in the use of the lancet. This operation is daily performed by barbers, farriers, and such like uninformed persons; who, however expert they may be as operators, are badly qualified to judge whether the patient be likely to derive benefit or detriment from this evacuation. Allowing it to be necessary, how can they rightly determine the quantity proper to be taken away? To ascertain this, the state of the pulse, and the other symptoms, are proper guides, which are circumstances that they are totally unacquainted with. And it is their interest to  
 bleed



bleed every person who applies to them for that purpose.

A very pernicious custom prevails among many persons, but particularly the more laborious part of mankind, which is, on the first attack of any disease, they have recourse to those kind of people to be bled; as if they considered bleeding as a sovereign remedy, and capable of checking the progress of every disease indiscriminately. There are certain diseases where the use of the lancet is primarily and indisputably necessary, and productive of the most salutary effects; and where the patient by the neglect of it, must frequently inevitably perish; and on the contrary, there are many other diseases, where it is not only unnecessary and improper, but often productive of the most malignant and fatal consequences:—of the former are diseases originating from plethora, where there is a superabundant quantity of blood, of too dense a consistence causing an encreased force in circulation, which impedes the regular action of the vessels; such a state of the  
blood



blood predisposes the person to inflammatory fevers, pleurifies, peripneumony, phrenitis, and various other inflammatory diseases. Of the latter are those diseases, where the blood is in too impoverished a state, with a diminished action of the heart, and vascular system; or those originating from a fault in the solids and fluids, as in dropfies, agues, intermitten, nervous, putrid, and malignant fevers; in various chronic diseases, or those from a vicious constitution of the humours, as in scrophula, scurvy, &c. and where bleeding cannot remove the whole of the virus from the habit, but only a proportionable quantity as the blood drawn away contains.

It is the usual custom of many persons, (though fortunately of late years it has been less in vogue,) to be bled twice a year, and they generally prefer the spring and autumn, which they consider as the most favourable seasons for this operation. This custom, they imagine, protects them from diseases, which otherwise they would be more liable to receive. This is a very



egregious mistake, and is liable to entail on them the very mischief, which they suppose it prevents. Those who have accustomed themselves to this habit for some years, will require it at the usual season of the year, at which this evacuation has been made; they will thereby materially injure their constitutions, and become obnoxious to various diseases.

If the vascular system is not over distended, and the circulating fluids not too rapid, the pulse will be neither too full, strong, nor oppressed. If so, how can it be necessary to weaken the powers of nature, and lessen the action of the heart and arteries, which was not too much increased. The pulse is the certain diagnostic of the state of the circulating fluids; and when the pulse is too full and hard, it evidently proves that a plethora prevails, and that bleeding may be advantageously performed. But when the pulse is neither too frequent, nor hard, nor the circulation too rapid, this evacuation is in general extremely injudicious, and often productive of fatal consequences.

Nothing



Nothing will so quickly weaken the powers of nature, and produce so general a relaxation, as phlebotomy. It diminishes the action of the vessels, and the motion of the blood through them; and if carried too far, may produce a general languor; for by this evacuation the pulse may, to any degree, be weakened.

If it is admitted that there are certain diseases where blood letting is not only injudicious, but extremely dangerous; and, on the contrary, that there are other diseases, where bleeding is not only judicious, but indispensably necessary, and productive of the most salutary effects; if this practice is considered as warrantable, I think it must also be admitted, that, to distinguish those diseases where bleeding may be beneficial from those where it may prove prejudicial, must require a thorough knowledge of the characteristic marks by which one disease may be readily distinguished from another.—This requires great experience, and attentive examination into causes, symptoms, and effects. And in those diseases requiring the use of



the lancet, it is a material consideration to endeavour to ascertain the quantity necessary to be taken away ; which can only be judged of by the state of the patient, in respect to strength, constitution, date of the disease, and the degree of virulence of the symptoms. To investigate this necessary quantity, the pulse is the best and surest guide.

As phlebotomy is an evacuation of greater importance than is generally imagined, I hope it will not be considered that I am too prolix on this part of my subject. Being aware that the imprudent use of it has been the bane of many, is a consideration sufficient to influence one that is anxious for the welfare of mankind, to declaim with the utmost energy, against the pernicious custom of wantonly lavishing away the vital fluid. And this is daily done without taking any advice about the propriety of such an evacuation. The most able and discerning practitioner is not capable of *rightly* judging of his own case, and to prescribe for himself under disease ; of which we have had some recent instances, where from too great a  
self-



self-confidence, society have probably been deprived of some valuable members, and the profession of some of its brightest ornaments, and this has happened through an ill-timed bleeding.—I hope these facts will inspire the reader with a wholesome dread of this pernicious custom, so as to avoid falling into this error himself, and induce him to caution others from exposing themselves to the like danger.

The greater number of persons that have recourse to these phlebotomists, are the laborious, and poorest classes of people, who depend upon their manual labour for their own and families subsistence: and it seems as if divine providence interposes that so many escape, without some fatal accident; or at best without being deprived of the use of an arm. They do not consider that they commit a valuable limb into the hands of a man, who is unacquainted with the situation of the arteries, nerves, and tendons of that limb. Either of these being punctured in the operation, may be productive of very serious consequences, as the loss of a limb, and in  
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some cases life, or at best leave the person a cripple the remainder of his days. These operators being unacquainted, or regardless of the consequences that would result from wounding an artery\*, nerve †, or tendon; and without feeling for the pulsation of an artery to distinguish its situation, and without endeavouring to avoid it, rashly plunge in the lancet without regarding the possibility of laming the patient, or doing him more fatal mischief.

\* An artery may be punctured instead of, or together with a vein, which may be followed with a dangerous hæmorrhage, aneurism, and even death.

† The puncturing a tendon, or nerve, is generally attended with excruciating pain.—The limb becomes inflamed, swoln, convulsed, and stiff; and if proper assistance is not timely procured, it threatens general convulsions, a gangrene of the part, and may terminate fatally.

If a vein be cut asunder there will be an extravasation of blood. The arm becomes of a livid colour, swelled, sometimes greatly inflamed, and very painful. This is sometimes followed by suppuration, at other times by mortification. The above symptoms may proceed from a person using his arm too soon after bleeding; the action of the muscles causing the vein to swell, and the blood is forced into the interstices between the skin and flesh.

Perhaps



Perhaps it may be said, that as these accidents rarely occur through the operation of blood-letting, I am too severe upon a class of men, who get a livelihood by performing it. They may censure me as being of an uncharitable and severe disposition, and that I aim at depriving these men of a subsistence. I should be sorry, if I knew that any person entertained so ignoble an opinion of me. It is true, there are many who make a trade of this operation, but most of them in conjunction with some other branch; and this is the case with midwives, barbers, and such like.—Were such persons to confine themselves to their own respective callings, they might meet with sufficient employment to maintain themselves and families, without presuming to perform a surgical operation, and perhaps depriving a fellow creature of a valuable limb. Allowing that these accidents do not frequently happen, yet it is a hazard that every man is exposed to, who entrusts himself under the hands of ignorant, illiterate practitioners: and there are many



of them, who perform this operation in a state of inebriation. These two circumstances, viz. the ill effects that may ensue from blood-letting injudiciously, and unnecessarily performed—together with the dangerous and sometimes fatal consequences that may attend injuring the parts herein mentioned, I am inclined to think will, by persons who are rational, and capable of judging rightly, be considered of such importance, as to require the necessity of warning mankind of the direful consequences that may attend on such incautious proceedings.

Perhaps some of my readers may be disposed to start the following question.

Has either of the aforesaid accidents never happened to the regular practitioner? It is not my intention to advance that they never have: all that I mean to say is, that to a cautious and well informed man, acquainted with the situation of the parts he ought to avoid injuring in the operation, I think, I may safely venture to affirm they never can happen. When such blunders have been committed they must have proceeded



ceeded from gross ignorance, or carelessness; therefore cannot reasonably be considered as a sufficient vindication for the support of uninstructed men, who are so liable to commit them frequently.

I am inclined to think, that the term empiric, or quack, is not applied to so many as deserve it. There are persons who, though they may be qualified to compound and prepare medicines, yet are far from being qualified to take upon themselves the province of the physician: and who, under the denomination of apothecaries, visit the sick, and prescribe medicines\*. Such a qualification is not to be acquired in the laboratory, or in an apothecary's shop; yet there are many who, without any other information than what such a situation has given them, undertake the treatment of diseases; and who after a certain term of years devoted to an apprenticeship, where probably few

\* I am informed from good authority, that there are persons who practice physic in the character of apothecaries, who have originally been porters in apothecaries and chymist's shops.



(if any) opportunities have occurred of attending patients, or examining into the nature of diseases; and whose time has been principally spent in preparing medicines; and without any further medical pursuits, have set themselves up for practitioners. But how they can be qualified for such an undertaking, I shall leave to the reader's good sense to determine.

The original design of an apothecary was to prepare the prescriptions of the physician. Later ages have enlarged this branch, and it is now customary among persons, in almost every station of life, on the first attack of a disease, to send for an apothecary, in full confidence that he is capable of judging of their case, and of prescribing a medicine and regimen suitable to counteract its effects on the constitution; and it seldom happens that a physician is consulted until a disease is considerably advanced, or until it becomes untoward or refractory, or when some alarming symptoms threaten the patient. Let not the reader mistake my meaning,



and think that I presume to insinuate, that apothecaries in general are not qualified for what they undertake; this is far from being my meaning, and far from the truth: nor is it likely that I should thus vilify a profession which I myself follow. I am perfectly sensible that the greater number of the gentlemen who practise this branch of medicine, are well informed, truly ingenious, and perfectly equal to what they profess. But on the other hand, I am confident that these gentlemen will agree with me in opinion, that there are some exceptionable characters, who are not sufficiently informed, and who are ill qualified for so important an undertaking. But this is a circumstance, which, among many other national evils, is overlooked. Mankind in general are incapable of discriminating, whether or not the practitioner they employ, is a man of real judgment in his profession; and this is more frequently the case in the practice of physic, than in surgery; as in the latter, certain cases occur, in which ignorance must be soon detected, such as in luxations,



fractures, and accidents, which require an operation. When, in the former cases, patients are often disposed to receive, as gospel, the directions, and swallow with confidence the medicines that are administered to them, without a supposition that those who prescribe them are equally ignorant and illiterate. Those who are disposed to pursue the means, will find no difficulty in acquiring that information which is necessary to qualify a man for a well-informed practitioner. In London, there are as able professors in the different branches of medicine, anatomy, and surgery, as in any country whatever. There are many public hospitals, situated in different quarters of the metropolis, in which every practical information, both physical and surgical, may be received.

Those who have neglected to pursue these essential parts of medical erudition, however regularly they may have served an apprenticeship, can have no clear idea of the true nature of diseases; they will be liable to commit egregious blunders in  
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the treatment of them; and the smallest errors are sometimes productive of fatal consequences. There are many practitioners of this description who experience the confidence of mankind; because mankind, in general, are not competent judges, whether the practitioner they employ, is a man of real abilities. And it sometimes happens, that they get into an extensive practice; while others, who have spared neither pains, nor expence, to acquire every requisite kind of knowledge, and are truly ingenious, do not meet with the same encouragement, which from their merit and abilities, they are entitled to expect. This is an incontrovertible fact, and serves to prove how little inquisitive people are in general, respecting the education of those with whom they entrust their health and lives.

Having advanced so far on the subject of Quackery, it will probably be expected that I should propose some plan for removing this evil. But I fear it is an evil, too deeply rooted, to be easily eradicated; nor can it be effected, unless a regulation



is established among the regular practitioners.

If a law was enacted, that no person whatever, should be permitted to practice physic and surgery, but those who have been examined by proper persons appointed for that purpose, from whom they should receive certificates of their qualifications;—that severe fines, and penalties, should be inflicted on every person who should presume to practice without such a privilege;—that persons should be employed, from time to time, to inspect each respective parish, who should make regular reports, and lodge an information against every one who should attempt to practice without having received a certificate of their qualifications; it might perhaps be attended with the best of consequences, and save the lives of many of his Majesty's subjects.

The College of Physicians of London, are the guardians of medicine in this kingdom, and are the best judges who are, or are not, qualified for practising  
this



this science, of so much importance to society. If a certain number of this learned and respectable body, were to examine every person (in the English language \*) who was to practice in the capacity of an apothecary, before they were permitted to prescribe remedies for diseases ; and, were the Company of Surgeons to suffer no person to practise any branch of surgery, as well without †, as within the bills of mortality

\* I mention the English language, because those who are admitted as fellows and licentiates of the college, are examined in Latin. And though a person may be qualified to answer any practical question in his own native language, yet he may not be sufficiently conversant with Latin to answer such questions proposed to him in that language.

† Those without the Bills of Mortality, are permitted to practice surgery, and are not summoned to be examined before the Court of Examiners of the Corporation of Surgeons. This, if I may take the liberty to say, I think requires some regulation, which, if put in force, might be productive of salutary effects. Doubtless there are, in the country, as well as London, some practitioners who are not sufficiently informed, and who may be sent for in many cases and accidents, which require immediate assistance, and where the fate of the patient depends on the skill of  
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tality, except those who have been examined, and received a testimony of their being qualified, from the Court of Examiners, very salutary benefits would be derived to mankind from such a regulation: errors, and abuses in medicine, of so pernicious a tendency, would be removed; the institution of medical practice would be secured on an equitable foundation, and many lives would be preserved from falling sacrifices, through ignorant and rash pretenders.

As public utility is my sole view in writing these sheets, I should therefore be concerned, if I thought that my intention should be misconstrued, so as to be supposed an advocate for cruelty and oppression.—This is so far from being the case; that, on the contrary, compassion, and a fellow-feeling for the sufferings of others, have influenced me to endeavour

the surgeon. For, in some parts of the country, a consultation cannot be so readily procured as in London, and the patient may perish; who, if proper assistance had been afforded him, might have been preserved.



to warn mankind of the risk they are exposed to, by having their diseases treated by unskilful persons.

I have not the vanity to expect, that my sentiments, on this subject, will meet with the concurrence of every one that may be disposed to peruse this pamphlet. I am aware that advocates for quackery, in this country, are numerous; from these I do not expect the most liberal sentiments. There are many credulous persons who will readily resign up their understanding, and become dupes to the most illiterate knaves. And there is not an instance in which the truth of this remark appears more plausible than in quackery.—Such persons will readily condemn and ridicule the sentiments of a man that does not coincide with their own favourite system, without considering, if what he has advanced, is consistent with reason and truth, or not. I flatter myself, however, that these sheets will fall into the hands of some who will judge of their contents more candidly, and conclude more rationally, and whose friendly ad-



monitions may induce many to avoid this snare.

Perhaps the reader will consider me too prolix on this subject ; but before I conclude. shall only add, that though I have presumed to publish my thoughts on a subject which I consider of so interesting a nature, I have no self-interested views ; all I aim at, is to endeavour to induce mankind to avoid a nest of profligate cheats, who are void of every principle of honour, honesty, and remorse of conscience ; who are actually ignorant of the profession they presume to practice, who not only defraud people of their money, but ruin their constitutions, and shorten the lives of many ; who often receive large premiums, when they deserve to be hanged. In short, the numbers they massacre in a year, are truly a national evil ; and I will venture to affirm, that if empiricism was abolished, many lives would be yearly preserved, who fall victims to their rash and erroneous practice.

As this pamphlet is designed for the perusal of the public at large, I have endeavoured



deavoured, through the whole of it, to express myself in a clear intelligible manner. Where I have added a technical term, I have attempted to explain it; whether or not I have effected this, I will leave the reader to determine.

F I N I S .

ERRATA. *Page 6, line 18, for Pleuresy, read Pleurisy.*



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LONDON: Printed by J. B. Nichols, in Pall-mall.







