

Medical essays / [John Armstrong].

Contributors

Armstrong, John, 1709-1779.

Publication/Creation

London : For T. Davies, 1773.

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/zkjspfdb>

License and attribution

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

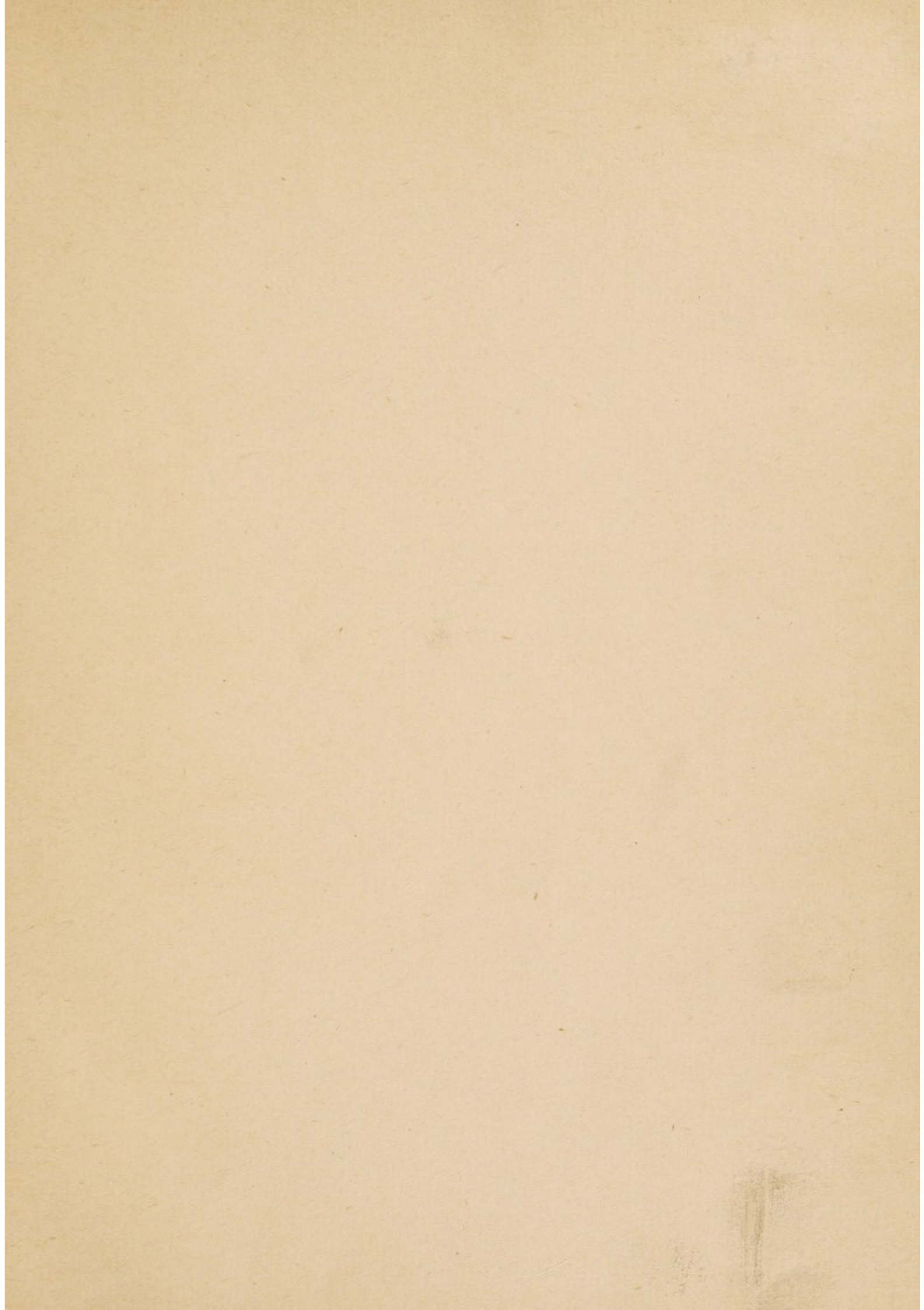
You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.




Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

Suppl

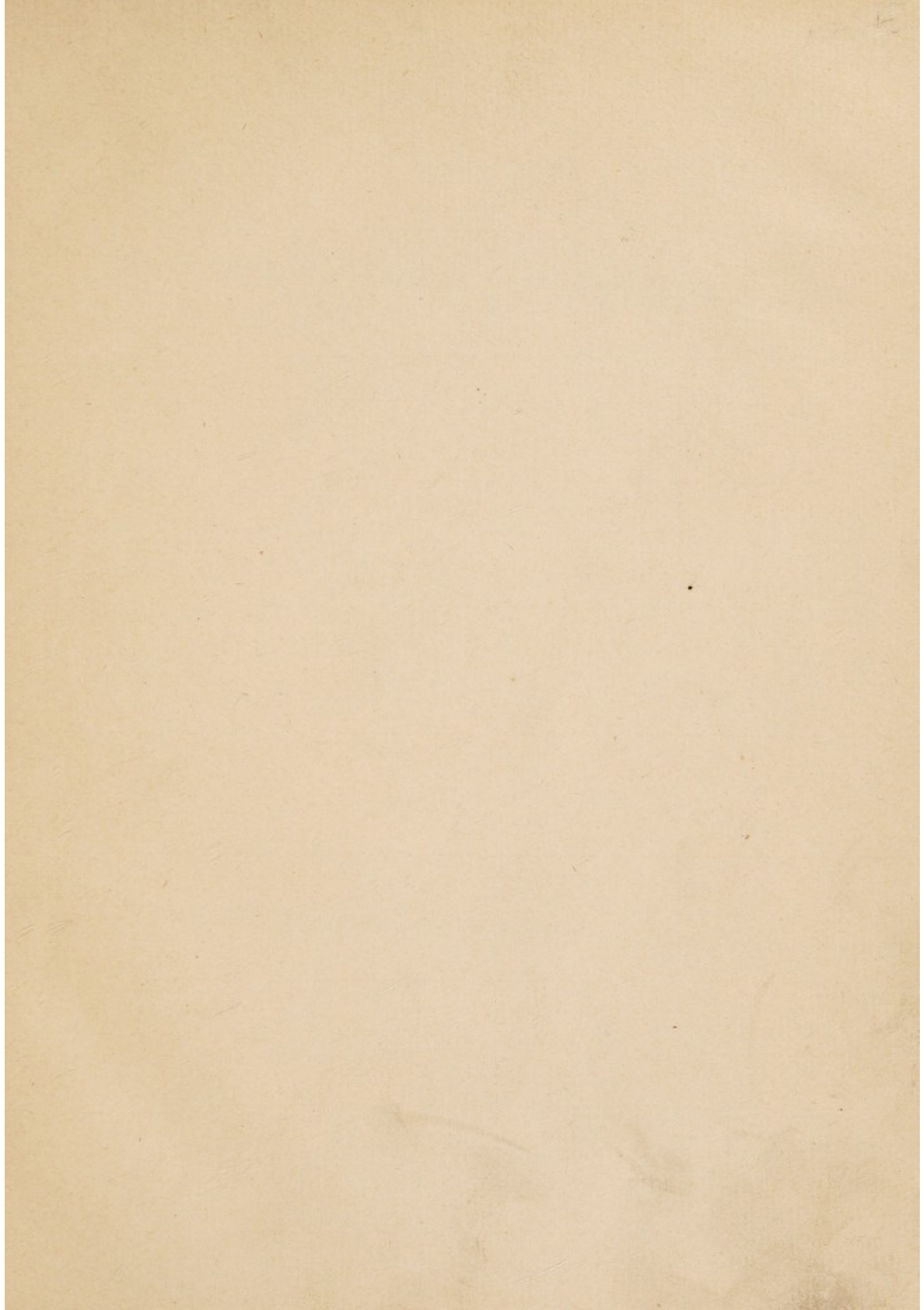
ARMSTRONG, J.
c

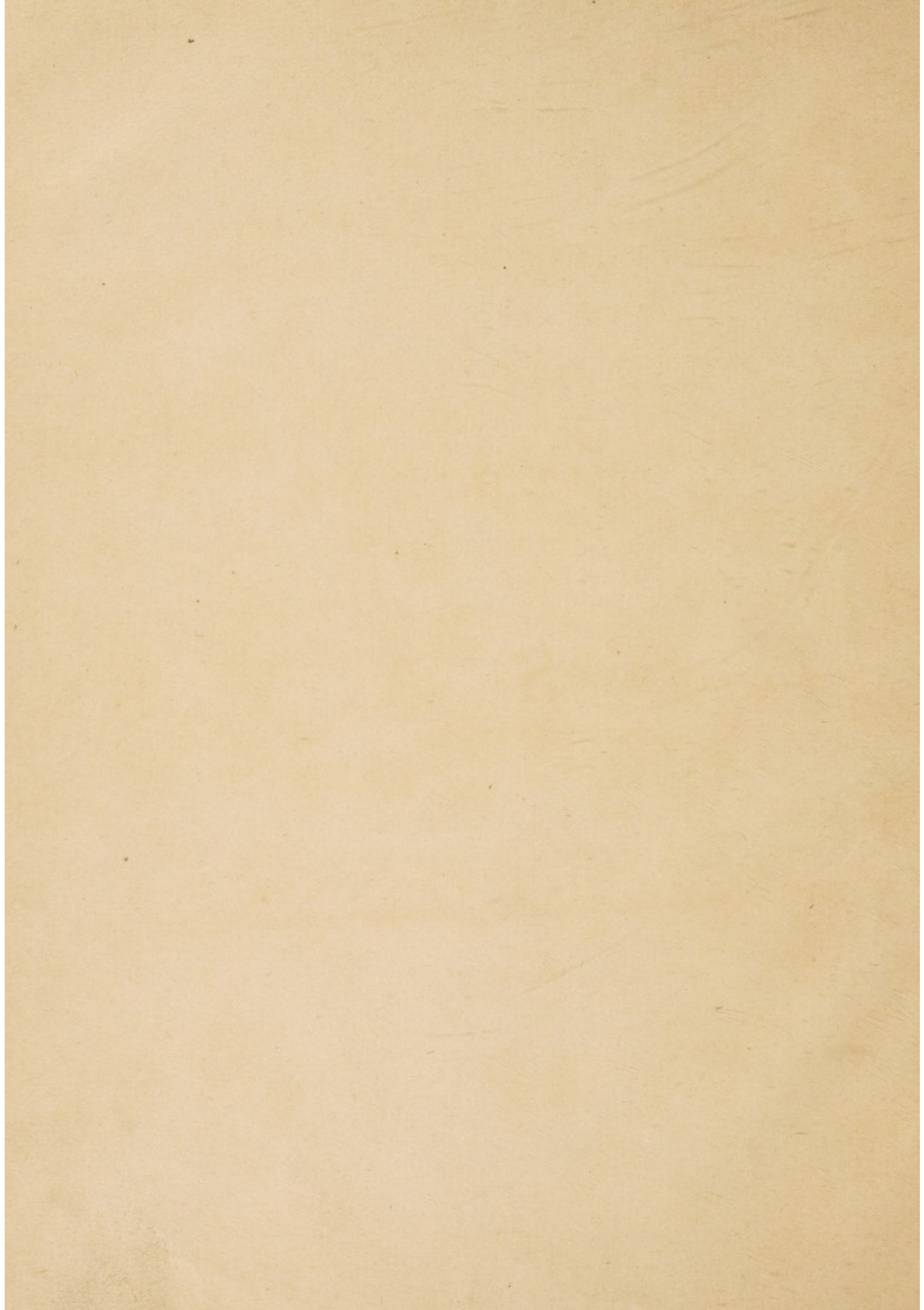


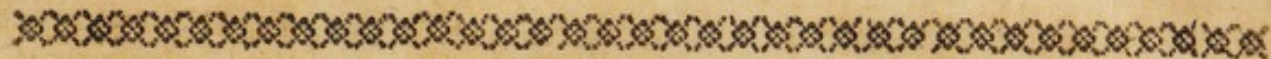


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b30409305>

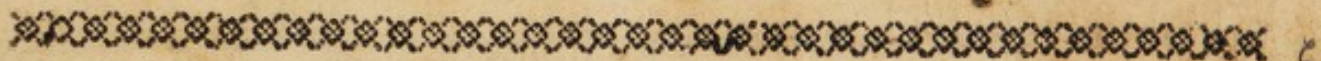






M E D I C A L

E S S A Y S.



MEDICAL

ESSAYS

MEDICAL ESSAYS.

BY

JOHN ARMSTRONG, M.D.
PHYSICIAN TO HIS MAJESTY'S ARMY.



L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR T. DAVIES, RUSSEL-STREET, COVENT-GARDEN;
BOOKSELLER TO THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

M.DCC.LXXIII.

1st edn.

MEDICAL ESSAYS

JOHN ARMSTRONG M.D.
PHYSICIAN TO THE MOUNTAIN ASYLUM

312522



LONDON:
PRINTED FOR T. DAVIES, ROSS STREET, COVENT GARDEN.
BOOKSELLER TO THE ROYAL SOCIETY.

C O N T E N T S.

ESSAY I.	Of Theory	Page 1
ESSAY II.	Of the Instruments of Physick	6
ESSAY III.	Of Fevers	9
ESSAY IV.	Of a few capital Remedies in Fevers ; and first of Bleeding	13
ESSAY V.	Some Observations on Bleeding	16
ESSAY VI.	Of Blistering	19
ESSAY VII.	<i>Indicatio Vitalis</i> : Or, of Cordials in Fevers	20
ESSAY VIII.	Of Ventilation and Fresh Air in Fevers	22
ESSAY IX.	Of Bathing in Fevers	25
ESSAY X.	Of Longings in Fevers	29
ESSAY XI.	Some Thoughts on the Gout and Rheumatism	32

CONTENTS

Page 1	Chapter I. Of Theory
2	Chapter II. Of the Instruments of Physics
3	Chapter III. Of Powers
4	Chapter IV. Of a few special Questions in Physics
5	Chapter V. Some Observations on Breathing
6	Chapter VI. Of Breathing
7	Chapter VII. Of the Pulse: Of the Arteries
8	Chapter VIII. Of Ventilation and Warm Air
9	Chapter IX. Of Breathing in Pivers
10	Chapter X. Of Lungs in Pivers
11	Chapter XI. Of the Lungs in the Goat and
12	Chapter XII. Of the Lungs in the Horse



MEDICAL ESSAYS.

ESSAY I.

Of THEORY.

THE flow progress which the art of physick has made from what may be called its commencement under *Hippocrates* to this present day, through a period of above two thousand years, has in a great measure been owing to the vanity natural to mankind. Instead of attending to the various shapes of diseases, and observing what remedies or methods of practice have been found the most effectual towards removing or relieving them; most writers upon the art of physick, especially amongst the moderns, have amused themselves with accounting for the

B

phæno-

phænomena of the animal œconomy, of diseases, and the operation of medicines: — to observe distinctly, with sufficient attention and accuracy; and to reason judiciously from observation, is as much as the human faculties should ever aspire at in the practice of physick.

Why should you teize and puzzle yourself to account for every thing in nature, like *Aristotle* or *Des Cartes*? You never can any more than they, or even *De Buffon* himself. You lose that time, those years, which should be devoted to severe observation, in hunting after such knowledge as you never can attain; and would probably be of little use if you could. The simple curs that run barking after the wild birds of heaven, are not much wiser than such philosophers.

A plausible theory is amusing to young people. To them it is even a laudable amusement; as it presents them with a systematical view of diseases, which they study with the more pleasure and attention, that they suppose themselves so far able to account for the mysteries of nature. But no man of sense, and such only can ever be a good physician, will long amuse himself with the theory after engaging in the practice of the art. Yet how ridiculously have some celebrated writers wandered through different roads in a desert of dreams and
con-

conjectures, in search of a knowledge inaccessible to the human powers, and useless to mankind?

What puzzling pains, for instance, have been taken to account for the secretions made by the different glands from the general mass of blood! --- A new sect of physicians, who explained all the phenomena of the animal œconomy by the application of mathematicks, appeared towards the latter end of the last century. They made a great noise, and for some times theirs was the only philosophy; but for want of a solid foundation it soon tumbled, and will hardly ever raise its head again. Those mechanical physicians very *ingeniously* discovered, that the various secretions performed by the different glands, were owing to the different angles at which their arteries were detached from the *Aorta*. That by the various directions of those arteries, the lighter or more ponderous, the mild or acrid, the balsamick or effœete particles of the blood, were determined into the glands which separate each a particular fluid from the common mass through its sieve-like fabrick; which in this or that gland transmits only the spherical or cubical or triangular or conical or cylindrical or pyramidal or paralelopipedal particles of the blood. Here you see the whole mystery of glandular secretion explained at once. But you are as wide of the matter as ever for all that. You may puzzle yourself and blunder as long

as

as you please about the anatomical apparatus of secretion, the laws of hydraulics, and heaven knows what, to no kind of purpose; except indeed, what is not to be despised, that your sage and important *discoveries* may be received with great edification and applause by thousands of gaping admirers. For my part, I am humbly of opinion, that every gland has an occult, a kind of magical power, inexplicable to the human faculties, of *transforming* the blood which passes through its fabrick into this or that particular humour. A power as little to be explained or conceived by us, as the mechanical structure by which the numberless variety of plants from the same mass of earth and water produces whatever is fragrant or fœtid, nutritious, medicinal, or poisonous.

So much for glandular secretion. But here is a discovery of the utmost importance, --- the circulation of the blood, --- a real discovery, an indisputable truth. Yet to what purpose? What improvement has the practice of physick received from this discovery? I believe, very little. For I suppose, that long before this great discovery was *completed*, the cutting of an artery was known to be much more dangerous than the opening of a vein. What advantageous effects have been derived from this discovery to the art of curing diseases? I am afraid, very few. For the practice of the ancient physicians,

as

as far as the circulation of the blood is concerned, you would think must have been built upon the same reasoning as if they had been perfectly acquainted with it.

To account for the operation of medicines has long been another object of impertinent and absurd curiosity. --- Pray, how far would you go this way, if you could? Is it not sufficient to know that rhubarb and jalap will purge, and ipecacuana vomit? You never will in this world discover by what means; any more than how sleep is procured by opium; which would be a great blessing indeed, if it failed as seldom in giving comfortable repose as the common purges and emeticks do in their different provinces. It is surely enough for the physician to know the natural and usual effects of the materials he employs: and the art of physick might by this time have been more advanced than it is, if its professors had constantly attached themselves to observation and cautious experiment; instead of losing time in the vain pursuit of such knowledge, such mysteries as lie beyond the reach of the human powers; and into which all our attempts to penetrate are absurd. In short, to explain the phænomena of nature beyond a certain line, we must humbly return to the honest, ancient, ineffectual expedient of *occult qualities*.

ESSAY II.

Of the INSTRUMENTS of PHYSICK.

THE great instruments of physick, exclusive of diet, exercise, and other articles of regimen; are evacuations by bleeding, vomiting, and blistering; evacuations by increasing the natural discharges; and a few capital specifick medicines, such as opium, mercury, antimony, and the Pervuian bark. It is indeed probable, that nature, consistent with her perpetual benignity, has produced a specifick cure for every disease: but it will cost the attention and experience of many thousand years, in proportion to the small advances that have hitherto been made in this part of science, to complete it.

In the mean time there are many reasons for supposing the most violent catharticks and emeticks, and even some poisons, in small doses, the best alteratives: and as *their* number is by no means extravagant, they are more naturally objects of enquiry and experiment than the infinite variety of forage, for the most part esculent, that covers the surface of the earth. The small progress that
has

has hitherto been made in this part of physick, has in some measure been owing to the absurd vanity and quackery of mixing a variety of materials in the same powder, electuary, bolus or decoction ; things that may perhaps counteract one another ; and if any good follows, it must be a matter of doubt to which ingredient it is to be ascribed. In prescribing simples with whose powers you are already acquainted, you can often add something that may assist their operation, or correct some disagreeable quality attending them : but in trying a new medicine, which is only or chiefly to be done in the hospitals, compounding is absurd.

After all, the few capital medicines with which we are acquainted, have been discovered by chance ; to which we owe almost all valuable discoveries of whatever kind.

I cannot conclude this article of the instruments of physick, without taking notice of one that has for many years in this part of the world been in universal use. I mean the saline draught or mixture ; which I take to be an excellent medicine, as it is commonly used in almost all fevers, and can hardly ever do much harm in any. Its neutral powers make it tolerably safe in such hands as are not to be trusted with sharp tools : and as far as a fever is to be ripened by time to its crisis, such

a harmless composition will seldom counter-act the friendly efforts of nature. At the same time it may occasionally be used as a not disagreeable vehicle to medicines of greater efficacy.

ESSAY

ESSAY III.

Of FEVERS.

THE most frequent as well as the most fatal of all the acute diseases that have in the present age infested this part of Great Britain, are those low languid fevers, which according to different symptoms are called nervous, or putrid, or malignant. Nervous, putrid, bilious, petechial or miliary, they are all of the malignant family; and in this great town these are almost the only fevers that have for many years prevailed, and do still, to the great destruction of mankind. For, inflammatory fevers, or those which attend an inflammation of some internal part; whether the lungs, the pleura, the diaphragm, the stomach, or any other of the viscera, have for many years been remarkably rare; and have evidently given way to some of a more formidable and untractable kind.

In those low torpid fevers, the vital powers are below the standard of good health. The fever is not in any measure owing to a redundant quantity of generous blood; but to its fretful acrimony, which so far from being corrected, is rather increased by diminishing its
D quantity.

quantity. --- A loss which nature in those cases does not easily bear.

The blood in these fevers is generally florid, and of a loose consistence ; such as it appears in hysterical and maniacal disorders. The pulse has nothing of that firm fullness which is always to be wished for in a fever. In short, in these kind of fevers the solids seem for the most part relaxed into an indolent inactive state, and the blood deprived of its wholesom balsamick degree of viscosity ; as in the inflammatory fevers it errs upon the opposite extreme.

The inflammatory fevers, in which the *vis vitæ* is above the standard of perfect health, are for the most part easily manageable ; provided bleeding to a proper degree, and a cooling diluting regimen, is used from the beginning. This method I believe will seldom fail of success ; except when the inflammation has fixed itself upon some part, suppose it the lungs, that happens to be naturally weak, or has suffered from some accident, or some former shock ; or is attended with some particular malignity. For it is no very difficult affair to moderate nature when the disease arises from a greater quantity of rich blood, and a more violent activity of the solids, than consists with good health. But, to support nature, or the vital powers, oppress'd and sunk under

under an enfeebling poison ; which seems to be the case in those low dejecting fevers attended with an insuperable langour, owing very likely to a septic spirit, a deleterious *Gas* in the melted blood, advancing towards the state of putrefaction, is a different affair. Sometimes these torpid fevers, in which that insuperable weakness and prostration of strength is a constant symptom, are so contagious, and throw out such eruptions upon the skin, as to emulate the genuine plague itself ; to which they are hardly, if at all inferior in malignity.

Our fevers, excepting the small-pox, the measles, and some intermittents, partaking it would seem of the irregularity of the climate, have seldom any critical days that the most attentive physician can either foresee or perceive ; but abate by insensible degrees, and without any such critical evacuations as at once discharge the concocted materials of the disease. Here, in the common run of fevers, you dare seldom presage on what day a crisis either salutary or fatal will happen. Whereas the physicians who practised above two thousand years ago in Greece, could tell from the appearances of to-day what would happen the second, the third, or the fourth day hence. Whether the fevers in ~~these~~ parts *o* are as regular now as they must have been then, is a very natural object of curiosity. Meantime, the physicians

ficians in the north-west parts of Europe are in the right to be cautious in prognosticating the event of a fever. Especially as it sometimes happens that, in a fever, while the pulse is good, the tongue moist and clean, while not one alarming circumstance appears, not even what is called the *pathognomonick* sign of a fever --- a quick pulse --- the patient tells you he is a dying ; which he knows by some sensations not to be communicated. And generally after the first impulse of what one may call these mortal warnings, he has not many hours to live.

ESSAY IV.

Of a few CAPITAL REMEDIES in FEVERS.

And first of BLEEDING.

IN all inflammatory fevers, bleeding to such a degree as the patient can bear it, is the chief remedy. And in all inflammations of the internal parts there is no safety in any medicines or regimen whatever without plentiful bleeding---tho' some pretend that pleurifies may be cured by the use of the feneca rattle-snake root alone. For my part I have no experience of it; and should not chuse in such cases to trust to it, or any other medicine, alone. But if it prevents the fatal effects of that rapid and most violent poison, it must probably be good for some other medical purposes; and seems to deserve the particular notice of the hospital physicians.

In inflammatory fevers the sooner that plentiful bleeding is used the better. Boerhaave, if I don't mistake, says, that in the pleurisy it is too late to bleed after the fourth day, with any hopes of preventing a suppuration of the parts inflamed. Notwithstanding the authority of that great man, to whose abilities and industry the world is much obliged, the very first time

E

I saw

I saw a pleurisy I ventured at once to draw off ten or twelve ounces of blood; tho' the patient, a strong labouring man, in the vigour of life, was now in the fifth day of the fever. This evacuation had so good an effect, that I repeated it according to the best of my judgment till all the symptoms of the disease were gone; and the patient was soon restored to perfect health. --- Upon considering this subject, it is natural to lament what numbers in the bloom of life have died of consumptions, which might easily have been prevented by judicious and timely bleeding.

Meantime great mischief has been done by bleeding in supposed pleurisies. A worthy gentleman, who had for many years served his country with great reputation and success, in a very eminent station at a foreign court, some few years ago came over to England in a valetudinary state of health. His chief complaints were loss of appetite, flatulencies, and irregularities in the discharges of the *primæ viæ*; which he dated from the time that he had several years before been *long* ill of a pleurisy. Upon enquiring into the history of this *pleurisy*, it appeared to have been a fix'd pain in the side, without either fever, or cough, or oppression in breathing; in short, that it could have been nothing but a rheumatick stitch, which might very probably have been removed by once cupping and blistering upon the part; instead of the repeated bleedings, which had brought
on

on those chronical complaints that not long since proved fatal to him.

But, without the least pretence to bleed from pains not at all inflammatory; where, except in case of a *plethora*, or sometimes of violent spasms, bleeding at the best never does any good; much mischief has been done by the injudicious, undistinguishing use of this evacuation: which is never neutral or indifferent; but where it does no good, can hardly ever fail to do mischief. The first thing that is commonly done in a fever, is to let blood. --- If the patient is nothing better next day, if even worse perhaps for his loss of blood the day before, the bleeding is repeated --- because it is a fever. And it is the most common of all fatal blunders, that in fevers, before the physician is called, the patient has been reduced by frequent bleeding to a state of languor and weakness, from which it is impossible for all the power of physick to recover him. For it is not every apothecary, no nor every doctor neither, that knows when bleeding is proper, when not. The fevers that have for many years prevailed the most in this great town, are of the low lingering kind, which hardly bear once bleeding. And tho' things of this nature are by no means to be compared by the strict rules of calculation, I am positive it is talking very much within bounds to say that many more Englishmen dye by the lancet at home, than by the sword abroad.

ESSAY V.

Some OBSERVATIONS upon BLEEDING.

BLEEDING with the lancet is commonly the first thing done in all sudden complaints : and indeed very properly in most accidents from contusion ; as in blows, falls, and all wounds where the discharge of blood is inconsiderable.

In these, as well as in all inflammatory cases, this operation ought to be performed by a large incision ; and in inflammatory fevers, for the first time at least, especially when the patient is young and vigorous, the discharge should be continued till he swoons away, or is near fainting ; which will much more readily happen from the loss of a few ounces discharged suddenly, and in a few seconds, than of a large quantity drawn off slowly by a small orifice in several minutes ; and the desired effect will be more considerable, at a much smaller expence of blood. In slow hæmorrhages what incredible quantities of blood are sometimes discharged without the least disposition to grow faint ? For as the blood ebbs off slowly, the vessels by their elasticity have time to collapse in proportion, so as to continue constantly full ; and the circulation proceeds without interruption.

ruption. But when even a small quantity of blood is hastily drawn off, and as it were at one gush, the blood-vessels are in a manner taken at a surprise; they have not time to contract themselves so as to prevent some degree of inanition; the action and re-action between the solids and fluids is suspended, the heart for a while ceases to move, and the circulation stops. Meantime, the seat of the inflammation, the obstructed arteries, are relieved from the pressure and violent motion of the blood. These discharges repeated in proportion to the violence of the disease and strength of the patient, the fever inseparable from an inflammation subsides; the blood becoming thinner after every bleeding and less impetuous, the obstructed capillaries, which without thus moderating the force of the blood must either have been melted down along with their contents in a suppuration, or suddenly torn to pieces by the violent motion of acrimonious blood, so as to produce a gangrene, are by degrees cleared of their barrs, and the inflammation is cured by a kindly solution.

To end this article of bleeding---If the blood that sprung freely from a large orifice, after it is cooled, appears either florid and of a loose consistence, or of a slimy mucilaginous texture, hold your hand; for in general there is more harm than good to be expected from repeated bleedings where the blood shews such

Y A 22 H F appearances.

appearances. But the physician must here be directed besides, by the pulse, the age and strength of the patient, the violence of the disease, and the apparent effects whether good or bad of a former bleeding.

ESSAY VI.

Of BLISTERING

AS far as my observation goes, blistering is of very little use by way of *stimulus* to the circulation in low fevers; even where attended with nervous symptoms, where generally the most is expected from it. In those cases it teizes and plagues the patient seldom to much purpose. But in a catarrhus fever a blister between the shoulders often gives great relief; as also in a pleurisy, after cupping upon the part affected.

It is not the fashion to blister upon the breast, the stomach, or the abdomen; but it is highly probable that many severe and dangerous complaints of the viscera contained in those parts might be greatly relieved if not removed by blistering upon them. At least it might be worth while to try such an experiment; especially as there is nothing hazardous in it.

ESSAY VII.

Indicatio Vitalis :

Or, of CORDIALS in FEVERS.

IN those most pernicious fevers, some of which are hardly less formidable than the plague itself; the spirits are sunk, the patient is sad, dejected, and labours under an insuperable weakness. These circumstances naturally indicate the use of spiritous and cordial medicines; such as the volatile salts, the warmest aromatics, some of the most subtile and exalted animal substances, combined sometimes with the great cordial opium. But wine and other fermented liquors I reckon the most effectual of all cordials in those fevers; as they not only by a comfortable *stimulus* promote the circulation, and as powerful antisepticks resist putrefaction; but at the same time as they supply the vapid juices with materials easily assimilated into those most subtile, generous, nutritious fluids by which life is supported.

The choice of these liquors is to be determined by the patient's taste and inclination, and the symptoms attending the fever. For according to these, either
some

some astringent wine, or some opening malt liquor, or cyder, or perry, or mead, may deserve the preference. As to the quantity, it must be directed partly by the patient's inclination too, and his habit of living when in health. I have often in those fevers, and to people habitually sober, allowed a quart or three pints of strong Madeira in different shapes every twenty-four hours; and have found that quantity, or sometimes more, necessary to support them through a low lingering fever, which I am persuaded they could not otherways have weathered out.

I have many times found very happy effects in low torpid fevers from bathing the feet in hot water, and afterwards fomenting them with hot wine, or with spirit of wine. Any thing warm or hot applied to the extremities promotes the languid circulation of the blood. Wine, or fermented liquors of any kind, applied hot to those parts, drank up by the absorbent vessels of the skin, re-inforce the blood with generous spirits. And where it is perhaps impossible for the fastidious patient to swallow any thing either nutritious or cordial, the vapid and effœte blood may by these means be supplied from time to time with fresh spirits; till at last the creeping fever is subdued by the superior vigour of nature.

ESSAY VIII.

Of VENTILATION and FRESH AIR in FEVERS.

A Constant circulation of fresh air is so necessary, so important in fevers, and all feverish disorders, that it ought to be particularly considered in the construction of all houses. It would be well if, in all the apartments of every house, but more especially in the bed-chambers, the upper sashes of every window were contrived to let down. For by this means the admission of fresh air would at all times be perfectly safe, except during a raw damp foggy night; as the body, even while under such a sweat as could not without danger be interrupted, may receive all the refreshing, restorative, and invigorating influences of the air, without being exposed to a stream of it. Meantime, where this convenience is wanting, the best method to supply it is by drawing the bed-curtains close now and then for a few minutes at a time; while a free passage is made to the foul air by opening the doors and windows.

The great importance of fresh air in fevers is not sufficiently considered. The worst fevers, those that approach the nearest to the pestilence, might very probably
be

be produced in a very short time by cramming a number of people in perfect health into a close room. The noxious vapours that fill a sick room, especially in some fevers, are not only offensive but dangerous to those who continue in it for any time. If dangerous to people in health, how detrimental must they be to one oppressed and struggling under an enfeebling disease; and ready to expire with insuperable langours! --- It is a common thing in a campaign to distribute the sick soldiers, amongst whom these malignant fevers prevail, in open barns; where the putrid volatile poison is in a short time dissipated. And in such situations it is surprising how soon they find a relief from the most threatening symptoms; and recover from circumstances which had they been carefully shut up in a close room must have proved fatal.

This subject naturally enough leads me to consider the article of cleanliness; which is surely of great consequence in fevers of every kind. Apprehensions of catching cold from shifting have too long prevailed in the management of the sick in fevers. But surely nothing can be more absurd than this delicate fear of clean linnen. When the body is oppressed and enfeebled with a dangerous fever, it is taking part with the disease to expose it to reorb the noxious *effluvia* which nature had kindly discharged; and whose virulent acrimony,
by

by irritating the skin, increases or often rather occasions that restlessness which is one of the most distressful and most disadvantageous symptoms of a fever. But I hope it is needless to enlarge upon the inconveniences and dangers of nastiness. At least I'll venture to say, that there is never any danger in clean linnen, provided it is perfectly dry, and put on warm.

ESSAY IX.

Of BATHING in FEVERS.

AS the advantages of fresh air in fevers are not generally considered with due attention; as this universal cordial of nature, without which we cannot live one moment, is even very scrupulously admitted to the sick when they need it the most; it is no wonder that the cold bath has all this time been so little thought of as a febrifuge. Yet *cool* and *cold* I take to be two capital antisepticks; and where *fresh air* is not sufficient, *cold water* may be worth trying, or at least considering.

It is a common practice amongst the *Russians* to go out of a hot room all in a sweat and throw themselves into the snow; with a view of tempering their bodies like steel, and rendering them more hardy. In some parts of *North-America*, according to *Charlevoix*, it is usual for the natives to plunge into the river when they find themselves ill of a fever. And there are instances at home of people in a fever who having escaped from their nurses had plunged into the snow; to which, very possibly, they owed their recovery. It happens

H

very

very often in fevers, that the sick become so impatient of confinement, that it is next to impossible to keep them in bed. One would not directly consider this as a hint from nature in favour of the cold bath. But, it seems to be no bad reason for gradually indulging the gasping and almost suffocated patient in all the luxuries of fresh air that can safely be admitted.

But suppose such hints as these could recommend experiments of this practice in fevers; what physician will hazard his reputation upon their success? Such trials could not with propriety be set on foot but by the authority and support of the legislature; as the most proper objects of such experiments are naturally those unhappy creatures who have forfeited their lives for trifling thefts and bloodless robberies.

In most fevers that are not inflammatory it appears that the solids are in a state of relaxation. The grand febrifuge, the *Peruvian* bark, is generally supposed to operate by bracing and strengthening the solids. Where this fails, why should not the cold bath, as a still more powerful remedy of the same kind, be tried? Especially where there are no particular reasons to apprehend any tender debility, or obstructions in the inward parts; in which last case the bark too is generally avoided. Meantime, in using the cold bath as a febrifuge, it would
be

be highly necessary, by a sufficient quantity of some generous cordial, to fortify and support the vital powers, against a shock whose consequence must be considered as very doubtful, till its success has been ascertained by a great number of experiments. And where any particular danger is apprehended from the weight and pressure of the water upon the surface, forcing more than their common portion of blood all at once upon unsound or too tender viscera; all the purposes that are to be expected from immersion by promoting the oscillatory motions of the fibrous system, or by the application of the cold element as an antiseptick, may be attained by squirting the body over with cold water, either fresh or salt, or spunging it hastily with whatever degree of friction may be proper. Any person of a turn to mechanicks could easily contrive an apparatus by which these operations might be ^{readily} ~~easily~~, conveniently, and safely performed. And by such means perhaps all the advantages to be expected from the cold bath in fevers, might be procured without either real danger, or the shocking apprehensions of it from the formidable circumstance of plunging.

In inflammatory fevers this practice to be sure is quite out of the question; for no man in his senses would ever think of using the cold bath in any shape, when the vital powers are already too violent. One
would

would not be in a hurry to try the hot, or even the warm bath, in those fevers. But there are fevers of the low kind in which they might probably be used with some success. Warm, or hot baths, impregnated with aromack vegetables, with spiritous and fermented liquors, amongst which I include vinegar, seem to be very proper objects of experiment in such cases.

For my part, I have no experience of the use of baths either cold, hot, or warm, of sea, salt, or fresh water, in any kind of fevers. But there can at least be no great harm in pointing out a field, that as far as fevers are concerned, and our intelligence extends, has hitherto lain almost intirely neglected; tho' very possibly it might be cultivated to some advantage.

ESSAY X.

Of LONGINGS in FEVERS.

ALL animals are directed by their various appetites to the food that suits them the best. And in the human race, which lives upon every thing eatable, I reckon the taste the most infallible guide as to the choice or wholesom fare. There are no general observations without exceptions, but here I believe there are few; and those so very obvious to the notice of every individual, that his own experience will soon teach him that tho' he *likes* milk or honey, they don't agree with him.

In all diseases, but chiefly in fevers, the utmost attention ought to be paid to the appetite; especially if it amounts to what is properly called a longing. If the patient longs for a draught of wine, punch, or beer, humour him for once; if for a draught of cold water, don't refuse it. The physicians of antient *Greece* used at the crisis of a fever to administer cold water in great quantities. Our fevers are in general so irregular, that it is seldom possible to calculate the critical day. Perhaps the patient's eagerness for something particular to

I eat

eat or drink, may be the principal or only notice you can have of it. If his fancy is indulged --- let it appear ever so extravagant --- if you gratify his longings, he is happy. From being restless and impatient for want of what he hankers after, and to what nature directs him, as soon as his eager demands are gratified, he commonly falls into a profound sleep, and the fever goes off in a kindly sweat.

It appears highly probable that this passionate appetite for something to eat or drink, coming on after the languid patient has perhaps for many days loathed all nourishment, proceeds from a salutary kind of instinct: by properly observing and humouring of which, nature exhausted and subdued is furnished with a fresh reinforcement of invigorating juices to push on the crisis, and support her under a sudden discharge of humours, which, peccant as they are, might prove a loss she could not otherways easily bear. Meantime, these cravings, however violent, ought always to be indulged with moderation and by degrees; that the languid flame of life may not be extinguished under a load of fresh fuel. --- As to a *false appetite*, it is a common phrase without any meaning; except when used in the case of a languid patient, who fancies he could eat some particular thing, and when it comes he can't touch it.

To conclude, I am of opinion that many have died of fevers for want of properly attending to those longings, and prudently indulging them. For, to balk them while nature is in a ticklish situation between life and death, and cannot bear the least disadvantage, may easily prove fatal. To amuse a poor exhausted creature, dying perhaps for a morsel of ham or smoak'd beef, with chicken water, or beef tea, is mortally tantalizing, and absurd to the last degree. Yet I have heard of such well meaning ill-judged severities; but never how far they have been practised without proving fatal.

After all, why so timid and scrupulous to indulge a raging appetite in such cases? --- Consider only to what longings for strange, and even what you would think, absurd things, the women are often subject during their pregnancy. For instance, what incredible quantities of strong liquors the most sober women have been known to swallow upon those occasions, without suffering the least degree of intoxication! --- If they are disappointed of what they long for, let it seem ever so whimsical or ridiculous, the common consequence is a miscarriage. And at the crisis of a formidable fever, where the balance is perhaps rather against the patient, may not the consequence of such a disappointment very naturally be death?

ESSAY XI.

Some THOUGHTS on the GOUT and RHEUMATISM.

NOTWITHSTANDING a doctrine that has long prevailed in the most celebrated schools of physick, that nothing acid exists in the human blood; I cannot help venturing to imagine, that an acrimony of that kind, call it if you please a sub-acid acrimony, may lye lurking in the gout: a disease that seems originally to spring from crudity, and an imperfect digestion of the aliments in the stomach.

Amongst other reasons that lead me to this opinion, or rather conjecture, one is that what is called the heart-burn, from an acid in the stomach, is a common complaint with people subject to the gout. --- Another, that the drinkers of strong stale beer, rough cyder, and other acid liquors, are the most liable to this disease. And in gouty people two or three glasses of punch, which from its composition cannot fail to be a very penetrating acid, are often within a few minutes felt in the joints.

This

This opinion, as far as it may deserve any notice, besides a particular attention to the condition of the stomach, and the other *organs* employed in the important office of digesting the crude aliments into good chyle, indicates an antacid diet, and medicines the most powerful in neutralising of acids, --- particularly the alkaline salts, whether fix'd or volatile.

But the most effectual subduer of all crudities, whether acid, acedent, or phlegmatic, in the first digestion or in the blood, is constant exercise, and a laborious life; which, except in the intervals, is impracticable to those who are already afflicted with this painful malady. Meantime, as it is easier to prevent a disease, than to cure it; a life of much exercise, with a particular regard to diet as to eating and drinking, is to be recommended to those who have reason to be apprehensive of any original disposition to gouty complaints: and it argues strongly in favour of an active laborious life towards preventing, if not curing, the gout, that it very rarely affects hard-working people.

The *Rheumatism*, tho' sometimes mistaken for the gout, is quite a different disease. The inflammatory rheumatism, attended with an acute fever, is to be managed, like other inflammatory diseases, with bleeding and a cool regimen. But there is a chronical rheuma-

tism, that shifts from joint to joint, from one part to another; and is perhaps the most universal of all the diseases endemick to this island. It commonly rages the most in cold, raw, damp weather, or when the wind is easterly; and towards the evening, and throughout the night. It gives intervals of ease without any regular periods, except in some rare cases, when it is to be treated as a tertian, or any other intermittent fever; and even when it fixes itself in the hip-joint, which one might call its citadel; as there it is more impregnable than any other situation; and sometimes has been known to remain obstinate for whole years against all the efforts of physick; the patient, I say, even in that case, who goes out lame in the morning, shall be able to walk home without the least pain in the afternoon. And these changes from pain to ease, and from ease to pain, are sometimes so sudden, and appear so unaccountable, that I have heard sensible people compare them to the supposed effects of witchcraft.

This wandering rheumatism, according to my observation, is particularly incident to those who are liable to a tormenting trifle, as one may call it; a crop of little fretful ulcers that from time to time break out on the inside of the cheeks, the lips, and about the tip and edges of the tongue. Those small blisters, which discharge nothing but a little acrid lymph, are
extremely

extremely painful; they are the most troublesome in raw damp weather, and when the wind is easterly; in the evening, and throughout the night. After a long or short teizing visit, they sometimes take an abrupt leave; and return again as unexpectedly as they went; according to the weather and other circumstances.

The dry piles is another tormenting complaint to which rheumatick people are often subject; and this sometimes, as well as those little ulcers in the mouth, rages alternately with fits of the rheumatism. This kind of piles is the most troublesome in hard dry weather from the east, or in a cold moist season; and is commonly the most violent in the night time while the patient lies abed.

To compare these observations; is it not probable enough that the same kind of excoriations, or little ulcers, that give so much pain in the inside of the mouth, are often upon the internal surface of the *rectum*, and particularly within the *sphincter ani*, the cause of the dry piles; and that the same kind of ulcers scattered about the ligaments, of the joints, and the sensible membranes that brace the muscles and tendons, may often be the cause of that wandering rheumatism, which sometimes proves so obstinate against all the common methods of practice?

The

The tooth-ach belongs to the rheumatism. Its attacks are the most frequent in cold damp weather, and are generally most violent in the night time. --- Dr. Arbuthnot, I believe it is in his book upon aliments, wishes he could account for the throbbing of a corn before rain, or in certain kinds of weather. --- Corns I take to be sprouts of the rheumatism, and not the offspring of mere pressure. They rage in the same kind of weather, the same time of the day, the evening, with the ulcers in the mouth; and give the same kind of burning pain with the chronical rheumatism.

A gentleman who had long been subject to fits of the wandering rheumatism, which had obliged him to leave off the use of punch; had at last, by a successful management, enjoyed such a long interval of ease, that he pleaded hard to be indulged in the moderate use of his favourite liquor: which was the more readily granted that it happened to be in the heat of summer. But he had only for a few weeks enjoyed this indulgence, when a corn pushed out on the bottom of the ball of the great toe, and was soon furrounded with a crop of small corns. It tormented him, he said, with the same kind of burning fretful pain he used to feel from the rheumatism; was the most troublesome towards the evening, and in the same kind of weather in which he used to find the rheumatick pains the most violent.

The

The great corn, with the circle of small excrescencies in which it was set, were destroyed by a gentle caustick. About the same time there arose an inflammatory tumour upon the flesh that borders the nail of one of the fingers ; out of which, soon after the inflammation had subsided, there came a hard round core, about as big as a grain of rape-seed ; which upon a part exposed to hard pressure, like the foot, would I suppose have become the *nucleus* of a corn.

But enough of this at present ; and what further observations or conjectures upon medical subjects the writer of these Essays may venture to expose to the public, must be deferred till he happens to be taken ill of another scribbling fit.

Meantime, he does not send out these little Essays by way of a Quack's bill. --- Upon honour he does not. --- For he has not the least inclination to extend his practice beyond the circle of a few friends and acquaintances ; amongst whom he commonly finds sufficient employment to secure him from the melancholy langour of idleness, and the remorse that in some minds must naturally haunt a life of dissipation. --- Tho' he could neither tell a heap of impudent lies in his own praise, wherever he went ; nor intrigue with nurses ; nor associate, much less assimilate, with the various knots of pert insipid, lively stupid, well-bred

impertinent, good-humoured malicious, obliging deceitful, washy, drivelling, Gossips; nor enter into *juntos* with people that were not to his liking; it will not appear a mighty boast to any one that is but moderately acquainted with this overgrown town to say, that he might have done *great things* in physick. --- Most certainly he could --- But that his Ambition had a great many years ago received a fatal check from a ticklish state of spirits, that made him afraid of a Business in which he found himself exposed to much anxiety, and a croud of teizing uncomfortable mortifying circumstances; to be encountered at all hours, and in every kind of weather. But for that distempered excess of sensibility he might have been as much renowned as almost any *Quack* --- notwithstanding even his having imprudently published a system of what every body allows to be sound Physick --- only indeed that it was in verse. However, it is well that some particular people never reckoned him the worse physician for all that. --- And, as it is become the fashion to praise ones self --- Tho' he does not say that *none of his patients die*; he has some reason to believe, that in proportion to numbers, whether from skill or good-luck, not many physicians have been more successful in the management of dangerous and difficult cases. --- Most probably indeed from good-luck; as he has never been
remark-

remarkable for it in any thing else. --- In the meantime he has heard that his character, as a physician, has been ungenerously nibbled at by people of his own profession; which he understands has had its intended effect upon some gentry, who it seems are too shallow in the knowledge of human nature, of mankind, and even of the world, to have observed that people of the same business are *sometimes* not very fond of one another; and that to be an object of detraction in such cases is no sign of inferior abilities. However, to comfort and support himself under the dark hints of such illiberal enemies; it is natural for him to recollect that there are *still some Gentlemen* of the faculty, who have candour and generosity enough amongst themselves to give him all reasonable credit, even as a physician. But the lies of malice are more listened to, and circulate much faster, than the fair reports of good-nature.

So much at present for his history as a Physician. --- As an Author too his fate has been somewhat particular. --- His having written a Poem upon a subject reckoned of no inconsiderable consequence to the health of mankind was, as some say, sufficient alone in this age and meridian, to have ruined him as a Physician. At the same time, from the treachery of one Bookseller after another, it is true enough what one of his friends guessed not long ago --- that tho' his works, as he called

called them, had *sold greatly*; he did not believe they had all together brought him near so much as has often been made by one play that deserved to have been damned.

To put an end to this detail of misfortunes and complaints, in which the public is very little interested -- That his long sufferance and contemptuous silence may not for ever, by the most muddy wits, be mistaken for an acquiescence in the *severe* decrees pronounced against him by certain *Criticks*; who in *monthly*, *weekly*, and *daily* publications instruct the reading world as to the merits of every new work that comes from the press; from a bloated motley history of *sbreds and patches*, that with much dignity and importance torpidly crawls out upon all four, to a dry chip of an ode, a *sad* elegy, or a *most lamentable* monody; he finds himself at last in the humour to *protest* against the *severe* reprehensions with which those *said criticks* have, from time to time, for many years grievously mortified and sorely afflicted him. It is true they have never, as far he knows, attacked him except with general abuse; which is just as much Criticism as calling names is Satire. --- But one needs only glance over a few specimens of their dry, barren, heavy labours, to discover that those ridiculous Dictators have neither taste, nor learning, nor candour. --- They are despised by all people of sense and taste. --- And
when

when they come to be dragged out of that cowardly obscurity under whose shelter, in the true black-guard spirit of the mob, they insult and throw dirt at their superiours; they will be hooted, hiss'd, and hallooed by the very multitude they have long misled, in recommending the worst, and abusing the best productions. This dim and dark constellation of Geniuses appears to be chiefly composed of raw young people of low education; who praise or condemn by the lump, as they are directed by their Masters *in the trade*, or their own malice and stupidity. And some say, that it is no uncommon thing with those *candid criticks* to pass sentence against a new performance, without the ceremony of giving it a few minutes poring perusal of a *lack-lustre eye*. --- Such are the *Criticks* who *modestly* pretend to dictate to the publick upon subjects of which themselves have not the least knowledge or taste. --- Such are the Judges who have usurped the vacant Tribunal of Criticism. --- But such Judges have in effect only constituted themselves THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF KING MIDASES BENCH.

The E N D.

when they seem to be dragged out of that cowardly
obscenity under whose shadow, in the true black-guard
spirit of the mob, they insult and throw dirt at their
superiors; they will be hooded, hilted, and hallooed by
the very multitude they have been misled, in recom-
mending the worst, and abusing the best productions.
This class and class of criticism appears to
be chiefly composed of raw young people of low educa-
tion; who tremble or condemn by the tongue, as they are
directed by their masters in the way, or their own malice
and stupidity. And some may think it is no uncommon
thing with these ready critics to pass sentence against
a new performance, without the ceremony of giving it a
few minutes quiet perusal of a few pages. Such
are the Critics who are wont to dictate to the
publick upon subjects of which themselves have not
the least knowledge or taste. Such are the Judges who
have assumed the vacant Tribunal of Criticism. But
such Judges have in effect only committed them-
selves to the Lord's Councils, or Lord's Misad-
ventures.

The END.

A
L E C T U R E
INTRODUCTORY TO THE
THEORY and PRACTICE
OF
M I D W I F E R Y.

L E C T U R E

INTRODUCTORY TO THE

THEORY AND PRACTICE

OF

M I D W I L L E R Y



