

**The oeconomy of quackery considered, in a reply to Mr. Spilsbury's pamphlet, entitled, Free thoughts on quacks and their medicines. To which is added, an answer to a surgeon's Letter to the Master, Wardens, and Court of Assistants, on their permitting aliens, apothecaries, and quacks, to encroach on the business of surgeons / [Thomas Prosser].**

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### **Publication/Creation**

London : J. Bew, 1777.

### **Persistent URL**

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THE  
OECONOMY of QUACKERY  
considered,  
In a REPLY to  
Mr. SPILSBURY'S PAMPHLET, &c.

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[ Price Two Shillings. ]

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In a REPLY to  
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ENTITLED,

*Free Thoughts on Quacks and their  
Medicines.*

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

An ANSWER to a Surgeon's Letter

TO THE

Master, Wardens, and Court of Assistants,

ON THEIR PERMITTING

Aliens, Apothecaries, and Quacks, to encroach  
on the Business of Surgeons.

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By THOMAS PROSSER.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for J. BEW, No. 28, PATER NOSTER ROW.

M D C C L X X V I I .



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MDCCLXXII.

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T H E

OECONOMY of QUACKERY  
considered, &c.

**I** NTEREST REIPUBLICÆ, COGNOSCI  
MALOS, said once the prince of orators,  
Mr. Spilsbury informs us, to a most  
august assembly; and INTEREST REIPUB-  
LICÆ, &c. said once the prince of quacks,  
to a most august assembly: \* — And, as *In-  
terest Reipublicæ, cognosci malos*, it shall be  
my endeavour now, in answer to Mr. Spils-  
bury, to lay open the evils (none of the least)  
accruing to the State from quacks, or adver-  
tisers of medicines; and as I am apprehensive  
we are yearly to lament the lives of many  
as fair characters, and as strict adherers to  
truth, by a certain fatal indemic disorder of

\* Mr. Spilsbury addresses his pamphlet to the Legis-  
lature in those words.



this country cut off ; yet what I shall say respecting them, will be with strict impartiality and candour. I will not deny but many good, many excellent medicines are advertised, as they are imitations of the compositions of the common dispensatories ; but yet are they an imposition on the public, in their paying for advertisements to inform them of secrets that every shop would supply at one tenth of the price ; and many of the advertised medicines are the same in substance and effect, though in different forms : and though many of them seem safe for people unacquainted with Physick to make use of, for disorders attended with no great danger, yet the most innocent are not incapable of doing mischief, for even the Scotch pills, *that never do any one harm*, have many times been known to give the piles. What then must be the consequence of the most active and powerful remedies, (that require a knowledge of the constitution of the patient, and of the nature and effect of the medicines, to render the use of them safe and serviceable) being indiscriminately, and consequently



quently often times improperly taken, but the removing, or the attempts to remove one disorder, the occasioning of a worse? And that this opinion is justly founded, I know many, too many proofs have happened amongst the takers of Norton's and Spilisbury's drops; and this must be the case with such things, in such manner made use of, until the time happens, when heat can be cold, and cold heat, and things which are as opposite in their natures alike: yet these are medicines recommended to the public as perfectly safe and harmless, for when were the advertisers known to give any exceptionable cautions to their general use, or the least suspicion of their being capable of doing any harm. The credulous are amused with pompous advertisements, fictitious cases, and attestations of the most miraculous cures; one of these wondrous cases and cures, that Mr. Spilisbury a long time kindly referred the public to, I had the curiosity to enquire after: the first person I saw was a lady, whose appearance bespoke no great dependance was to be placed on the truth of her story; but, however, on en-



quiry, though she had been mistress of the house sometime, she knew no such person as the advertisement referred to; there had a servant, she believed, lived there, that might have some breakings out about her arms, but what became of her was not to be found out: and by such paltry stories are the public taken in, any thing miraculous, the more incompatible with reason and common sense the better, for a bait for us English folks; if it catch the ear or the eye, the understanding seldom pauses, witness the *urine* doctor's scheme, and the late famous gout curer: yet may it be said, in excuse for people in common, that, much to their honour and credit of their knowledge in Physick, practitioners have come, on a fool's errand, from distant parts of the country, to this urine caster; gentlemen bred to a branch of physick, have taken long journeys to this wonderful connoisseur, (full of hopes and confidence in him) for the benefit of their own health. Mr. Spillbury seems to entertain some fears of the legislature's (from Mr. Hawes's representation of Dr. Goldsmith's and Mr. Scawen's cases) taking



taking into consideration the present state and tendency of quackery, and consequently suppressing it; but his fears I apprehend are groundless, the legislature could not yet be prevailed upon, to put a tax upon dogs, in compassion to those who suffer by those creatures running mad, therefore perhaps quacks may still be permitted to follow their trades, notwithstanding our fair representations of the evils resulting.

“ Can it be expected,” says Mr. Spilbury, (p. viii. dedication) “ that those so opulent  
 “ practitioners, already drowned in profusion,  
 “ voluptuousness, pleasure, and luxury, will  
 “ exert their *thickened* and congealed imagi-  
 “ nations, in the improving an art, the very  
 “ defects and imperfections of which, alone  
 “ constitute that unfathomable golden mine,  
 “ whence they draw all their wealth?” The  
 opulent practitioners do not draw all their  
 wealth from the imperfections of the art,  
 they have more considerable emoluments, I  
 believe, from the number and sanction of ad-  
 vertised medicines in these kingdoms; but,  
 were Mr. Spilbury’s drops, and such kind of  
 advertised



advertised medicines, more in use among the more opulent order of people, the manufacturers and furnishers of *artificial teeth*, would be more benefited by quackery than any other set of men. Mr. Spilsbury, surely, is exceedingly inconsistent, and contradicts himself and the rest of his brethren, when he laments (p. x.) “the present state of physick, and it’s not being brought to it’s *perigee*.” As his drops cure the scurvy and gout, Mr. Norton’s cure the leprosy and *evil*, another the stone, another the dropsy, another consumptions; unfortunately to be sure, most of these disorders are yet incurable by the regular professors, and I am afraid will remain so, and that, notwithstanding the assertions of Mr. Spilsbury and his fraternity, these cruel and mortal diseases will continue to withstand their sanative power, and keep up their places and numbers in the bills of mortality. Mr. Spilsbury again is partial to his own knowledge, when he says (p. xi.) “every discoverer of a new efficacious medicine is always repaid by it, for his labours and expence,” when he himself is not adequately

repaid



repaid by his drops that cure the Gout. The late famous, and much to be regretted for his loss, Dr. Le Fevre, got more by his gout medicine, in a few months, than Mr. Spilsbury will in his life-time; and yet is Mr. Spilsbury's medicine equally efficacious in that disorder, for of all the patients that have received a cure from either of these gentlemen, it stands so firm and complete, that *not one can ever* have it again.

Mr. Spilsbury, notwithstanding all his complaints against the regulars of ill usage from them, not content with his acknowledged superiority, wishes to exercise a cruelty over them which they have not deserved, when he (p. xiii.) summons them to a meeting with him and his brethren before the legislature of the land, as he knows the regular gentlemen would here appear at a very great disadvantage, when challenged with their skill in these disorders, against Mr. Spilsbury, &c. for they could not do themselves the credit and honour of one cure; and Mr. Spilsbury and his companions have nothing to do, but take a handful of news-papers with them, and they are

monies



furnished with sufficient vouchers and testimonies of their surprizing and unequalled abilities.

The trial of Miss Butterfield, (p. xvii.) no acquittal at all of the charges against quack medicines, as it was allowed or proved by the trial, that an improper use of some medicines hastened the death of Mr. Scawen; and this improper use is the charge against quackery, and not against the medicine itself: but Mr. Spilisbury has the modest effrontery to tell us, (p. xxviii.) “ that to exclaim against an advertised medicine, because two, three, or  
 “ twenty people have died by an injudicious  
 “ use of it, is as absurd as to exclaim against  
 “ a pump, because a man delirious with a  
 “ fever drank of it and killed himself; or to  
 “ exclaim against the public good and utility  
 “ of the river Thames, because many are  
 “ drowned in it with a *felo de se* intent, or  
 “ by accident, daily.” But here Mr. Spilisbury may please to observe, that there is no analogy between the deluded takers of advertised medicines and those unhappy suicides, no one takes quack medicines with such intent; it is a much better allusion, indeed, to  
 the



the man in a fever drinking the water, for as his nurses and attendants were certainly by their neglect accessaries to his death, so indeed I think the legislature, and guardians of the public health, may be looked upon accessaries to the deaths of those that Mr. Spilsbury acknowledges may happen by twos, threes, or twenties, by the use of quack medicines (for their not suppressing them.)

Mr. Spilsbury positively and strenuously asserts, (p. xxix.) that “quack medicines require a skilful and judicious administration, and that to produce a cure, a medicine ought to be adapted to the nature of the constitution of the patient.” And what is this but bespeaking the danger of taking advertised medicines. Can Mr. Spilsbury administer his medicine judiciously to a person he never saw? Can he adapt a medicine to the nature of a constitution he knows nothing of? If he has so much knowledge in physick as to be able to do this, by inspecting the patient, he must know that very many persons are taking his drops who are hectical, have tender lungs, are of a nervous, irritable ha-

B

bit,



bit, have tender bowels, or are otherwise very unfit subjects for his medicine to work upon, and take it at a great hazard, and often to very great and irreparable injury to their health: and are not these uncertainties obviated by employing a physician, who, Mr. Spilsbury knows, does not take the patient's word for his disorder, but his own judgment, aided by symptoms and circumstances, together with the patient's information; this obvious and most important advantage of certainty, with Mr. Spilsbury's leave, must regular practice ever have over quackery; for are we not every day sent for to patients, who tell us they have the pleurisy, and we find the disorder the rheumatism; those who have the gravel in the loins think they have the rheumatism, and those with the rheumatism tell us they have the gravel; and I have known quack medicines taken for worms, when the disorder was a dangerous inflammation in the bowels; and I dare affirm, many people, with all the medical prudence and caution they were masters of, have taken Mr. Spilsbury's drops for the scurvy, when their  
disorder



disorder was the itch. Mr. Spilisbury, then, endeavouring to shew a certainty and safety in quack medicines, (p. xxx.) equal to those sent from the shops, labours in vain, the current stream of reason and common sense runs against him, and he sinks; and even the most ready and best assistance of his favourite institution (p. xxi.) for the *resurrection of the dead*, cannot recover him,—what says Mr. Spilisbury, (p. xxxi.) “ Because a musquet  
 “ has done never so horrible a mischief in  
 “ the hands of a child or a madman, is it  
 “ a reason why an act of parliament should  
 “ be brought to forbid the manufacturing or  
 “ importing of them in the kingdom?” Here Mr. Spilisbury is evidently playing and paddling in his *thickened* and congealed imaginations, for here is no simile, no analogy, in his reasoning: if any one wilfully and intentionally takes the life of another with this useful musquet, what has Mr. Spilisbury to say against the justness of the law; this is more to the point; but Mr. Spilisbury (that he may live) is to be permitted to destroy his Majesty’s subjects by twos, threes, or twen-



ties; for though his medicines might be a good one in the hands of a prudent, intelligent physician or apothecary, yet incautiously taken, from the hands of a quack, it is as much to be dreaded as the musquet in the hands of a madman.

There are not, says Mr. Spilisbury, “ in  
 “ the universe, two constitutions alike, nor  
 “ two cases of disorder alike, therefore every  
 “ thing, food, pleasure, exercise, drink, diet,  
 “ medicine, &c. ought all equally to be a-  
 “ dapted to every single subject, such is the  
 “ meaning of the *prudent and judicious ad-*  
 “ *ministration* so much recommended, and so  
 “ much insisted on in matters of medicine;  
 “ it is, then, in other words, nothing but a  
 “ sagacious increase or decrease, a prudent  
 “ and *a propos* desistance and suppression of  
 “ the doses, derived from a watchful atten-  
 “ tion on the effects they produce, which ef-  
 “ fects none but fools can misjudge,” (I will  
 not say so of them, but many will call them-  
 selves fools as long as they live, and would be  
 very happy, if wearing the fool’s cap were  
 the worst of the punishment for their credu-  
 lity



lity in quackery,) “ especially when directions are so plainly given as they generally are.” Here again Mr. Spilisbury is evidently mistaken, many of Mr. Spilisbury’s patients, intelligent, and (excepting in the instance of trusting their health to the mercy of a quack or his medicine) prudent persons, have gone long stages towards a confirmed hectic, before they could be aware of it; and Mr. Spilisbury must know this will be the consequence of such an indiscriminate use of mercury, or he has not even so much as a *thickened* and *congealed* knowledge of physic, more especially as the medicine is taken from the advertisement, without its being known or suspected what it is, and they are not cautioned or guarded against the danger of taking cold, which the manner of life of the takers of advertised medicines, will much expose them to, being mostly the lower order of people, who live by industry or labour; and the disorders arising from catching cold, whilst taking mercury, are not the least alarming, as fevers, consumptions, salivations, or inflammations of the brain; and these are not

fictitious



fictitious stories, Mr. Spilsbury, or cases made ;  
 I have seen several narrowly escape from the  
 most imminent danger, some I have known  
 die, not of the disease their deaths were per-  
 haps imputed to, but of the effects of the  
 medicine they were taking to cure that dis-  
 ease ; and the bills of mortality bear too ample  
 testimonies of these facts, as it might be said,  
 in the articles of fevers and consumptions,  
 that a considerable number of those die of an  
 imprudent use of mercury. But here, in-  
 deed, Mr. Spilsbury is himself acknowledging  
 the truth of what I have been urging. But,  
 says he, “ the absurdity of people, against  
 “ which never enough can be said, leads  
 “ them to make this reasoning by themselves,  
 “ viz. if one grain of such a thing does so  
 “ much good, why sure two grains must do  
 “ a vast deal more, and it is that additional  
 “ grain *precisely*, which kills them.” So Mr.  
 Mr. Spilsbury makes no scruple of crediting  
 the mortality likely to happen amongst his  
 patients, (p. xxxi.) but prettily enough slips  
 himself the censure of the homicide, through  
 the loop-hole of the additional grain. But  
 Mr.



Mr. Spilsbury's OWN MEDICINE, he tells us in the next line, "has not, to his knowledge, done the least harm to any one individual." Here, I suppose, Mr. Spilsbury would have us believe, he has some curious and secret knack of muzzling his own medicine, yet has it *taken many by the mouth*, in a very unruly violent manner, but the least harm from it to any one individual has not come to Mr. Spilsbury's knowledge; we have his word for it, and who can suppose the humane, the benevolent, indefatigable Mr. Spilsbury, who, for the public's health and benefit, first opened, and since supported and continued a dispensary for the poor, at his own sole expence, of perhaps a few quarts yearly of his Universal Antiscorbutic Drops, which are an expence to him of about as many sixpences, and which he sends yearly in quantities of gallons, quarts, and kegs, to our neighbouring kingdoms, to be discretionally distributed by his agents to the poor; and did I not suppose these artful pretences to enhance the value of his drops in the minds of the credulous and unthinking,

I should



I should feel much for the consumers of his gallons and kegs of drops.

I have said it is often a dangerous and injurious medicine, it remains for me to make good the charge, and shew how facts correspond with our knowledge of the nature and effects of the medicine in the hands of people ignorant of physic, and of what they are taking: Know then, Mr. Spilbury, a Mr. Prescott, of Medhurst, in Suffex, took your drops till he found his mouth sore and teeth loose. A person in the service of the Right Hon. the Earl of Egremont, at Petworth, in the same county, was also a customer of yours, and he believes a great sufferer in his health by your Universal Antiscorbutic Drops; he was severely salivated, and reduced to a low hectic state of health, and ill a great part of the winter before last, and the following spring, so that this is a pretty recent case, which you may add to Capt. Evans's and a few others. I desired this patient of yours to draw up his case himself, and give me with his name; but he begged indeed to be excused doing so, I will not say whether more  
out



out of compassion to his own weakness and folly, or out of tenderness to you; however, I had my information from his own brother, and Mr. Spilisbury, or any one enquiring, will hear the same in the family of the noble Earl before-mentioned; and this patient positively says Mr. Spilisbury denied to him (for he came to town on account of his health) his drops containing any mercury; so, good Mr. Spilisbury, when you publish next, abate thus much in the positiveness of your declarations, of the least injury to your knowledge not having happened to any one, and before you proceed further, it surely would not be amiss, for a man of your endearing qualifications, as humanity, generosity, and *tender feelings*, to enquire after the condition of the consumers of the gallons and kegs of your drops. Remember, Mr. Spilisbury, the poor live hard, and bite hard to live, and whilst mumbling their crusts, with almost *toothless gums*, do not fail to murmur out curses on you and your drops.

One instance more of similar effects from a medicine of the same stamp with Mr.



Spilsbury's, though advertised under another name, "but of as long standing, as constantly  
 " advertised, and consequently as accredited a  
 " one," as Mr. Spilsbury's; the medicine alluded to (Maredant's Drops) the case, a servant maid of a late most eminent counsel, and worthy man, in Bedford-Row. This young woman, of a tender irritable frame of nerves and habit in general, and much subject to low fevers, had also a kind of scurfy or scorbutic breaking out, especially upon her hands and arms, which was exceeding troublesome to her in her business, being cook; and, encouraged and persuaded by Mr. Norton's pompous advertisements, and seemingly well attested cures, was very desirous of taking his drops; it was mentioned to me, I told the family my notion of the medicine in general, in her case in particular, and what it was, and that I was afraid hers was not a fit constitution for it to work upon; they further urged similar cases set forth in the papers, it had been successful in, and the attestations referred to; I replied, no dependance was to be placed there, as nothing was *so easy* as to procure cases,



cases, nothing *so easy* as to procure cures, and attestations sufficient to satisfy all those who were ready and willing, even in so tender and valuable a thing as health, to be imposed upon, and I well knew it was the common practice with all advertisers. However, she took the drops, and seemingly with advantage as to the breaking-out, but she had not proceeded above half way with the cure before her appetite failed her, which symptom I told her indicated to me she would not be able to go on much longer with her favourite medicine; and the event turned out so, for she soon became hectic to such a degree as to require the care of two physicians for some time, to save her from dying consumptive.

But after all, Mr. Spilsbury gives us to understand (p. xxxii. preface) “ he does not  
 “ mean in any part of his work (a very curious  
 “ work indeed) to take indiscrimi-  
 “ nately the part of every foolish advertised  
 “ medicine, which comes in the head of  
 “ any ignorant cobbler, or country horse-  
 “ doctor, &c. &c. nor to defend thousands  
 “ of lies and impositions, propagated daily,



“ such as powerful extracts which extricate  
 “ or take the mercury out of the blood and  
 “ bones in an easy way, or machines of cu-  
 “ rious and new invention, effectually to  
 “ extract mercury out of the body, &c. &c.  
 “ Impostors indeed, says he, of such a na-  
 “ ture, as to fall as much under the cog-  
 “ nance and jurisdiction of the civil magis-  
 “ trate of Bow-Street, as those of the con-  
 “ juror of the Old Bailey.” In some part  
 of this work of Mr. Spilsbury’s, I think he  
 has proposed to espouse the cause of his bre-  
 thren quacks at large, here he declares off,  
 and that every one, after the example of him-  
 self, must defend his own lies. I am sorry,  
 however, that these extracts and machines  
 are impositions, knowing that many of Mr.  
 Spilsbury’s patients would be very joyful to  
 have his medicine and its effects extracted  
 from their bodies.

But some, Mr. Spilsbuury supposes, will  
 say “ a little time and paper would not be  
 “ ill bestowed, in preventing the danger to  
 “ which the propagation of such impostors  
 “ might expose peoples lives.” Amongst  
 the



the rest I suppose he hints at his illustrious brother the Water Doctor; and I am entirely of the same opinion; the preventing of evil must be the doing of good, and it is the end and intent of my present writing. But, says he, “as eight or nine hundred pounds a year  
 “ is the least sum a medicine can cost to be  
 “ advertised (and yet but indifferently) all over  
 “ England, and that to be well advertised  
 “ every day, it costs at least fifteen hundred  
 “ pounds every twelve calendar months\*.”  
 Here, Mr. Spilsbury, I much suspect you of exaggeration to sooth the legislature with the importance of the revenue; but hear him, O ye *patres conscripti*, how he is thus publicly exposing you, for suffering yourselves to be bribed by such fellows for licences to kill, maim, and destroy the health of the subjects of the state. Mr. Spilsbury does not assert that any medicine can be applied as a general specific, or a sure remedy in all cases and constitutions, therefore he does not mean

\* Out of which seven hundred and fifty goes to the government.



to insinuate, against all sense and reason, that *Dr. James's Powders* in particular, will do wonders in all sorts of fevers, and in all stages of that disorder, "for if they arise  
 " from a stoppage, surely it must first be re-  
 " moved; if from bad humors, undoubtedly  
 " they must previously be corrected, and so  
 " forth." I will not condescend here to make any remarks on the reasoning of this illustrious quack of quacks; it is too ridiculous, even a cobbler or country horse-doctor could not talk greater nonsense.

Here (p. xxxix.) Mr. Spilsbury is greatly incensed at a letter, under the signature of *Advice*, published in the Morning Post, manufactured, as he says, by Mr. H——s, apothecary; and in answer, writes one to himself as from a gentleman at Bath, full of adulation, praises and compliments of qualifications the most endearing, as humanity, generosity and tender feelings, breathing in every advertisement, "and who has establish-  
 " ed, at his own sole expence, a Dispensary  
 " for the poor, where, when properly re-  
 " commended, either by their parishes, or  
 " some



“ some person of consideration, they receive  
 “ the full benefit of his medicine gratis, till  
 “ they are perfectly cured; such deeds alone,  
 “ in my opinion, (that is his own opinion,  
 “ as he is saying all these fine things of him-  
 “ self) are sufficient to secure him *for ever*  
 “ the esteem of the whole nation.” As Mr.  
 Spilsbury promises to give his attendance at  
 his Dispensary to the poor *for ever*, doubt-  
 less by so doing, he secures himself the es-  
 teem of the public for the same moderate  
 term, *for ever*; and an encouragement suita-  
 ble to his deserts, the author of this letter of  
 gratitude to Mr. Spilsbury, (for curing him  
 of an old inveterate gout, laughable enough,  
 another Le Fevre) he candidly owns he could  
 not produce, but who can read his pamphlet  
 and believe he could not produce the author,  
 with all his endearing qualifications, at any  
 time he pleases.

And, after all, such is the variable and  
 fickle dispositions of men, and consequently  
 the uncertainty of even the most elaborate  
 and well intended schemes of public utility  
 to please, that notwithstanding Mr. Spilsbury's  
 candid



candid declarations, and endearing qualities, very many look upon his Dispensary as nothing more than an artful contrivance (like raising the price of the drops) for the entire purposes of blinding and deluding the credulous multitude.

Mr. Spilsbury, true quack like, as worthy of being at the head of so respectable a tribe of beings, observes no mean of presumption and assurance, he quotes the first names in physic, and wrests their sense and text to serve his sinister ends; but, says he, (in his quotation from the author of *Observations on the Duties of a Physician*) that I may not fear to be taxed with infidelity in my quotations. Now it is wonderful he is not somewhat fearful of being taxed with infidelity in his quotations being so guilty of it, as I shall shew in his quotations from the immortal Huxham. No considerable improvement in the art of medicine, the quoted author observed, was to be expected from physicians, while they were on their then footing; since that then I suppose the plan of physicians may have been altered, for, certainly,



certainly no science has been improved within this half century equal to physick; and by the methods and united endeavours of the regular-bred physicians, a great progress and improvement has been made in the application of medicine, to the cure of all curable diseases: Mr. Spilisbury and his brethren *cure* all the *incurable* disorders, and what more can the public wish for, or what more is wanted of physick.

Having attended Mr. Spilisbury through his dedication and preface, we come upon the body of his pamphlet, *Free Thoughts on Quacks and their Medicines.* “That a great deal proceeds, Mr. Spilisbury, has been already said, and should continue to be every day repeated, against quacks, empiricks, and their medicines, is not so much to be wondered at, as the silence these have obstinately kept on the subject.” No, this, as Mr. Spilisbury observes, is not much to be wondered at, when daily abuses and sufferings from quackery furnish matter of daily provocation and murmurings. “Attacked, says he, with the most ungenerous,



“ nerous, and, I dare say it, fallacious argu-  
 “ ments,” (Yes, he dares say it, because,  
*en passant*, he dares say any thing) “ woven  
 “ with that skill and address which dazzles  
 “ the generality of readers, little used to the  
 “ finesses of the art of logic.” Here again I  
 believe Mr. Spilbury is mistaken, I have not  
 seen any of these arguments of dazzling skill  
 and address, I am sure there need none to  
 the purpose, observation, facts, and common  
 sense, will furnish the best arguments against  
 quackery, and will always be found suffi-  
 cient; Dr. Lettsom, I believe, makes use of  
 no other against Mr. Spilbury’s very much  
 superior, the renowned Myersbach the urine  
 cafter.

Our adversaries, says Mr. Spilbury, (p. vii.)  
 observe, that Hyppocrates pronounces physick  
 to be the noblest of all arts, and very justly  
 no doubt, as it comprehends almost every  
 other art and science: “ But if to enhance  
 “ the difficulty, superiority, and sublimity of  
 “ that very art, they think it necessary to  
 “ alledge that Æsculapius, the inventor of  
 “ physick, never arrived before he died to  
 the



“ the perfection of it, and that his successor,  
 “ Hyppocrates, being himself come to a very  
 “ old age, was not ashamed of confessing the  
 “ same; if they are not against admitting  
 “ likewise that, even now, it requires an in-  
 “ finite deal of pains, labour, expence, tri-  
 “ als, experiments, and time, before a man  
 “ can be rightly and duly qualified for the  
 “ task, does not this most evident conclusion  
 “ result, that the man who turns all his  
 “ thoughts on the study of one sole disease,  
 “ and attends to no other, is infinitely more  
 “ likely to discover a true and efficacious re-  
 “ medy, than those who, forced to practice  
 “ on a larger scale, cannot bestow a sufficient  
 “ time upon any in particular, to investigate  
 “ the true principles of them all, and apply  
 “ the proper preservative to a threatening  
 “ disorder, or restorative to a determined  
 “ one.” Here indeed is logic, and dazzling  
 arguments, brought against reason and com-  
 mon sense: knowing one disease, Mr. Spilf-  
 bury, leads to the knowledge of another, and  
 it is necessary physicians should have a gene-  
 ral knowledge of diseases, so that in curing



of one they may avoid bringing another, and perhaps a worse, on the patient; and whilst you are curing the scurvy and gout with your Drops, it would not be amiss if you had some knowledge of hectical complaints, consumptions, inflammations of the lungs, brain, salivations, &c. (tho' by the way, I believe you know just as much of these as of the scurvy;) And the tendency of your medicine to occasion these disorders, your two patients I have before mentioned, in Suffex, are thoroughly convinced, and by woful experience of the necessity of such knowledge, and every one of the *patres conscripti* you take the liberty of addressing, I dare say, under the like circumstances, would think so too; what think you of it yourself, MONSIEUR QUACK?

“On what principle, therefore, (p. ix.)  
 “do the self-calling regular-bred physicians  
 “ground their pretended prerogatives, and  
 “their superiority over us *Venders* of Me-  
 “dicines.” This question I hope Mr. Spilf-  
 bury and every one will think already pretty  
 fully answered. “Is it a generous, candid,  
 “and disinterested love of mankind, and the  
 preservation



“ preservation of it's members, as you affect  
 “ to profess it by words, which induces you  
 “ Gentlemen of the Faculty to decry all  
 “ quacks, from Æsculapius to the present,  
 “ either as ignorant or self-convicted impost-  
 “ ors, advertising daily lyes, whether mount-  
 “ ed on stages or riding in chariots? Is it  
 “ the true knowledge of the dignity of your  
 “ profession, and a superiority of understand-  
 “ ing, which makes you rail so vehemently  
 “ against that pretended evil spirit of quack-  
 “ ery, which you say is gone forth, and has  
 “ possessed all orders of men among us, &c.  
 “ &c.” No indeed, answers Mr. Spillsbury  
 to his own question, no such purity of senti-  
 ments exists in you, “ lucre, gain, and profit  
 “ are the true and only motives which in-  
 “ spire you that flow of anathemas you be-  
 “ stow so lavishly upon us; the fear that the  
 “ cure of diseases should become easy, and  
 “ might be performed by every one at a  
 “ small expence, and thus oblige you to lay  
 “ down your own chariots, erected on, and  
 “ supported by, the credulity of the igno-  
 “ rant, though wealthy multitude,” (if I  
 mistake



mistake not, this is the source of the empiricks, and not of physicians) “ is the reason  
 “ why you foam in all your writings, your  
 “ consultations, and private conversations, a-  
 “ gainst the venders of medicines, ready pre-  
 “ pared to *cure* what is not in your power  
 “ of attenuating.” This is certainly very  
 true, Mr. Spilbury, you *Venders* of Medi-  
 cines cure the evil, consumptions, stone, &c.  
 as well as the scurvy and gout; but these  
 cures are wrought only in the news-papers,  
 the devil abit the better are the poor sufferers  
 of these disorders; and if lucre, gain, and  
 profit, are the views of physicians, they ne-  
 ver will endeavour to suppress the quacks;  
 they would not, Mr. Spilbury, be the less  
 likely to walk on foot, for certainly there is  
 not an eminent physician that does not main-  
 tain his chariot out of the business he has,  
 occasioned by quack medicines, and were  
 they more in use among the more wealthy  
 order of people, their revenues hence would  
 be equal to Mr. Spilbury’s expence in ad-  
 vertising; so here, take your scrip of Latin  
 again, oh! “ *auri sacra fames, quid non mor-  
 talia*



“ *talia pectora cogis.*” Why you have your Latin and Greek, *ad anguem*, as one may say, Mr. Spilsbury, and indeed you write concord, and not bad language, if 'tis your own; but, you will excuse me, that I very much doubt, it is so uncommon you know, for members of the scientific and learned body of empiricks to be able to read and write.

“ But let us examine,” says Mr. Spilsbury, (p. xii. Free Thoughts) “ without partiality, “ the fact as it stands,” (nothing partial, I hope, will appear in my examination of any part of Mr. Spilsbury's pamphlet) “ what “ are strictly speaking, those advertised medicines: Are they a compound of horse-dung and cows-piss, or, as the more polite, “ though no less contemptuous phrase is, a “ mixture of brick-dust and water, prepared “ by a parcel of dirty, ignorant fellows? No, “ it is quite the reverse, they are mostly “ compositions which unite the exterior neatness and elegance with the power, energy, “ and efficacy interiorly centered; and “ they are the fruit of the labours, studies, “ and experience of some really learned physician



“ fician of the fo much boasted regular-bred  
 “ clafs, who, after having himfelf ufed it  
 “ and adminiftered it a long while, with a  
 “ never-failing fuccefs, at laft gives it to a  
 “ friend, or leaves it in his family.” All  
 this may be, but he never left it for the pur-  
 pofe of quackery; for that will turn his suc-  
 ceffful ufe of it into an abufe of it, and make  
 it dangerous. A few alfo, he fays, may be  
 the difcovery of fome illiterate fellow, and  
 though good in themfelves, “ erroneoufly do-  
 “ fed, improperly adminiftered, and injudi-  
 “ cioufly prepared, may do a deal of mif-  
 “ chief inftead of good.” But thefe, he ob-  
 ferves, cannot emerge from the obfcurity of  
 their origin till they change mafters, and be-  
 come the property of fome man of abilities,  
 who never fails, before he rifques his name,  
 his reputation, and his fortune, (this is the  
 firft I have heard of a quacks reputation in  
 phyfick) to make fuch trials, effays, and ex-  
 periments, as will afcertain the dangerous,  
 the doubtful, and the ufeful qualities of the  
 new remedy, and then it becomes as fure  
 and fafe a one as any other whatever, (fure  
 and



and safe, though, only in the hands of one capable of managing it.) “ Such, however, “ are the sources whence originate the adver- “ tised medicines, which so much excite the “ rancour, and stir up the bile of our proud, “ haughty, vain, and superb adversaries. — “ Now, says he, I will ask any impartial “ and candid reader, what he thinks in his “ heart of their affected declamations; must “ it not look highly laughable to every one “ who hears or reads them, to see how the “ bullets infallibly and naturally retort upon “ them, since it is proved that none of those “ medicines, which make the object of their “ spleenful clamours, now exist, but come “ directly or indirectly from themselves.” I thought we were to understand Mr. Spilfbury’s medicine the result of his own or some one’s labour, who had turned all his thoughts on the study of one sole disease, it’s cause, source, principle, and antidote, (p. viii.) but if this is the case, Mr. Spilfbury, how is it you empirical gentry so readily *cure*, what is not in physicians power to attenuate with the same medicines? Do you not now make



something like a self-convicted impostor of yourself? Dr. Johnson's definition of a quack sure does not here seem stretched out quite in the *outré*; look at yourself, "a vain, boastful  
 "pretender to physick—an artful, tricking  
 "practitioner in physick," (Johnson.) It is indeed truly laughable, that these never-failing advertised Medicines, the great secret of whose preparation is known, or has been imparted only to the advertiser, are in truth, medicines taken from any common dispensatory; and it is also wonderful to think, when you christen these medicines with some proper name, by what magic art you endow them with their all fanative powers, by which you advertisers so readily cure those dreadful diseases, that physicians with the same medicines can be of but little service in: you cure the scurvy, gout, and rheumatism (*laughable enough*, disorders as different from each other as costiveness from a purging) with the same medicine, yet your pretence of curing the gout is an affront to reason, common sense, and all philosophy and knowledge of physick; and I, who profess some little insight  
 of



of the matter, am offended at your insolent ignorance and imposition. Mr. Spilsbury avoids giving the pedigree of his own medicine—it is of the Maredant or Norton breed, lineally and closely descended; it bears a strong family resemblance, notwithstanding the pains and expence of Mr. Spilsbury in education and dress, (since he, with all his endearing qualities, kindly took it under his protection) which, like education in common, only gives a superficial outside appearance, and leaves the moroseness of temper and disposition unaltered at bottom, which it does not fail to shew whenever there is proper opportunity for it to exert itself, and which it often does, to the great terror and injury of those who, by Mr. Spilsbury's fair recommendation, entertain it, receive it into their families, look upon it, and *take it* for a bosom friend; for it is maintained at a great expence by robbery and depredation, and though it's common walk is pocket-picking, yet sometimes, if a powerful resistance is not made, it will be daring and barbarous enough to commit murder.



Mr. Spilsbury, in support of the value and credit of advertis'd medicines, that they are the same as in common use in the shops, gives some instances: First, the wonderful Turlington's Balsam of Life, and the Fryar's Balsam, which the public have been paying (if we may here believe Mr. Spilsbury) at least one thousand pounds a year to be inform'd of, as mighty secrets; yet all the while the *Traumatic Balsam*, to be had in every shop at less than a twelfth of the advertiser's price. If, says Mr. Spilsbury, "that  
 " of the shops be a good and recommend-  
 " able medicine, can that of the venders be  
 " a bad one? Our reason, not our prejudice  
 " is to guide in this, and answer the ques-  
 " tion." To be sure, this is not so hazard-  
 ous a medicine for people unacquainted with  
 physick to quack themselves with as prepa-  
 rations of mercury, yet it is not on all occa-  
 sions as the advertisement bespeaks it, a safe  
 and recommendable medicine; and I would  
 ask Mr. Spilsbury, if he had a mind to take  
 it, or use this medicine, if he would be fool  
 enough to give Mr. Turlington three or four  
 shillings



shillings for what he might have in any shop for as many pence? His reason, and not his prejudice, I suppose, would guide him here.

Next he openly owns (p. xxiv.) the imposition on the public in Hill's Pectoral Balsam of Honey, Chymical Drops, Lozenges, Effence of Coltsfoot, &c. &c. being nothing but the Paregoric Elixir of the shops, a little disguised, a species of fraud these honest fellows, he says, practice with no other view but to have an opportunity to publish, with success to their purpose, a well known and safe remedy, as if it were a *Nostrum* of their own invention. Here, in the instance of the Pectoral Balsam of Honey as it is advertised, Mr. Spilsbury is mistaken; it is not the same as the Paregoric Elixir, the Balsam of Honey is a tincture of Balsam of Tolu in spirits of wine, and nothing else; and this balsam, if taken in hectical heats and consumptions, to have any material effects, those effects will be injurious; it is a medicine now not used by physicians in such Disorders.

In the last century, Mr. Spilsbury informs us, an imprudent use of the *Peruvian Bark*  
 “ having



“ having been attended with bad consequen-  
 “ ces, had brought this valuable remedy into  
 “ difesteem, disrepute, and disgrace ; but a-  
 “ bout the same time an English gentleman  
 “ at Paris, had acquired such a prodigious  
 “ reputation by the use of a certain medi-  
 “ cated wine of his own preparation, that  
 “ Lewis XIV. ordered a large sum of mo-  
 “ ney to be offered to this gentleman (Sir  
 “ Robert Talbot) for his secret ; and then,  
 “ says he, what did the so famous medicine  
 “ prove to be, nothing but the poor old dis-  
 “ carded *Bark* itself : and where, therefore,  
 “ did the merit lie ; was it in a different, a  
 “ new, a more sensible, more rational mode  
 “ of preparing this vegetable, a method bet-  
 “ ter suited to it's constituent qualities ? No,  
 “ not at all, but in the mere method of ma-  
 “ naging it, the sole process of administra-  
 “ tion.” And it is this prudent, or improper  
 administration, that makes every medicine be-  
 neficial or hurtful ; it is by this prudent use  
 physicians avoid those injuries to their patients  
 which not unfrequently happen to the takers  
 of medicines, by the recommendation of an  
 adver-



advertisement, even though that advertisement be Mr. Spilsbury's.

One example more Mr. Spilsbury wishes to give, of fresher date. " One Keyser, of  
 " German extraction, surgeon to a French  
 " marching regiment in the war before last,  
 " finding that almost the whole army was  
 " fired with the poison of the venereal dis-  
 " order, thought it his duty to contrive a  
 " method for contracting all the beneficial  
 " qualities of mercury in so small and com-  
 " modious a compass as to be administered to  
 " his numerous patients, and make them reap  
 " all the advantages of it, without any inter-  
 " fering with the duties of their profession:  
 " he luckily then invented some pills, (which  
 " he denominated *Dragees*) by means of  
 " which he performed the most surprizing  
 " cures, and saved the lives of many hun-  
 " dreds of his Sovereign's subjects from the  
 " knife of corrupted venery; and since ac-  
 " quired, before his death, a considerable for-  
 " tune in Paris, during the following peace.  
 " These pills found also their way into this  
 " country in his life-time." There was no

fort



fort of occasion, however, for these pills travelling so far, when we had plenty of the medicine Mr. Spilbury informs us they are made of, (calcined mercury) and in daily use; and being a mercurial medicine, is liable to all the objections of Mr. Spilbury's drops; and I suppose Mr. Spilbury will not allow of their being the safer medicine of the two, and by whomever they are still patronized to the use of quackery, they are still too frequently subjects of abuse and injury to their takers, as the advertiser knows not, nor does not make the constitution of the patient.

“ It is then, says Mr. Spilbury, evident to  
 “ the blindest genius, to the most obtuse  
 “ capacity, that it is not, as they would  
 “ make us believe, a true and disinterested  
 “ love for mankind and the good of society,  
 “ which make the faculty rave so much a-  
 “ gainst what they are pleased to call *quack*  
 “ medicines, but only and truly the sole dis-  
 “ pleasure of seeing the art of healing grow-  
 “ ing so easy, and their consequence sinking  
 “ in proportion; they see with an aching  
 “ heart, (*they see with an aching heart,*  
 very



“ very grammatical to be sure) in the in-  
 “ crease and multiplicity of such successful  
 “ medicines, the portending harbingers of  
 “ an immense and nigh *hovering* decrease of  
 “ their revenues.” Ha! this is laughable  
 enough, how the bullets here retort! Long  
 as the great increase and multiplicity of suc-  
 cessful medicines have been advertised, the  
 physicians have not yet suffered in their bu-  
 siness and revenues; such misfortunes and  
 aching hearts are not yet amongst them; but  
 Mr. Spilisbury prophecies they are nigh, *bo-  
 vering*: Aye, in Mr. Spilisbury’s advertise-  
 ments and dispensary, where he cures all the  
 poor gratis, and the rich can afford to buy  
 his medicine, notwithstanding his rise of the  
 price; and indeed it cannot be denied but the  
 physicians have lost some patients, (and for  
 ever too) by means of advertised medicines:  
 Mr. Scawen and Dr. Goldsmith never will  
 employ them again, and some others that  
 have not so publicly made it known.

“ As this was a recent fact, says Mr. Spilf-  
 “ bury, (p. xxx.) transacted before our own  
 “ eyes, within a few years, I had in this



“ cause (Keyfer’s pills) a good opportunity  
 “ of fighting that of almost all others; be-  
 “ sides this account most evidently shews the  
 “ true occult source whence springs that in-  
 “ veterate enmity which our much-boasted,  
 “ regular-bred physicians bear to every ad-  
 “ vertised medicine, so that now such an ex-  
 “ ample is enough to open the eyes of the  
 “ public upon their conduct.” Yes, it is  
 necessary for Mr. Spilsbury, that the public  
 open their eyes to read his pamphlet and ad-  
 vertisements, and at the same time, lay their  
 reason and understanding fast asleep, that they  
 may not perceive the empirical trick and de-  
 ceit. “ What low, mean, and vile selfish-  
 “ ness, what interested views do you discover  
 “ to candid and indifferent observers; since,  
 “ because an efficacious remedy is not left in  
 “ your hands, but passes into those of such  
 “ as will administer it to the afflicted with-  
 “ out the fees of consultation, &c. you had  
 “ rather see all your patients die without as-  
 “ sistance, than it be said you have recom-  
 “ mended such a remedy to them, or used  
 “ it yourselves in any of your prescriptions.”

I think



I think Mr. Spilsbury not long since told us,  
 “ that the advertised medicines were in the  
 “ hands of physicians, and only craftily taken  
 “ by the advertisers and disguised a little, a  
 “ species of *fraud* they practice, with no  
 “ other view but to publish, with success to  
 “ their purpose,” (the purpose of imposition  
 then to be sure) “ such a remedy, as if it  
 “ were a *nostrum* of their own invention.”

Why, then, as these medicines are in the  
 hands of physicians, in every shop, and in  
 daily use, what does Mr. Spilsbury here  
 mean? He surely would not have physicians  
 order such medicines, when they think them  
 safe and proper, in the disguised form and  
 name of quackery. — “ Notwithstanding  
 “ (would any one believe it, and what a  
 “ contradiction) innumerable almost are the  
 “ quack medicines which, either positively  
 “ coming from regular-bred physicians, or  
 “ from other quarters, have however, so far  
 “ got the better of their opposition, as to  
 “ meet with their general approbation, be  
 “ recommended by them, and even admitted  
 “ into their repository.” Contradiction in-



deed; in one page Mr. Spilisbury accuses the physicians of the vile selfishness of letting their patients die, rather than use an advertised medicine; in the next, he tells us, innumerable are the quack medicines that meet with their general approbation, are recommended by them, and even admitted in their repository: if this is not contradiction, where shall we find it; but does not Mr. Spilisbury's pamphlet bear such strong empirical marks through the whole of it? " For, besides  
 " those already taken notice of, we have got  
 " again as standing ones, that is to say, still  
 " sold and advertised in the quack manner,  
 " and nevertheless recommended by the fa-  
 " culty, Daffy's Elixir, in the shops under  
 " the appellation of Tincture of Sena, the  
 " Beaume de Vie, Dr. James's Powder, An-  
 " derson's Pills, Stoughton's Drops, in the  
 " shops under the name of Bitter Tincture,  
 " the Vinegar of the Four Thieves:" But  
 the Daffy's Elixir advertised, with Mr. Spilisbury's leave, is not the same medicine as the Tincture of Sena of the shops, the adverti-  
 sers



fers prepare it with Buckthorn Juice (being cheaper) for the purging ingredient, instead of Sena; this Mr. Spilsbury may inform himself of (if he does not already know it) at any of the herb shops in the Buckthorn season, such vast quantities as he will then see there are not used by the faculty, it being now almost out of use, (except in stables and kennels) on account of it's roughness and nauseousness. — Mr. Spilsbury informs us, (p. viii.) the venders of advertised medicines adhere with a scrupulous and never-failing punctuality to the recipe of every preparation, and in using every ingredient the very best of it's kind: this instance of fraud in the preparation of Daffy's Elixir is given, to shew how far the assertion of a quack is to be relied on.

Mr. Spilsbury next proceeds to examine the medicinal virtues of mercury and antimony, so I must beg my readers patience to attend with me to his pretty stories on these minerals. Mr. Spilsbury reckons sublimate the best and safest of all mercurial preparations, but when, he confesses, it is in judicious hands;



hands; many of Mr. Spilsbury's patients I believe are *thoroughly* convinced of this, that it is safe only in judicious hands, and more judicious than a news-paper advertisement.

“ Some weak geniusses, Mr. Spilsbury informs us, make their appearance now and then, who, in compliance to the prejudices and circumstances of the times, have the foible of advertising their medicines as destitute of mercury, antimony, and other unfortunate mineral or vegetable, which for the time may happen to be in disgrace; while at the same time, these ingredients are the very foundation of their medicines, and they could not manufacture them without that portion of their receipts; they forget that there is no medicine of any note or efficacy, which does not carry it's particular characteristic along with it,” (Mr. Spilsbury, I suppose, forgot this, when he told his Suffex patient his drops had no mercury in them) “ a characteristic which will always be found out by the smell, by the taste, or by the effects, therefore a mere assertion or declaration, that such or such an ingredient

does



“ does not enter into the composition of such  
 “ a medicine is not enough to be credited,”  
 (even we find tho’ that declaration be made  
 by Mr. Spilsbury.) “ There is this very  
 “ plain, and, however, true observation to  
 “ be made on advertifed medicines, viz. that  
 “ all the treasures of Peru bestowed in ad-  
 “ vertifements and puffings of a *bad* medi-  
 “ cine, in itself bad, absolutely bad, will not  
 “ avail one farthing towards it’s sale.” That  
 is a mistake, according to the information of  
 one well versed in the business; *powder of*  
*post*, or any thing so far good as to be harm-  
 less, *in itself bad, absolutely bad, and good for*  
*nothing*, being well advertifed, will sell much  
 better than ever so good a medicine poorly  
 advertifed; so that it is the advertisement does  
 the business, and not the medicine.

“ Many a mistake, and many an error  
 “ have been committed, sometimes through  
 “ the hurry, and more often through the ig-  
 “ norance of the servants of the shops, which  
 “ have killed the patients, instead of reliev-  
 “ ing them; through hurry, mistakes have  
 “ been committed by putting a wrong label  
 round



“ round the neck of a bottle, &c. &c. thro’  
 “ ignorance, innumerable mistakes and errors  
 “ have been, and daily are committed in the  
 “ shops, by servants, apprentices, and shop-  
 “ men taking out of a wrong pot, or bottle,  
 “ and sending a rank poison to patients, which  
 “ kill them almost suddenly, with the draught  
 “ in their mouth, before one half has had  
 “ time to get down their throat: these ac-  
 “ cidents never did, never can happen with  
 “ the venders of advertised medicines.” Nor  
 they never happened any where, but in the  
 fertile, — invention of Mr. Spilsbury’s  
 brain: I know the conduct and manner of  
 transacting business in the first shops in the  
 kingdom, where business is managed with  
 such order and regularity, that it is almost  
 impossible for a mistake to happen. “ And  
 “ the ingredients and drugs they (the adver-  
 “ tisers) use, are always the very best of the  
 “ sort which can possibly be got for money,  
 “ without any regard to the price; and their  
 “ remedies are composed with the greatest  
 “ care and most scrupulous attention to the  
 “ formulæ or prescriptions of the inventor:”

I have



(I have taken notice of one exception to this rule in the Daffy's Elixir of the warehouses, which custom of the advertisers I suppose Mr. Spillsbury is not acquainted with, or a man of his endearing qualifications, as humanity, generosity, and tender feelings, &c. &c. would not risk or forfeit his honour, his integrity, his reputation, and good name, in deceiving and betraying the public into an unworthy confidence on the venders of advertised medicines.) “ Contrary to this, the  
 “ draughts which are composed in the shops  
 “ are too often made of old, stale, and still  
 “ more often, spurious drugs, which are substituted for the good and genuine ones,  
 “ either thro' a spirit of laziness, or thro' a  
 “ fordid spirit of interest and avarice.” That this may not, in a very few instances, be the case, I cannot take upon me to deny; a person of a fordid, avaricious turn, will not fail to satisfy his passion for money in any opportunity. “ Covetousness is a poison lodged in  
 “ the soul, it contaminates and destroys every  
 “ thing that is good in it; it is no sooner  
 “ rooted there, than all honour and honesty



“ fly before the face of it.” \* But from my own knowledge, which is pretty extensive in this particular, I can say such a conduct in shops is extremely rare; every thing of the best is sought for, as the books of their wholesale dealers would shew, and the company of apothecaries are chiefly supplied from their hall, where no spirit of laziness nor penury interest prejudicially operates, the best of every article is always procured, and every medicine is prepared with the greatest punctuality and exactness.

“ But, will some again say, did not ever  
 “ any of the advertised medicines kill or hurt  
 “ those who made use of them? To be sure,  
 “ says he, some have, nay, moreover, all  
 “ may, and why not pray?” There can be  
 no reason given I am sure, why they may  
 not have this kindly effect. “ By a medicine  
 “ being advertised, says Mr. Spilbury, for  
 “ such or such a particular disorder, and no  
 “ other, the patient knows then what he  
 “ takes, he is positively sure that that medi-  
 “ cine is made for that disorder; he knows  
 best

\* See *Œconomy of Human Life*.



“ best whether or not he is afflicted with  
 “ such a one: if, on the contrary, he is not  
 “ afflicted with that disorder this medicine is  
 “ prepared for removing, and insists upon  
 “ taking of it, he is a fool, he himself com-  
 “ mits the mistake.” That he is not un-  
 likely to do, though yet no fool; for without  
 taking notice of other instances, wherein is  
 equal difficulty, I would ask Mr. Spilisbury,  
 how often is it the patient cannot, nay, when  
 is it he can know himself, whether his dis-  
 order be the gout or the rheumatism? I am  
 apprehensive it would be very often beyond  
 even Mr. Spilisbury’s skill and judgment in  
 diseases, to distinguish these cases; but he has  
 hit off this difficulty, by adapting his medi-  
 cine for both, which, to be sure, is a knack  
 in physick the faculty are not masters of.

Mr. Spilisbury, now and then, quotes some  
 eminent physical authors, but partially in  
 common, to make the quotation serve his  
 purpose. Dr. Quincey, says he, speaks thus  
 of preparations of mercury and antimony:  
 “ It is by these that many empiricks have got  
 “ great fame, when persons of learning and



“ judgment are backward in adventuring on  
 “ things where there is any hazard, though  
 “ these by a *skilful hand* never do harm.’

Mr. Spilisbury would have us here with him to wrest the sense of the author, and understand a *skilful hand* as the preparer of the medicine. (“ It is true, (p. xlix.) but we  
 “ have said all along, that these remedies re-  
 “ quire a skilful and judicious hand; and we  
 “ have proved that they were skilful, they  
 “ were judicious, those hands which first  
 “ prepared the quack medicines which con-  
 “ tain some of these dangerous ingredients.”)

But that is not all meant, any apprentice boy may be as capable of that as Mr. Spilisbury himself; the skilful hand is in the use of the medicine. Dr. Huxham, in his Observations on Antimony, expresses himself thus: “ Now,  
 “ says he, in this liquid preparation the re-  
 “ guline part is already dissolved and most  
 “ exquisitely attenuated, so that it passes into  
 “ the blood with the utmost facility; it  
 “ should be moreover observed, that in this  
 “ form antimony may be given in the most  
 “ agreeable manner, without even being per-  
 ceived,



“ ceived, or creating any more distaste than  
 “ the wine it was made on: Should it be  
 “ imagined that this medicine, being so safe  
 “ and easy, can have no great efficacy as an  
 “ alterative and diaphoretic, I answer, that  
 “ as it is capable, in a proper dose, of irrita-  
 “ ting the stomach and intestines so strongly,  
 “ it cannot be supposed, even in very small  
 “ doses, to lie inactive in the sanguineous and  
 “ lymphatic arteries; and both seems, and  
 “ eventually is, exceedingly well calculated to  
 “ stimulate and scour the whole vascular sys-  
 “ tem, &c. &c.” And thus says Mr. Spilf-  
 bury: “ A great many authorities, from the  
 “ greatest Doctors, might be collected, to  
 “ evince the merits of those two exquisitely  
 “ excellent minerals, Mercury and Antimo-  
 “ ny; but it is hoped that, without tres-  
 “ passing any longer on the patience of our  
 “ readers, the few here collected together  
 “ will prove fully sufficient, to justify those  
 “ two lately disparaged ingredients of the  
 “ materia medica, and their employers, from  
 “ the doubts raised against their safety, and  
 “ the malicious aspersions which Dr. Gold-  
 smith's



“ Goldsmith’s and Mr. Scawen’s cases had unjustly  
 “ given an opportunity to a certain party to  
 “ throw against them, in order to prejudice  
 “ the mind of that part of the generality  
 “ which is unacquainted with the virtues or  
 “ vices of drugs, and the nature of pharma-  
 “ centical preparations.” What malice or in-  
 justice can Mr. Spilsbury make out, has been  
 thrown out against advertised medicines from  
 Dr. Goldsmith’s and Mr. Scawen’s cases,  
 when he himself acknowledges their deaths  
 to be occasioned by an improper use of quack  
 medicines, and no other prejudices nor asper-  
 sions have been raised against them? And that  
 being truth and justice, all the authorities  
 Mr. Spilsbury can quote will avail nothing  
 towards removing them: Dr. Huxham will  
 not serve his turn, he finishes his Treatise on  
 Antimony thus, “ But after all, it is not this  
 “ or that medicine or preparation will cure a  
 “ disease, unless *prudently used*; a man, says  
 “ he, may as well know how to make a  
 “ hatchet, a hammer, or a saw, as a Che-  
 “ mist how to make such or such particular  
 “ medicines, and yet the first may be as far  
 from



“ from being a good carpenter, as the second  
 “ from being a good physician ; the arca-  
 “ num is, *how to use them.*” And on an-  
 other occasion, this great and good physician  
 and man, well knowing the danger, most  
 strongly and feelingly cautions the public a-  
 gainst the unhappy accidents that happened to  
 Dr. Goldsmith and Mr. Scawen : “ As for  
 “ those, says he, who neither reason nor re-  
 “ flect, but practice by rote and prescribe at  
 “ a venture, I would seriously recommend  
 “ them to *peruse the sixth commandment.*”  
 And now, whether this advice of Mr. Spils-  
 bury’s favourite author is not applicable to  
 Mr. Spilsbury and his brethren ; for if quack-  
 ing with a medicine, and throwing it into  
 the hands of the public by advertisements, is  
 not practising by rote and prescribing at a ven-  
 ture, I know not what is, nor Mr. Spilsbury  
 I believe cannot tell me.

Mr. Spilsbury having thus fought the long  
 pendent cause of quacks and their medicines,  
 and gained the day, proceeds to some account  
 of himself and his own remedy, the nature of  
 it’s composition, it’s effects, &c. ( Here I am  
 glad



glad to have had it in my power to acquaint him with some very material circumstances, which, it seems, were entirely unknown to him.) But, first, he communicates a few reflections on the scurvy and gout: In rambling over an incoherent, unintelligible story of the scurvy, he makes some childish, unsupported attacks on the conduct and method of the faculty in treating disorders, neither of which meriting consideration, we come to the gout. The gout, “ a well-known disorder by it’s  
 “ dreadful effects, is notwithstanding, ac-  
 “ knowledged to be uninvestigated yet as for  
 “ it’s cause, or rather it’s nature; however,  
 “ this must be understood no further, than  
 “ that nothing certain yet and demonstrated  
 “ to pellucid evidence can be said to have  
 “ been discovered concerning it, for pretty  
 “ rational conjectures may be, and have in-  
 “ deed been really formed, which, although  
 “ they cannot be considered as amounting al-  
 “ together to mathematical demonstration,  
 “ help however, so well to account for the  
 “ ravages it produces in the human frame,  
 “ that, with their assistance, such precepts  
 may



“ may be given, such prescriptions laid down,  
 “ as, when observed, will infallibly prove  
 “ salutary enough to afford relief; and, if  
 “ pursued and adhered to with perseverance  
 “ and sedateness, might, I think, produce,  
 “ in time, a perfect cure also.” O! ye noble  
 and honourable company of arthritics, lay  
 down your crutches, and jump for joy! “ As  
 “ for my part, continues Mr. Spillsbury, with-  
 “ out being willing to presume on my own  
 “ abilities on the subject, nor to assume the  
 “ airs of an investigator of those secret causes  
 “ which proved the stumbling block of so  
 “ many others before me, I will only hum-  
 “ bly declare, that, as well as I can judge  
 “ from long practice and experience, the gout  
 “ appears to me to take it’s source from one  
 “ and the same principle with what is vul-  
 “ garly called the land scurvy, viz. intempe-  
 “ rance in appetite, accumulated indigestions,  
 “ sloth, and want of exercise; the difference,  
 “ lies in the effects only resulting from this  
 “ similitude of principles. Is that effect a  
 “ coarse, heavy, slimy humour which passes  
 “ into the blood? The scurvy then, attended



“ with all it's usual and dreadful appendages,  
 “ that is to say, ulcers, dry and moist scurfs,  
 “ eruptions, pimples, &c. is the consequence.  
 “ Is it, on the contrary, a fermentation in the  
 “ first reservoirs of the stomach? (A fer-  
 “ mentation we all know very well is always  
 “ attended with a volatilization of the most  
 “ subtile particles of the putrified matter.)  
 “ Then it is those volatilized particles of that  
 “ sour, fermented, undigested food, which  
 “ pass into the blood, and produce those ra-  
 “ vages so well known under the name of  
 “ the gout: if, therefore, says he, you con-  
 “ tinue to ask me now what I think the  
 “ gout is, I answer, I firmly believe it is  
 “ nothing but a subtile, volatile, corroding  
 “ spirit, raised from the fermentation of sun-  
 “ dry multifarious, incoherent, incompatible  
 “ foods, corrupted to sourness and putrefac-  
 “ tion in the first reservoirs of the stomach,  
 “ before that dissolution, or, which is the  
 “ same, regular and perfect digestion could  
 “ take place.” Now here we have so ra-  
 tional, sensible, clear, intelligible, ingenious,  
 well-founded, and perfect an account of the  
 gout,



gout, that every Reader must comprehend from it a clear idea of the nature of that disorder; and, I suppose, as Mr. Spilsbury frequently mentions his long practice and great experience, that he has certainly been in an *elevated station* in physick, and *the Doctor* being otherwise taken up himself, employed his \* *pickle-berring* to draw up this account of the gout. “ And this, I believe, will not  
 “ be found either contradictory to, or even  
 “ discordant with, the excruciating pains it  
 “ causes in the affected parts, nor with the  
 “ swellings and inflammations by which those  
 “ pains are accompanied: to be more pun-  
 “ gent still in my description, I will compare  
 “ the gout again to the bite of a viper.”  
 This surely, Mr. Spilsbury, is being too pun-  
 gent in your comparison, as the life of those  
 bitten by a viper is almost immediately de-  
 stroyed, or is in imminent danger; and those  
 afflicted with the gout, (excepting their suf-  
 fering from the local pains and inflammations)  
 often enjoy good health, and live with it to a  
 great

\* The common appellation given to a Mountebank's Merry-Andrew, or merry fellow.



great age. But a little further he tells us the  
 “gout is in fact a nervous disorder, which  
 “puts on more shapes and forms than we have  
 “been aware of, since it has been mistaken  
 “often for hystericks, hypochondriac affec-  
 “tions, cholic, rheumatism, and other low-  
 “ness of spirits; all disorders indeed which  
 “are nothing but the very gout itself.” Why  
 Mr. Spilbury is certainly a great master of  
 the gout, for he makes it, and unmakes it,  
 and makes it just what he pleases: but as he  
 acknowledges even his judgment has been de-  
 ceived, and has taken it for other disorders,  
 how are his patients, or people in common,  
 to know when they have this particular disor-  
 der his medicine is adapted for. He says,  
 “If the patient is not afflicted with that dis-  
 “order his medicine is prepared for remov-  
 “ing, and insists upon taking it, he is a  
 “fool.” Now, sure, here is a droll piece  
 of severity, in Mr. Spilbury’s making his  
 patients fools or suicides, for being only mis-  
 taken in what he acknowledges even his own  
 acute judgment has failed; and from this ac-  
 knowledgment I am greatly apprehensive Mr.  
 Spilbury



Spilsbury, or the patient, has been mistaken in the gouty case he is now so frequently and plausibly alluding to (Capt. Evans's) in South Wales.

“ There is another grand cause of the gout  
 “ and scurvy, which I would not forget to  
 “ mention, and which is, our victuals turn-  
 “ ing sour on our stomach, an accident which  
 “ is notified to us by that acid matter which  
 “ is sometimes thrown up, and which sets  
 “ our teeth on edge; or, again, by the smell  
 “ of rotten eggs, and the stinking of our  
 “ breath, owing to an alkaline state of our  
 “ food in the first reservoirs.” Mr. Spilsbury  
 is so pleasing and instructing in every thing he  
 says, that it would be pity indeed he should  
 forget any thing; but if the grand cause of  
 the gout is a prevalent acid in the stomach,  
 how happens it also from this alkaline state?  
 How can such contrary causes produce a simi-  
 lar effect?

“ There is between minerals and vegeta-  
 “ bles, Mr. Spilsbury informs us, the same  
 “ difference as between the impetuous fiery  
 “ horse and the peaceable dull mule; the  
 first



“ first of which, if you are a good horse-  
 “ man or driver, will, by one single leap  
 “ timely applied, extricate you from the most  
 “ imminent danger, when on the brink of a  
 “ well, or in the middle of a confused hel-  
 “ ter skelter of carriages, at the breaking up  
 “ of an opera, a ball, or a review, &c.  
 “ while, whether driven or carried by the  
 “ other, you would not but undoubtedly pe-  
 “ rish, and be crushed to atoms by the re-  
 “ lentness of his motions.” Mr. Spilsbury  
 before, charged the injury any of quack doc-  
 tors patients suffered, to an additional grain  
 they made free with beyond the dose allow-  
 ed; here we are to understand the reason  
 why his medicine, or fiery impetuous horse,  
 has thrown some people *down* in a salivation,  
 is, because they were not good horse-men;  
 so I suppose, in future, he would recommend  
 his patients to his neighbour Astley’s riding-  
 school, before they take in hand his managed  
 steed.

“ It will appear perhaps, says Mr. Spils-  
 “ bury, a very strange paradox to the public,  
 “ (though we have already observed it be-  
 fore



“ fore) to declare that medicines capable of  
 “ doing the most good, generally are, and  
 “ seldom can be any thing else, but rank  
 “ poisons.” Why, sarsaparilla, Mr. Spilsbury,  
 bark, quicksilver, and rhubarb, are not rank  
 poisons, nor no poisons at all, and yet no  
 medicines are capable of doing more good.  
 “ And though I have had the satisfaction to  
 “ operate such great cures, even in the gout,  
 “ I am, notwithstanding, convinced this last  
 “ disorder will, whilst the world exists, ever  
 “ be a scourge to mankind, in spite of all  
 “ the united efforts of Empiricks and Regu-  
 “ lars.” Here I am very much of Mr. Spils-  
 bury’s opinion; but it is a very strange pa-  
 radox to me, that Mr. Spilsbury tells us of  
 the mighty cures he has wrought in the gout,  
 and yet is convinced this disorder will ever be  
 a scourge to mankind, or be incurable; for  
 the disorder being once and ever the same,  
 the same remedy that succeeds in one case  
 will in another; as sulphur does in the itch,  
 mercury in the venereal disease, bark in the  
 ague, &c.



“ In the gout and rheumatism, says Mr.  
 “ Spilsbury, a great deal can be said in be-  
 “ half of these drops, and I believe equal at  
 “ least to any pretender.” We are fully sa-  
 tisfied Mr. Spilsbury is equal to any one in  
 pretences, for he is all pretence, and nothing  
 further. “ In summer time a cool acid drink,  
 “ when it agrees with the constitution, is  
 “ very proper, and it will be found generally  
 “ to agree, as most of the gouts are of an  
 “ alkaline nature.” The gout is a strange  
 variable distemper with Mr. Spilsbury; just  
 now he told us it was occasioned by a predo-  
 minant sourness or acid upon the stomach,  
 now it is an alkaline, by and by perhaps it  
 will be both acid and alkaline, or neither;  
 or are we to understand it, alkaline in sum-  
 mer and acid in winter? “ People should  
 “ be more cautious in recommending certain  
 “ diets or remedies to others, on that sole  
 “ ground that they themselves have received  
 “ great benefit from them, for they may very  
 “ well fail with others, although they have  
 “ succeeded with them, and that by the sole  
 “ reason of difference of constitution; there-  
 fore,



“ fore, now, with a candour in which I  
 “ glory the more, as it is less expected from  
 “ a man of my profession, \* I will further  
 “ declare, that the above reasons are the  
 “ same why some of the advertised medi-  
 “ cines, though really good in themselves,  
 “ and absolutely capable of effecting a cure  
 “ in the cases for which they are calculated,  
 “ are sometimes, however, found to fail of  
 “ success with certain people, who in trying  
 “ of another medicine of the same stamp,  
 “ and prepared for the same purpose by an-  
 “ other advertiser, will happily be cured ;  
 “ the failure of the first, considered in it’s  
 “ true light, is no more a detriment to it’s  
 “ merit and character, than the success of the  
 “ second is a proof of it’s superiority in point  
 “ of efficacy over the first ; the whole ought  
 “ to be charged to the account of the consti-  
 tution

\* To be sure, such candour as we meet with in Mr.  
 Spilsbury is very rare amongst men of his class ; but we  
 do not so much wonder at it in him, as we have been  
 given to understand, he is a full exception to the gene-  
 rality, in his professing in so high a degree the endearing  
 qualities of veracity, humanity, and benevolence.



“ tution of the patient who has taken them,  
 “ and to nothing else ; for it is an undoubted  
 “ truth, though, I fear, little attended to by  
 “ the faculty, that, to produce a cure, a me-  
 “ dicine ought to be as much adapted to the  
 “ nature of the constitution of the patient to  
 “ whom it is administered, as the aliments  
 “ ought to be adapted to the nourishment  
 “ thereof.” The faculty Mr. Spilsbury fears,  
 neglect this most essential part of physick, and  
 I think, acknowledges it is impossible it can  
 be attended to in the mode of administering  
 quack medicines ; so that the public’s health  
 between both is very shabbily indeed taken  
 care of. “ And a further proof of my asser-  
 “ tion is, that the same reciprocity of adver-  
 “ tisements have often been seen from two  
 “ rival and antagonist proprietors, producing  
 “ against each other acknowledgments of gra-  
 “ titude addressed to them for benefits receiv-  
 “ ed by the medicines of the one, after hav-  
 “ ing unsuccessfully used that of the other :  
 “ But, will some say, does not this declara-  
 “ tion prove precisely the objection of the  
 “ danger which is said to attend the use of  
 such



" such powerful medicines? Does it not  
 " plainly justify the cry raised against them,  
 " since all constitutions by your own confes-  
 " sion are not alike, and since the variety  
 " cannot be introduced in a medicine pre-  
 " pared in large quantities at a time for the  
 " use of thousands? To which I answer in  
 " the negative, and say No." (Mr. Spilsbury  
 is however, here, deficient in his usual can-  
 dour, or he would certainly have answered in  
 the affirmative, and said Yes.) " It justifies  
 " nothing of the usual exclamations raised  
 " against those medicines, and that for three  
 " reasons: First, Because the chief and prin-  
 " cipal care of the composers or preparers of  
 " those medicines always is, to neutralize, as  
 " much as possible, the acid or alkaline qua-  
 " lities of the ingredients which enter into  
 " the composition of their medicines, by  
 " blending them with a due proportion of  
 " their contrarieties or correctors, so as to  
 " leave them no such sufficient strength."  
 But then this must, according to Mr. Spils-  
 bury's own opinion, be rendering the medi-  
 cine good for nothing: Mr. Spilsbury here



seems to hint, that he depends on success in his medicine from it's acid or alkaline quality; and then in the rheumatism or gout it cannot be of any use, because these diseases are not occasioned by either the one or the other.— Mr. Spilsbury's second reason is, “ Because  
 “ in the bill of directions, which never fail  
 “ being delivered along with those medicines,  
 “ a proper caution and charge are always gi-  
 “ ven, and strongly insisted upon, to begin  
 “ the use of the medicine first with such a  
 “ particular quantity, (and that quantity it is  
 “ to be observed by the bye, is always the  
 “ smallest possible, and such a one indeed as  
 “ would hardly make any impression on the  
 “ stomach of a lark) then to increase the dose  
 “ gradually, according to the scale of quanti-  
 “ ties given, to such a particular and specified  
 “ pitch, and no further, should it even agree  
 “ never so well beyond it; and that if at any  
 “ of the prescribed doses the patient should  
 “ find that the medicine does not agree with  
 “ his stomach, to retrograde back to that par-  
 “ ticular dose which he did find to agree  
 “ best; and such directions, when duly at-  
 tended



“ tended and adhered to, fit, as we may see,  
 “ those sorts of medicines to *almost* all sorts  
 “ of constitutions.” But, with Mr. Spils-  
 bury’s leave, and we may use our own eyes,  
 instead of seeing with his in this matter ; we  
 see very clearly such medicines do not fit al-  
 most all constitutions, for is there no damage  
 to be done to the constitution but the stomach  
 must be first affected ? Surely that is not al-  
 ways the weakest part, but the intestines,  
 perhaps the lungs, or the nervous system,  
 may receive the first injury, or perhaps from  
 a cold a violent fever may ensue, without any  
 warning from the stomach : and this refuta-  
 tion of your second reason, Mr. Spilsbury, is  
 not theory only, but the cases of your pa-  
 tients I have mentioned in Suffex stand good  
 to confirm the fact ; and these happened too  
 since your capital and long studied improve-  
 ment of your drops. — “ But the third, and a  
 “ very strong reason why my precedent can-  
 “ did declaration does not either authorize, or  
 “ justify, the clamours raised against the pre-  
 “ tended danger attending the use of adver-  
 “ tised powerful medicines is, again, that a  
 proper



“ proper regimen of life, and rules of diet,  
 “ are prescribed to the patients in general.”—  
 But how is Mr. Spilsbury to hit upon this  
 proper regimen of life, and rules of diet, for  
 a patient he knows nothing of, any better  
 than to adapt the medicine. It is but a very  
 little while since Mr. Spilsbury told us, (a  
 circumstance to be sure we were not aware of  
 before) that to produce a cure a medicine  
 ought to be as much adapted to the nature of  
 the constitution, as the aliments ought to be  
 adapted to the nourishment thereof; yet Mr.  
 Spilsbury (as he could not advertise without  
 it) hits off this difficulty in the general, in  
 the wholesale; but mounted on this alert mi-  
 neral of his, or fiery impetuous horse, he  
 leaps over every thing; yet I think he seems  
 here in the midst of a *belter skelter*, and that  
 it would have been more prudent for him to  
 have leaped aside this tender subject to ad-  
 vertised medicines, and what they never can  
 stand the test of; and moreover, these three  
 reasons of Mr. Spilsbury's, alluding to the  
 safety of advertised medicines, do not only  
 fall to the ground in reasoning, but in fact,  
 for



for his two Suffex patients had the advantage and security of all these cogent reasons, we must suppose, in common with others, yet their cases, and the effect of the medicine, do authorize and justify the clamours raised against the *danger attending the use of advertised powerful medicines*. But Mr. Spilsbury having said and expatiated enough already upon this subject, quits it, and we come to view the plan of his Dispensary. In the contrivance and plan of this Dispensary our empirical hero seems to have exerted his faculties, and indeed in it he has produced a masterpiece of quackery; yet I think it impolitic of him in this mighty plan of this mighty, national, and consequential Dispensary, that from the endearing qualities of humanity, generosity, and benevolence, he first founded, and still continues at his own sole expence: I say, after telling us of all these mighty things, together with sending daily his drops gratis by quarts, gallons, kegs, &c. to all parts, it is impolitic to betray any apprehension of being suspected of puffing, alias lying; but Mr. Spilsbury cannot avoid suspecting



suspecting himself, which will certainly occasion others to suspect him.

“ As I have often had occasion to mention  
 “ *my Dispensary* of the time when I first  
 “ opened it, &c. &c. I think I shall not be  
 “ blamed if, to prevent being *suspected* of  
 “ having *propagated a mere puff*, I submit to  
 “ the public a short sketch or plan.” This  
 plan consists of an invitation to the poor, of  
 blank forms of certificates, letters of applica-  
 tion, and tickets of admission; and Mr. Spil-  
 bury has brought his Dispensary and medicine  
 to such a degree of perfection, that he can cure  
 his patients of their disorders, though those  
 disorders be the evil or the gout, *as fast* as  
 he can fill up the blank letters, tickets, and  
 certificates; and moreover he engages, *for*  
*ever*, thus to devote his time for the benefit  
 of those who may be in want of his assist-  
 ance. “ Therefore, says he, fully sensible  
 “ how very serviceable and useful this far  
 “ pre-numerous part of the community (the  
 “ poor and industrious) are to society, I do  
 “ hereby publicly declare, and give notice,  
 “ that, through a principle of humanity and  
 tenderness



“tenderness for them, I bind myself, *for*  
 “*ever*, to keep the following contract and  
 “articles of agreement, viz. That on Tues-  
 “days and Fridays, from nine in the morn-  
 “ing to three in the afternoon, I will give  
 “advice and attendance gratis, *for ever*, at  
 “my own house, to poor persons of either  
 “sex, and of any age.” And however in-  
 credible this promise and declaration of Mr.  
 Spilsbury’s may appear, the public may rest  
 assured he is as capable, and will as punctu-  
 ally perform and fulfil it, as almost any thing  
 he pretends to.

And now, having done his book, his dis-  
 pensary, his medicine, his physical opinions,  
 his endearing qualifications, &c. &c. all the  
 justice in my power, I finish my reply with,  
 A summary of falsties, and contradictions,  
 contained in Mr. Spilsbury’s pamphlet :

——— first, — The Faculty never fail,  
 wherever there is any appearance of lucre to  
 be drawn, to send an innumerable quantity of  
 useless medicines, (p. xi.) — My own medi-  
 cine has not, *to my knowledge*, done the least  
 harm to any one individual, (p. xxxi.) — Be-  
 fore I could bring my medicine to it’s present



improved state, it is undoubtedly true *I committed many errors*, (p. cxix.)——It will cost fifteen hundred pounds every twelve calendar months to advertise a medicine well in all the papers, (p. xxxiii.)——The public may judge of the merit of a medicine by the frequency and constancy of it's being advertised.——Receives a letter from a gentleman near Bath, acknowledging great benefit from his drops in an old inveterate gout.——*Candidly* owns he does not know the author.——Dr. Strother, a physician, speaks in favour of quacks and their medicines, (p. xlv.) yet censures the many lyes they propagate, (p. xlvi.)——The fear that the cure of diseases should become easy, is the reason why physicians rail against us vendors of medicines.——The physicians see with aching hearts, in the increase and multiplicity of advertised medicines, the decrease of their revenues.——Physicians would sooner see all their patients die without assistance, than recommend an advertised medicine.——Innumerable almost are the quack medicines that meet with their general approbation, and are recommended by them.——A medicine taken out of a common dispensatory, and advertised and imposed



imposed upon the world as a new remedy, is of no consequence to the public. — The advertisers of medicines always prepare them with the very best of every ingredient that can be got, without any regard to the price, (p. xlvi.) — The medicines composed in the shops are often made of old, stale, and spurious drugs. — Makes it a point, when asked the question whether there is any mercury in the composition of his drops, to answer in the affirmative, (p. lxii.) — Denies to a patient, severely salivated by his drops, that they contain any mercury. — The faculty constantly recommend cathartics and diaphoretics, be the complaint what it will. — The land scurvy nothing but the effects of frights, surfeits, and other accidents, instantaneously turning all our blood : — Or, the juices which should nourish the body stagnate, and like stinking pools, turn into poison. — The gout is a poison, a true poison, and a most subtle one, (p. xciii.) — The gout is a nervous disorder ; has been mistaken for hystericks, hypochondriac affections, cholics, rheumatisms, and other lowness of spirits ; disorders which are nothing indeed but the gout itself. — A grand



cause of the scurvy and gout is food turning sour upon the stomach, (p. xcvi) the reason why acids and lemons are said to be hurtful to persons afflicted with the gout; \* — Or it is owing to an alkaline state of the food in the first reservoirs, notified by the smell of rotten eggs and stinking breath. — All habitual diseases are owing to nothing but a bad state of the blood. — Minerals alone contain those powers which can increase or decrease the velocity of the circulation of the blood. — Medicines capable of doing the most good generally are, and seldom can be any thing else but rank poisons. — Though I have wrought such great cures in the gout, I am, notwithstanding, convinced this disorder will, whilst the world exists, be a scourge to mankind, or be incurable. — The safety of my remedy is such, that children or pregnant women may take it without the least risk or danger, (p. cxxv.) — I promise to give advice and attendance on Tuesdays and Fridays, *for ever, gratis*, to poor persons, at my own house, (p. cxxix.)

\* In summer time an acid drink is proper, as most of the gout is of an alkaline nature, (p. cxxiv.)

THE END.



A N

A N S W E R

T O A

SURGEON'S LETTER, &c

**P**ASSING over some things of less im-  
port to me, as the woful complaints of  
the hardships and trespasses upon the  
privileges of the company the surgeons suffer,  
I begin with lending my assistance in the ex-  
treme difficult point, as this gentleman makes  
it, of ascertaining those causes which should  
be the object of the physicians or surgeons  
care. As although, says he, "Surgery is a  
" manual operation, and chiefly employed in  
" external disorders, there are many chirur-  
" gical cases happen, in which greater depen-  
" dance is upon the hand than the hand."  
Or, perhaps, he might have said, there are  
many cases in surgery, in which greater good

is

F I N I S



is to be done by the internal use of medicines than by local application; for I should suppose, and hope, the surgeon's hand is as much guided by his head as is the pen of the physician; but yet the direction and management of internal means is most clearly and certainly the part of the physician, lest the surgeon, not so well acquainted with the constitution of the patient, or the general effect of the medicines he would give, may do the patient more lasting injury, whilst he is endeavouring to relieve him from some local external complaint; and this I suppose is the common method of proceeding with the most eminent practitioners more especially, and in the gentlest business: and I think the surgeon here shews much ingenuity and industry, in raising such an extreme difficulty in a point so obvious, and I believe generally understood; for surely a person must be much uninformed, and wanting in a necessary knowledge, that employs a surgeon to direct a course of medicines to be taken, any more than he would send for a physician or an apothecary to set a bone, to tap him, or to perform the operation  
of



of lithotomy, cases which always require also medicinal assistance: and when is the surgeon entrusted in that part? or when does the physician or apothecary attempt the operation for either?

Next, “As to those detestable plunderers, and pests of society, empiricks and quacks:” I believe the physician and apothecary have much greater reason to complain than the surgeons, as I believe they are much more employed in *curing* the *incurable* physical cases than in cases of surgery.

As to the cure of the venereal disease, which, says this gentleman, appears in so many different shapes, that there is no doubt but that it is the province of the physicians and surgeons care; that is, the disorder frequently requires some external local application, as well as internal remedies; but in many cases, says he, where a gonorrhœa only is the complaint, it may be too expensive for many to employ a physician or surgeon, “let the apothecary therefore, be permitted to treat and cure this disease, having been previously *examined* in respect to his skill in  
that



“ that particular point, either by the college  
 “ of physicians or company of surgeons, and  
 “ licensed accordingly ; for which he should  
 “ pay a fine and annual tax, to be divided  
 “ equally between them,” (the college and  
 company.) Here I would ask this gentle-  
 man, what fair and reasonable pretence he  
 has to call me, an apothecary, to be exami-  
 ned by the surgeons, in my capacity of curing  
 a disease, which cure depends wholly on me-  
 dicine to be taken, and in which I have been  
 careful to avail myself of the best informa-  
 tion from the most eminent writers (phyfi-  
 cians) on the subject, as *Astruc, Pringle, Van*  
*Swieten, &c.* for what improvement have we  
 received from the surgeons on this head? The  
 apothecary, I apprehend, would not object to  
 an examination by the college of physicians,  
 whence he well knows he is principally in-  
 structed, and informed in this as well as other  
 disorders : and this gentleman might have  
 proposed the apothecaries being examined be-  
 fore the surgeons (as to his management of  
 the external part of this disease) with some  
 plausibility and modesty ; but to propose an  
 apothecary’s



apothecary's condescending to an examination by the surgeons, in a disease where surgery has no part, is surely taking an unwarrantable liberty. And having occasion to say thus much, in answer to this surgeon, I shall mention one circumstance I have not seen attended to by our first authors, namely, the length of time necessary to free a patient from venereal infection; and this matter is not of a little moment, and some unfortunate accidents I have known to happen, from want of sufficient time being taken for a complete cure, calls it now to my mind. In most other disorders, as fevers, or topical inflammations, if the remedies are not continued (though that is best) till they are totally suppressed, if their violence and strength is somewhat abated, the constitution or nature may do the rest; but in this disorder, if the least particle of infection is left, it may prove as injurious as if no means had been taking against it, and health in every other respect, and constitution, are here no security: And again, in other disorders, the abatement of the symptoms is a surer guide whereby to judge of the diseases

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being overcome than in this; for the ceasing of the gonorrhœa, the dysury going off, the subsiding of inflammations, or swellings in the groin, or elsewhere, are by no means proofs of the disease being totally removed; here every one knows infection may still lurk, it is therefore, every one's business to still pursue means long enough to entirely get the better of it; for as the venereal taint may be long circulating in secret in the habit before these symptoms break out, so it may remain long after they disappear: less than one month of the most prudent use of medicine, cannot be depended upon to free a constitution from a venereal infection that has made it's way into the habit and circulation; and as we cannot be too cautiously secure, making the time up six weeks will be yet more adviseable; it is the length of time we are to place dependence in, for the same quantity of medicine taken in half that time will by no means answer the same end. It is often of the utmost consequence in the venereal disease, to distinguish the symptoms of the disease from those occasioned by the medicines given to  
cure



cure it; and a surgeon is not so likely to do this as one who is in a more general use of mercury, and more acquainted with its effects in different diseases and constitutions; and I have not a doubt but as much injury ensues from an improper, incautious use of the medicines given to cure this disease, as from the disease itself.

“ And as the itch, says this gentleman, is chiefly among the poorer class of people,” *(therefore nothing to be got by it)* “ let that be included in the licence, though chiefly cured by an external application.” But yet surely, the cure of this disorder is strictly the business of physick, as much so as to apply a blister for an inflamed eye, a pain of the head, or to apply a fomentation to inflamed bowels, external applications: and, besides, it is often beyond a surgeon’s knowledge of diseases, to distinguish the itch from some kinds of scorbutic breakings-out, therefore I humbly conceive it not improper for the surgeon, before he pretends to cure this disease, to pass an examination before the college of physicians or company of apothecaries, *in respect to*



*his skill in that particular point.* One thing further, as I have said thus much, I will take the liberty of remarking, namely, that it is a disease commonly but indifferently managed, the not uncommon custom of anointing for nine days or a fortnight, is sufficient almost to poison the patient, (if he has any delicacy belonging to him) as well as kill the disease; four nights anointing with sulphur, or the precipitate ointment of the new dispensatory, is certainly sufficient; some common people anoint but once, and say they find it effectual, wearing their dirty cloaths a few days longer; and the not uncommon custom of giving alterative medicines and bleeding in this disorder is entirely useless.

The next article to be taken notice of in this gentleman's letter is, on Inoculation and Inoculators. "Inoculators, says he, though  
 " it was formerly more in the business of  
 " surgeons than it is now, they have left off  
 " dressing the infected places:" (or, he might have said, since it is done *without the performing an operation*) "should be under some  
 " restraint, and not be suffered to practice in-  
 " discrimi-



“ discriminately, giving themselves the name  
 “ of physician or surgeon as bests suits their  
 “ purposes, declining and refusing to be ef-  
 “ teemed either as one or the other when  
 “ called upon to pay the usual fine, and un-  
 “ dergo the test of examination, yet able to  
 “ pay, and certainly liable to either the col-  
 “ lege or corporations examination; there-  
 “ fore, though they are regular apothecaries,  
 “ if they practice inoculation, they should  
 “ take out a licence (or become a member of  
 “ the college or corporation) for that pur-  
 “ pose, for which they should pay a fine of  
 “ twenty guineas, and be annually taxed two  
 “ guineas, yet be liable to serve upon juries  
 “ and all parochial offices; the fines (to pre-  
 “ vent any disputes) to be equally divided  
 “ between the college of physicians and cor-  
 “ poration of surgeons, and to be levied by  
 “ the college of physicians, where they should  
 “ pass their examination in that branch *which*  
 “ *most certainly comes more under medical than*  
 “ *chirurgical knowledge.*” I always thought  
 surgeons out of their proper subject, when  
 employed in inoculation; this gentleman seems



so here: First, he says the apothecaries must be liable to either the college of physicians or corporation of surgeons examination; only a few lines further, they are to be examined by the physicians in this branch, "as it most certainly comes more under medical than chirological knowledge." Surely, he should have said, it comes wholly under the knowledge and care of physick, and surgery has no part of it: whence then comes the surgeons claim to a share of the penalties and fines, if they were levied? But in this gentleman's good will, it seems, though he acknowledges this matter to be much more the business of physick than surgery, yet the surgeons are to share, equally with the physicians, the apothecaries money; but he is here evidently embarrassed and out of his latitude, and which, perhaps, occasions him not to express himself in the correctest language. "*They should take out a licence, or become a member.*" This part of this surgeon's letter does not correspond with the motto in his title page; here he is neither "*suaviter in modo*, nor *fortiter in re.*"

Having



Having said thus much in defence of my brethren, against the encroachment of aliens and surgeons in this branch of the business,\* I am sorry I have further occasion to observe, that the practice of inoculation is in some places in disgrace; in some parts of the country especially some few accidents have happened to inoculated patients, under the care of those best qualified to conduct the business; and how entirely soever unconnected these accidents may have been with inoculation, the more ignorant people will always lay them to it's charge: on the other hand, it must be observed, some unfortunate accidents have happened from the inattention or ignorance of those who have presumptuously thought

\* On a former occasion, I did make free with the opinions of surgeons on a disease, (a) which had been commonly looked upon a case in surgery, and placed it entirely to the charge and care of physick, whereto it most certainly properly belongs, where only it can be relieved, and, if I would wish to do the same by inoculation, (as I would not) I think I should act here with no more injustice to surgery:—the characters and dispositions of many of it's professors I have the honour to know, I profess much to admire and respect.

(a) *The Bronchocele.*



thought themselves qualified to undertake inoculation; and no wonder, when old women here turn operators, and tooth-drawers<sup>s</sup> and farriers inoculate and pretend even to the *bocus pocus* or S——n part of the art, the *taking away* the pustules if they happen to be too numerous, and adding a few if there does not seem to be enough; and in this I believe they are as expert and capable as the first of the S——ns: and gentlemen, (though not much to their honour or the credit of their understandings) have permitted their game-keepers or gardeners to inoculate; and tho' their success may chance to be lucky and encouraging, circumstances will now and then happen that their knowledge cannot be entrusted with: their patients have been said to have had the disease, when it has been only something like it; and it must be acknowledged, that such mistakes have happened from those whose education would lead folks to place a greater confidence in. Hence has arisen the stories we sometimes hear, of persons having the small-pox more than once: Physick yet, I apprehend, knows no reason  
 why



why this disease cannot happen twice or oftener in one person; but by analogous reasoning, and taking a comprehensive view of nature in all her works, the uniformity we find sufficiently authorizes us to say, it never does or can happen; some reasons indeed have been assigned, but futile: such also we know to be the case with the measles and chicken-pox.— Groundless apprehensions also are entertained by some, of the possibility or probability of other diseases being communicated by inoculation; and I wish some of the eminent writers on the subject had removed this ill-founded objection to the practice. With equal foundation in truth, is the myth of a nurse thought by some to have a power of altering the temper or disposition of the child she suckles? Just as much can it improve or injure it's capacity and intellects: And then we had nothing to do, in order to reform or plant reason and understanding in the unhappy idiot, but to put him to the breast of a keen, sharp-witted nurse. Nor yet is it here meant, that no disease can be given by these means; a child readily takes some

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bodily



bodily diseases from it's nurse: \* But that the irremediable cast of temper and capacity we bring into the world with us, or that the disposition of the mind can be altered by the one or the other, is as ridiculous a supposition as human folly can suggest.

I shall now conclude my short reply to this gentleman's letter with a few words on some inconveniencies attending the S——n, or new method of inoculating, (I mean to those who have not had the disease, and are not prepared for it) from persons under the disease going abroad to take the air; many practitioners, I apprehend, that are daily and strenuously insisting on their patients observing this rule, have little more to say in support of it, than that they do so because the S——ns do, and it is the fashion. That such conduct is injurious or hazardous I have no conception; but that the free air of a house, or within the garden, will as fully answer every salutary purpose I will maintain; I do not mean by  
my

\* Some other temporary diseases also possibly may be communicated with Inoculation, as the Erysipelas for instance.



my own insignificant opinion, but by the opinion of many eminent gentlemen in physick; and this being long ago advised by the greatest physicians that ever lived, there is in fact no improvement in the new or S——n method, as it is called; and surely it would be nothing more than civil, or observing their duty to their neighbours, for inoculated patients to avoid going abroad, to the terror and, perhaps, no small injury of those who have not had the distemper.

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F. I. W. I. E.







