A letter to Dr. Cheshire occasion'd by his dissertation upon a rheumatism / By an apothecary in Birmingham.

Contributors

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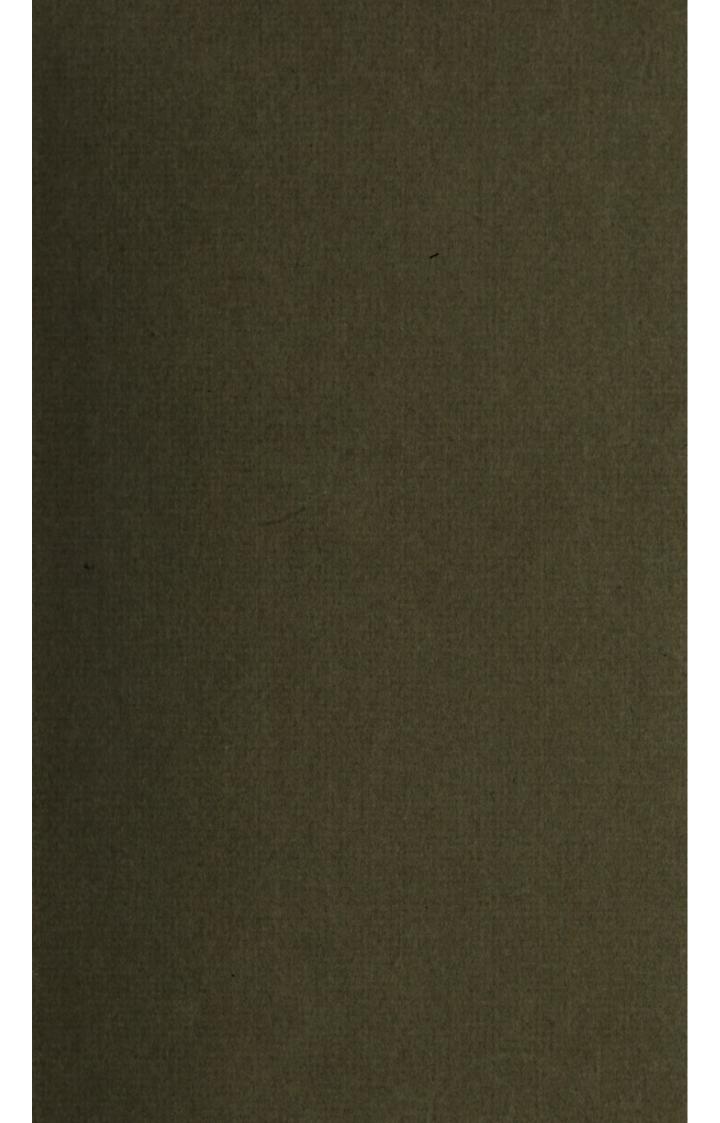
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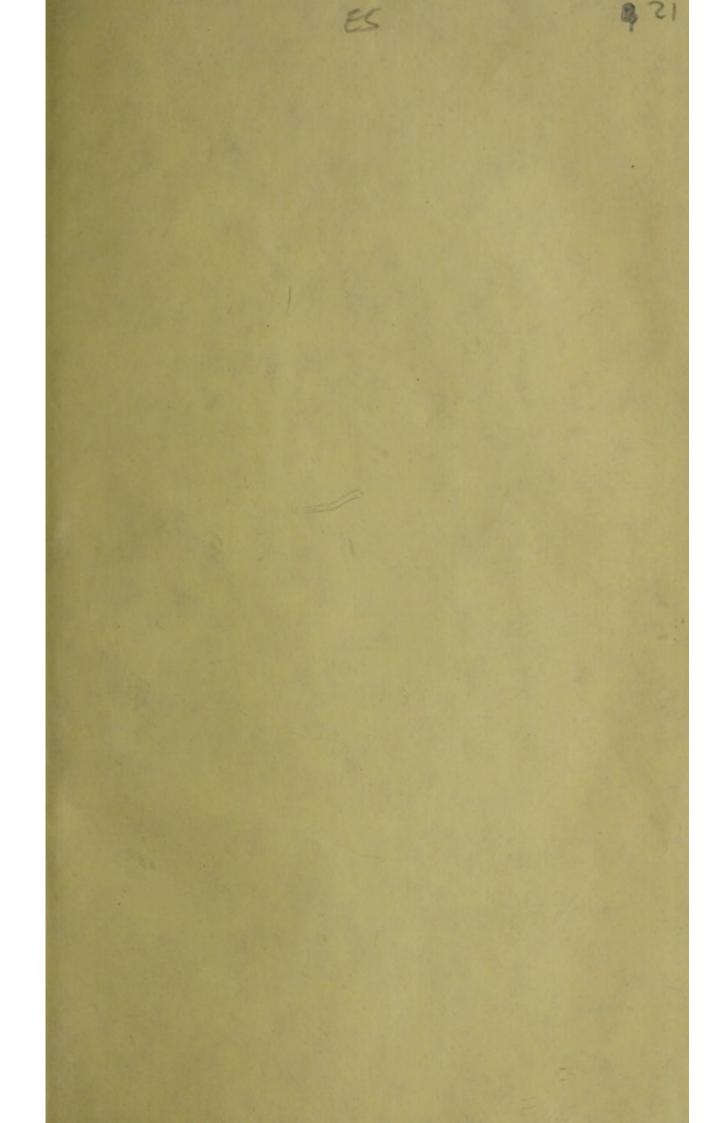
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LETTER

TO

Dr. CHESHIRE

Occasion'd by His

DISSERTATION

UPONA

RHEUMATISM.

By an APOTHECARY in BIRMINGHAM.

Ambubaiarum collegia, Pharmacopola, Mendici, Mima, Balatrones; hoc genus omne Mastum ac solicitum est.

HORACE.

LONDON:

Printed for A. Moorf, near St. Paul's Church-Yard, MDCCXXXIX. (Price Four-pence.) 35/445

A

LETTER, Oc.

REVEREND SIR!

THEN you was fo obliging as to offer your Services to the good People of Birmingham, about three Years since, I perus'd your Treatise about a Rheumatism; and as several things therein were afferted directly Contradictory to whatever I had either heard, or read, of that Diftemper; and as your Practice feem'd diametrically opposite to that of the two worthy, and truly learned Gentlemen, just then deceas'd; I had drawn up a few Quæries, which I intended to ask the favour of you to Answer, for my own Satisfaction, and to prevent all Disputes that might posfibly arife, betwixt you and me. For tho' I am only an Apothecary, I am refractory enough to refuse making up any Prescription, that I have strong Reasons to believe would prejudice my Patient, tho' it was wrote by a Radcliffe, or a Boerhaave.

However when I consider'd, that you appear'd amongst us, in the Character of a regular Physician, I thought it might appear somewhat Insolent in me to ask Ques-

A 2

tions,

tions, let my Design be never so good; so I laid by the Memorial I had drawn up, believing it Time enough to Expostulate, when I thought any of my Patients in Dan-

ger.

You see, Sir, that my Modesty at that Time sav'd you the trouble of perusing my Address. But since then some Accidents have happen'd, which have quite alter'd my Sentiments upon that Subject. For in the Northampton Mercury of December 18. 1738, I observ'd the following Advertise-

ment, viz.

The great and uncommon Success, which in various Cases has attended the Administration of Dr. John Cheshire's Restorative Styptick Tincture, when other Medicines have prov'd inessectual, with the repeated Importunities of those who have frequently experienc'd its Virtues, has induc'd him, for the common good of Mankind, to make it publick in this Manner: And to render the Use of it as extensive as possible, it will be sold at the Doctor's House in Leicester for 7s. 4s. 8d. 2s. 4d. and 1s. 2d. per Bottle, with Directions for its internal and external Use in Cases to which this Medicine is peculiarly adapted.

This Medicine is of great Efficacy in Loss of Appetite from too free living, Vomiting, even to that of Blood, whether occasion'd by rupture of Vessels from external Injuries, or

internal

internal Causes; in the Gout or Rheumatism in the Stomach, in Faintness or Lowness of Spirits; in Hypocondriack or Hysterick Constitutions; in Loosenesses habitual or accidental, even in that of the Small-pox, Meafels, or any Fever, or in the Bloody Flux; in Bloody or Coffee-colour'd Urine; in the Diabetes; in Ulcers of the neck of the Bladder; in Consumptive Cases, or tendency thereto, where Asses Milk is proper; in paralytick Tremblings, or Trembling from too free a use of spirituous Liquors; in all immoderate Evacuations of the Female Sex, whether in the Circumstances of Lying-in, Miscarriage, or otherwise; in Cuts or fresh Wounds; in bleeding Piles, either internal or external, in a course of Scarborough, Epsom, Tunbridge, Bristol, Bath, Buxton, Kedlestone, Stenfield, or most other English mineral Waters, which, by the Assistance of this Tincture, may be drank with Success. fooner in the Spring, and later in Autumn Season. It's also of great Use in Weakness or loss of Appetite, from accute or chronical Diftempers or decays of old Age.

N. B. Any Person of Credit may be supply'd with this Tincture to retail, with proper Allowance. It keeps its Virtues many

Tears and in all Climates.

This I took at first for a Banter, and thought that some of your Enemies had put it into the Mercury, in order to do you

a Prejudice, and expected nothing less than an Information in the King's-Bench against the Author, or Printer. For you know Sir, the Contempt that the greatest Physicians in all Ages have had for Pretenders to Secrets, and universal Remedies, whom they have treated as Cheats and Impostors; and some wise Nations, have made the very attempt to impose upon Mankind in this way a capital Crime, the Punishment annex'd to it being no less than Death; the fame that was provided for Pretenders to Witchcraft, and fuch as had been guilty of the blackest Treasons. And indeed this way of proceeding feems very just; because by the strictest Rules of Morality, he that conceals any thing from the Publick, that may possibly be of great Service to the Life or Fortune of any individual Member of the Community, is guilty of a fort of Treafon against the Common-wealth. On the other hand, he that boasts of a Secret not worth communicating, and of no Use to any one, but the Person that Advertises it, is manifestly guilty of picking Pockets at least, or something very like it; perhaps, in the consequence, of Murder.

This was the way of Reasoning, which made me entirely disbelieve, a Gentleman, and one engag'd in Holy Orders, could be concern'd in so low and mean an Advertisement. However considering the Frail-

ties

ties of Human Nature, I was not much fur-

priz'd to find myself mistaken.

You will now, Sir, perceive, that two Causes directly contrary to each other, are capable of producing the very same Effect. There was a time when my Modesty made me filent in regard to you. It has fince happen'd (fuch are the strange Revolutions in sublunary Affairs) that my Pride has operated in the same manner, and prevented my fending you my Remarks and Quæries. For is there an Apothecary in Great Britain, that would not think it a discredit to him to enter the Lists with the Gentlewoman at the Blue-Posts in Haydon-yard in the Minories? What Apprentice would engage Dr. Rock, the Dr. at the Green-Door in Holborn, or the Author of the Anodyne-Necklace? However imprudent an attempt of this Nature must appear to the rational part of Mankind, you will perceive Sir, that my Pride has at last submitted to my Humanity. I fay Humanity because the time of the Year is now pretty far advanced, in which the Valetudinary are to expect the Diseases of the Season, jam Quartanam, jam Rheumatismum expectantibus ægris; and I shall advise no Patients of mine, that are so unfortunate, as to be seiz'd with an acute Rheumatism, to pursue the method of Cure directed in your Book, till you have given me better Reasons to think

it would not be fatal to them, than any that have hitherto occur'd to me; especially as at this Juncture, his Majesty is encreasing his Forces both by Sea and Land, in order to pursue the War against Spain with Vigour, and therefore the Death of a Man must be more a publick loss, than in time of Peace.

As I have mention'd a Green-door, I hope you will not think a small Digression upon

this Subject improper in this place.

You must know I have taken a great deal of Pains to find out the Reason, why Green and Blue are the colours that are generally adapted to medicinal Uses. If an Oculist was to paint his Door Green, there would be nothing more easily accounted for, because 'tis observ'd, that this Colour of all others is most agreeable to the Eyes; and for this Reason, I dont doubt but Mr. Higgs will have a Green-door, when he has publish'd his Treatise of Optic's, and is made a Fellow of the Royal Society; but why a green Hatch, blue Posts, or blue Lamps, should render a Man infallible in curing the Venerial Disease, cleaning of Teeth, preparing princely Lotions, or restorative Tinctures, is what I have never yet been able to find out, tho' I have been at no small Pains in consulting Aristotle, and Des Cartes, upon the Subject of Colours in order to inform myself.

I shall finish this Digression, with obferving, that a Door near yours in the
Square is very unfortunately painted Green;
you must therefore prevail upon the Owner to bestow another Colour, upon his Door,
or else you must set up blue, or green Posts,
or Lamps, and be at the Expence of another
Advertisement, in order to prevent the Errors that undesigning People might otherwise innocently sall into; for no doubt the
Master of that House would knock a Man
lown, who should have the Impudence to
isk him for a Bottle of the Restorative
Fincture.

I shall now proceed to my Remarks, and Quæries, having first animadverted upon our Advertisement distributed last Week.

You there fay that the numerous Adulteraions of Medicines, are detrimental to the ludgment and Abilities of Physicians. This mongst Friends, seems to me downright Nonsense. 'Tis true the Adulterations of Medicines may hinder the success of a Precription; but how does this impair the udgment, or lessen the Abilities of the Phyician? Those appear to me incapable of being hurt by all the Adulterations, the viest of the Chymists are capable of. But I vill tell you how the Adulterations of MEDICINES may become detrimental to a Man's Morals. Suppose a Man that is enirely unacquainted with Chymistry, and that

that has never feen a Process in all his Life, or, at most, but very few, should endeavour to impose upon the Publick, by giving out, that he will INSPECT the Preparations of Medicines, which are to be offer'd to Sale, by a fet of People, that understand just as much of the Matter as himself. I say, if fuch a Man could be found, whose Honesty wou'd not interfere with fuch a dirty Task, and whose Understanding would not reprefent to him how far he is made a Convenience to a fet of Infignificant Fellows, whose greatest Merit is, and always has been, a little low Artifice, I am afraid fuch an Enterprize would not much increase his moral Character, nor establish an Opinion of his Wildom.

'Tis now time that I proceed to my Remarks, which I shall confine to one part of your Book, in order to avoid being too prolix. Besides it would be a very disagreeable undertaking to read your Book over a second Time, much more to transcribe it, which I should be oblig'd to do, was I to take Notice of every Passage worthy Animadversion. The part I mean begins at page 67. where I find the following Words, viz.

'The next Species of Rheumatism, which is attended with the Co-INCIDENCE of a Fever upon the Dyscrasy of the Bloodwhich produces it, and therefore term'd acute,

requires a Treatment peculiar from that which I've already laid down. Here, in-' deed, is a Case surrounded with many ' Difficulties, great danger (the Fever be-'ing continual) and requires a SAGACIOIS 'GENIUS to obviate the impending Fate; 'The Fever is to be brought to a Crisis, and the Dyscrasy of the Blood to be corrected at the same time; and great Care and Judgment are necessary to secure the Nerves from the Impression and Assault of these formidable (and sometimes, in-'vincible) Enemies. Our great Master Hippocrates Aphor. 24. Sect. 1. says that ' in acute Diseases, and in the beginning of Diseases, Physick must be us'd, but with great Circumspection. I must own, I pay a great Deference to the ancient Writers of our Profession, value their Performances, and honour their Memories; but am convinc'd that Delays, even in Conformity to the Doctrine of this Aphorism, are frequently pernicious, and often not retrievable. Not that I am for hurrying on, and loading Nature with an unreasonable " weight of Medicines, either in acute or ' other Cases, but affording her such Assist-' ance, as a mature and well-grounded Judg-' ment can suggest that she really wants. 'The Case of Diseases is to be attempted 'in their Infancy, before they have got too ' deep and firm Possession in a Constitution,

on, and before they have laid Waste any

of the vital or noble Parts, or obtain'd too

' great an Ascendency over the declining

' Spirits, and languishing Strength.

' I shall consider now the manner of treat-' ing an acute Rheumatism, attended with 'a continual Fever, and wou'd endeavour to STOP THE CAREER of that dangerous Distemper, in the subsequent Method; but shall first observe, that some-' times, under these deplorable Circumfrances Deliriums, Comas, Convulsions, and other nervous Symptoms do appear: ' and then, in the Management of this Dif-' temper, Regard is to be had to fuch ha-' zardous Attendants, as well as the original ' Disorder. If the Rheumatick Pains are ' confin'd to one Side, or any particular part of the Body, I wou'd advise Bleeding in the 'opposite Arm, viz. Mittatur sanguise Vena ' Mediana ana uncias duodecem pro veribus 6 primo mane.

'Every third Hour let the following Bo-'lus be taken, drinking after it a draught

of Sack-whey hot, with 50 or 60 of the

6 following Drops.

Contrayerva Stone a Scruple. Cinnabar of Antimony and English Safforn powder'd each eight Grains. Russia Castor three Grains. Salt of Amber, two Grains Venice Treacle a sufficient quantity to make a Bolus Compound Spirit of Lavender half an Ounce, Tincture of Cassuminair two Drachms and an half. Sydenham's Liquid Laudanum, forty Drops.

Let these be taken in the abovesaid manner, or at pleasure in case of Swooning,

or if the Sweat decreases.

These Bolus's and Drops are to be continued for two or three Days: But if the Rheumatick Pains should be very trouble-some, in the taking of these Medicines to check the Fever, &c. I would advise the Application of Blisters, and the Cupping-Glasses, with Scarification upon or near the part, which may be of Service, viz. Let a blistering Plaister be apply'd to the Nape of the Neck, and two under the Arm-pits, at Bed time, or nearer the Parts affected.

'If Rest is much wanting, the sollowing Draught may be taken at nine at Night; (for I suppose the Patient keeps in Bed). 'Take Milk-water two Ounces and a half, Treacle-water and Aqua-mirabilis of each half an Ounce, Sydenham's Liquid Laudanum sisteen Drops, Diaphoretick Antimony a Scruple, Venice Treacle half a Scruple, Syrup of Diacodion half an Ounce, mix and make them into an Hyp-

'If necessary this Draught may be taken every Night: and from these Medicines,

' in fix or feven Days, very probably, the ' Secretions may be alter'd, and Urine

discover a manifest tendency to a regular and perfect Crisis; but it often

happens longer before this happy effect

appears.

I agree with you, that great Care, and Judgment, are necessary in this Case, and that it is attended with a great deal of danger. We shall presently examine the method which your SAGACIOUS GENIUS has found out to STOP THE CAREER of this dangerous Distemper. But I will first make an Observation upon your learned Quotation. I own I do not understand one Syllable of Greek, having loft that little I learn'd at School, by a long Difuse; but as I understand English, I thought Hippocrates a stupid old Fool, to think it worth while to tell us that Physick must be us'd in Acute Diseases, and in the beginning of Diseases, with great Circumspection. As if Physick was less proper in the beginning of a Distemper, than any other Stage; or as if Phylick was at any time to be us'd without Circumspection. However as I thought the Stupidity might possibly be your own, and Hippocrates innocent, I ask'd a Gentleman of my Acquaintance fomewhat better vers'd in these Affairs,

Affairs, than myfelf, what was the true Meaning of this Passage in Hippocrates; and he has explain'd it in a way that makes me think it very far from being Nonsense. For, he tells me, Hippocrates expressly says in the Aphorism you quote, that we should rarely purge in Acute Distempers, and that in the beginning, purg-ing is to be used with great Caution. Then, Sir, said I, how comes it to pass that Physicians often use purging Medicines in the very beginning of Fevers, and that with great Success. Because, says he, Phyicians are now acquainted with Rhubarb' and many other Drugs, that purge gently, without causing violent Efforts, and raising great Commotions in the Blood; whereis the Antients only made use of Helleore, and some other strong purgers, which were at the time of Hippocrates, and are till very improper in the Cases where he nas forbid their Use.

You see the Affair is now quite alter'd, ind you may still preserve your deference or the Ancients without hazarding your Reputation. Behold what a Happiness it is o have a SAGACIOUS GENIUS! How filly t is to judge of an Author from trifling Quotations! And how dangerous it may prove to teach People born with wrong

Heads, to read!

I am now arriv'd at the practical Part, which is the principal subject of my Remarks.

As I had never feen the quantity of Venice Treacle in a Medicine left undetermin'd by any Physician, that knew what it was made of, I had the Curiofity to prepare a Bolus exactly after your Prescription and I find it takes up a Drachm, at least, or Venice Treacle, of a moderate confistence I have fent it you, that you may fee I have not put in more than what is just sufficient you will fee also that it is near as big as a Hand-granado, and I am afraid it would prove not less Destructive, for the Reasons I am going to give, viz. Such a Bolus as this is to be given your Patient every three Hours, for three Days, as you inform us in one place, and in the very next page you teem to fay, they should be taken for feven. Let us calculate how much Opium the poor Patient is destin'd to take in such a little Time. There is one Grain of Opium in every four Scruples of Venice Treacle. Bolus every three Hours with a Dram of Venice Treacle in it, is an Ounce or eight Drams in 24 Hours, that is 24 Scruples which gives fix Grains of Opium; this multiplied by three gives eighteen; and by se ven forty-two; infomuch that a Patient in your method is to take in three Days I Grains of Opium, in seven forty-two. Bu for fear he shou'd not be dos'd sufficiently

you take care to put Laudanum into the Drops, and (which I tremble to mention) a Draught every Night, if necessary, wherein is contain'd fifteen Drops of Laudanum, half a Scruple of Venice Treacle, and half an ounce of Diacodion. And after this, is it necessary you should tell us, that under these deplorable Circumstances, Deliriums, Comas, Convulsions, and other nervous Symptoms do appear? As if there was a Porter in Europe strong enough to bear the Effect of such Doses, without falling into these Symptoms, the was to take them in a State of perfect Health; much less would he be able to escape these obvious Consequences under the Circumstances of a Fever attended with a Rheumatism, where it is Difficult sometimes to guard against Deliriums, Comas, &c. by the most approv'd Methods, so little is it necessary to give the Patient Medicines, that will in this Case most certainly cause them.

I hinted to you before that the two Physicians who for some Years practic'd in this Town, with great Success, treated their Patients in a method very different from that you recommend. As I am not going to teach you how to manage your Patients, it would be unnecessary to tell you the particulars of their Practice. But it may not be amiss to assure you that I have at this time upon my File Prescrip-

than thirty Patients that labour'd under the Distemper you mention; and I dont remember that any one of these dy'd, that pursu'd their method regularly; so great was their Success. Now if their way of treating this Distemper was good, yours must necessarily be bad. And this I think my self so well assured off, that if in treating ten Patients in the method describ'd in your Book, you recover two, I will be oblig'd to make you any Submission you shall require

shall require.

I could quote you a hundred Authorities, and those too of the best, and most approv'd Authors which may ferve to prove your method detestable, provided that which they recommend is good. But as this would fearcely be worth while, I shall content myfelf with one modern Author of great Reputation, I mean Boerhaave. This Author fays as follows, viz. A Rheumatism is to be cur'd by Bleeding; by repeated cooling Purges, with a Narcotic at Night after each; by soft tepid Baths, and cooling Fomentations, apply'd to the Part affected; by strong Vesicatories and Canteries; by Medicines extreamly diluting, and at the same time emollient. And he ends his Treatise on this Subject with this remarkable Passage; HENCE APPEARS DANGER WHICH ATTENDS THE WARM

WARM MEDICINES, AND A TOO EARLY EXHIBITION OF OPIATES. He means that the use of hot Medicines, and Opiates are very likely to force the Rheumatism upon the Lungs or Brain; and then come on the Deliriums, Comas, &c. which I find you have so frequently met with. Such are Boerhaave's Sentiments upon a Rheumatism; whereas you dont so much as mention cooling Purges, where he thinks them most necessary. He directs an Opiate at Night after every Purge, a manifest proof that he thought them pernicious at any other Time. You direct excessive quantities of Opiates from the beginning. He prescribes cooling Fomentations; yours are hot and inflaming. He recommends diluting emollient Medicines; you advise Fire and Brimstone, and dilute with Brandy, for Sack, fuch as we commonly buy, has most certainly a great deal of Brandy in it.

As my Remarks have not been very long, my Quæries shall be as short, for I begin to be tir'd with so disagreeable a

Subject.

First then, what has tempted you to set up your own SAGACIOUS GENIUS, in Opposition to common Sense, and all the greatest Men of your Profession; in all Ages?

Is

Is it not superlatively wicked, to recommend a Method of Cure so pernicious
as that of yours, and which might possibly be fatal to Thousands yet unborn,
provided your Writings could long escape
a Jakes? Tho' the present Generation has
not been so favourable to you as your
SAGACIOUS GENIUS may deserve, methinks
you should have some Compassion upon
Posterity, that cannot have offended you.

Lastly was it only the itch of Scribbling that tempted you, at any Rate, to

Print?

I hope this was the Case; and if so, why in the Name of Goodness, would you not rather chuse to write Verses, for in Poetry you might have amus'd yourself without Guilt, tho' the Productions of your Sagacious Genius were even as bad as the Poetical Works of your Friend Mr. Hetter, which, execrable as they are, how ever are attended with no ill Consequences to any Body, but himself.

I own I am far from entring into the Opinion of Messieurs the Criticks, who all endeavour to dissuade People born without a Genius, from making Verses. Now I think a bad Poet would probably make as bad a Figure in any other Situation where Sense is required to keep a Man from being contemptible. And really versifying is the most innocent way a Man car

stumble

stumble upon to render himself ridiculous.

I shall end this Epistle by recommending to you an Undertaking, that if executed with that Spirit and Vigour, with which you have began another, will in all Probability turn out the most Profit of the two. My Advice therefore is, that you immediately fet up a Stage in the middle of the Bullring, and proceed in the following Manner. Let Mr. Birth mount at halfan hour after One, dress'd in one of his French Suits, and he will make an incomparable Jack-pudding. You know upon these Occasions it is necesfary to have a Person on purpose to be the Merry-Andrew's Butt, and to Laugh at his Tokes. Therefore let Mr. Piggs without fail mount with him, whose Excellence, if he has any, consists in his Laugh. He would also make a very good Toad-Eater. Buttal would make a tolerable Figure with a Trumpet, after a little Application; and benor in a short red Jacket, and with an artificial Tail would make an excellent Facka-napes, which you know feldom fails to attract the Eyes of the Rabble. But if this should not attain the defired End, viz. of getting a Crowd together, let Higgs prevail with some of the Ladies of his Acquaintance, from Mrs. Bridgens's or Mrs. Purman's to come upon the Stage to Tumble, and shew Postures, and your business is done. Then

Then at half an hour after Two, put on a pair of Whiskers, command Silence, and harangue the Populace with the Virtues of your RESTORATIVE STYPTIC TINCTURE.

Then shall the People cry aloud, in the manner of the Jews speaking of the Calves in Bethel, BEHOLD TOUR DOCTORS O

ISRAEL!

POSTSCRIPT.

I really thought I had done with you, but fince I transcrib'd this for your perusal, behold another Advertisement arrives, of the same Leaven as the former.

Birmingham Nov. 8. 1739.

Whereas it has been reported, that I accepted of an Invitation to this Town, purely for the Service of Mr. Edward Nuttal and Company and their Patients, I apprehend it incumbent upon me to declare that the Report is false and malicious; and that the Poor in general shall be entitled to my Advice Gratis on all Occasions; and that shall readily attend all Persons, requiring my Assistance, who now do, or here after may employ, any other Apothecary

23

this Town, &c. in such a Manner as is consistent with the Character of a Physician of a regular Education, and the Experience of above twenty Years in Practice.

John Cheshire.

This is drawn up with so much Truth, Spirit, and Vivacity, and the Poor are lugg'd in so prettily by the Head and Shoulders, that I am sure no Body, but your Friend Mr. Letter, could pen it. However, be it his, or be it yours, 'tis pity so great a Genius should go unrewarded. Methinks the place of Secretary to an itinerant Rat-Catcher would be a Post adequate to the Capacity of the Author, and a considerable Preferment too; for I think they generally Advertise wherever they come, and are so kind as to offer their Assistance to all good Housewives that are in Pain for their Cheese and Bacon.

However, to be serious for one moment, I assure you that I never knew any one either of the late or present Physicians in Town, or Country resuse their Advice and Assistance to poor People, or Servants, Gratis; and I believe every Apothecary in

Town can fay the fame.

(24)

For my own part, I have attended many poor Patients with every one of them, where they have neither expected a Fee, nor I to be paid for my Medicines. And this is a thing so notoriously known in Town, that 'tis unnecessary to insist any farther upon it.

This is drawn up with fo much Truth, spirit, and Vivacity, and the Poor are lugg'd in 15 prettily by the Head and Shoulders, that I am fure no Body, but your Friend Mr. Draw cold plain. How Fire be it his, or be it yours, its pity to grat a Genius should go unrewarded. Merhinks the place of Secretary to an itinerant Rat-Catebral would be a Polit adequate to the Catebral of the Author, and a confiderable freferment too; for I think they generally Advertise wherever they come, and are to lind as to offer their Assistance to all are to lind as to offer their Assistance to all find as to offer their Assistance to all cond Housewives that are in Fain fer their

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