

**Observations preparatory to the use of Dr. Myrersbach's medicines / [John Coakley Lettsom].**

**Contributors**

Lettsom, John Coakley, 1744-1815.

**Publication/Creation**

London : E. & C. Dilly, etc., 1776.

**Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/h5sw5829>

**License and attribution**

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

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



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

# OBSERVATIONS

Preparatory to the Use of

Dr. MYERSBACH's *Medicines*;

IN WHICH

The Efficacy of certain GERMAN PRESCRIPTIONS  
(given in ENGLISH) is ascertained by Facts and  
Experience; with Cases, tending to shew the  
Possibility of acquiring the Knowledge of Diseases  
by Urine.

By J. C. LETTSOM, M. D. F. R. S. and S. A.  
Member of the College of Physicians, and Physician to  
the General Dispensary in London.

---

The SECOND EDITION, considerably enlarged.

---

L O N D O N :

Printed for E. and C DILLY in the Poultry; J. WALLIS  
and C. STONEHOUSE, in Ludgate-street; J. FLEXNEY,  
opposite Gray's-Inn-Gate, Holborn; Mess. BYEFIELD  
and HAWKESWORTH, Charing-Cross; and A. BELL,  
No. 8. Aldgate.

MDCCLXXVI.



*Falstaff.* Boy ! What said the Doctor to my water ?

*Page.* He said, Sir, the water itself was a good healthy water : but for the party that owned it, he might have more diseases than he knew for.

### SHAKESPEAR'S HENRY IV.



---

Correspondence from the G A Z E T-  
T E E R, &c.

**H**AD Dr. MYERSBACH, possessed half the cunning and medical knowledge of KOCH, his apothecary, he might have prevented the friend of reason and common-sense from detecting his impostures, and have continued them among the ignorant and credulous much longer than his destiny now seems to promise. So little indeed has been his precaution, as to suffer himself to have been deceived with Lisbon wine, \* as well as with elder-flower water †, for the urine of women ;

\* A gentleman, through mistake, carried a glass of Lisbon wine instead of his wife's urine, to Dr. MYERSBACH, who told by it the lady's complaints ; which, according to him, are the same pretty universally, viz. *a disorder in the womb*. The husband, on his return home, discovered his mistake ; but he has not related it to his wife, who still continues to take the German medicines. This was communicated to me by J. D. who will vouch for the fact.

† A small quantity of high-coloured brandy was added to the elder-flower water, to give it the appearance of urine ; this was



women; and with numerous other mixtures, where the least attention might have discovered the deception. I do not design to avail myself of all these detections of the impostor's ignorance, but to confine myself chiefly to the correspondence upon this subject admitted into the Gazetteer.

## L E T T E R I.

H. F. a young gentleman near the City-road, waited on Dr. MYERSBACH, on the 9th of June, with a vial containing about equal quantities of the urine of two persons in health: the Doctor, after shaking the bottle and smelling at its contents, passed his hands over different parts of F's body, at the same time telling him, "*the pain was here, or the pain was there;*" and that he might be more certain of stumbling upon some part affected, the Doctor likewise included the gentleman's head in the quick motion of his hands, and added, "*that he had slime in his kidneys, and that he had taken too much mercury, which had ruined his constitution, without being cured of the disease for which mercury had been given; but that he would cure him.*" My friend, however, was in health, and had not taken any mercury during the last two years; the urine was mixed for the purpose; and, indeed, so ignorant is Dr. MYERSBACH of this fluid, that he has been several times deceived by per-

sent to Dr. MYERSBACH as the product of a lady in high-life, and by it the Doctor found out the complaints he usually applies to the female sex.

sons,



sons, who have taken to him the urine of different sexes, as well as that of different animals, as the following cases sufficiently evince.

On the 25th of August, H. Fearon, with W. Norris, a young gentleman of his acquaintance, waited on Dr. MYERSBACH, with a vial containing the urine of a cow, belonging to C. Kearsly, a considerable milkman near town: this *doctor of urines*, upon inspecting the water, told his supposed patient, he perceived by it, that *his blood was so acrid it could not get into the circulation; that he had throbbing pains in his inside, beating of the heart, with tremors and palpitations.* H. F. then assured the Doctor that he had not any one of these complaints; who replied, *that the water changed every week, and if he had brought it a week after his first visit, he could have explained to him his disorder, which he added, he now saw, was a slow fever, and that the water was a very bad water, but better than when he applied before.* Indeed when he applied before, the Doctor discovered that the party had been *too free with the ladies of the town.*



---

## LETTER II.

To the PRINTER of the GAZETTEER.

*August 26, 1776.*

**I**T has been an observation, no less true than common, that the English are the greatest dupes of novelty and deception under the sun; and however absurd and inconsistent the publication of any matter or subject may be, if there is the least plausibility in the tale, or suitableness in the application, no people will swallow the bait with less reluctance, or proclaim its excellence with greater zeal. To be an object of credulity in matters merely indifferent, will frequently afford just grounds for censure, and the consequences may not be very great: but when the most precious thing we possess is liable to sustain material injury, if not be effectually ruined, it becomes a subject too serious for burlesque, and too important to trifle with. I am led, Sir, into these reflections from an affair in which I lately engaged; and that, not to satiate any private pique, or to gratify a vain and idle curiosity, but for the real advantage of the community, many of whose lives are by much too valuable to society for reflecting persons to see them daily murdered by empiricks from almost every quarter, and remain silent witnesses of the dreadful facts.

Having



Having been assured by several of my friends, that the famous Dr. MYERSBACH prescribed for many of his patients with little or no judgment ; but more particularly, having read a late pamphlet intitled, " Observations preparatory to the Use of Dr. MYERSBACH's medicines," &c. I was induced to make an experiment to try the Doctor's skill and knowledge ; with this fixed and candid resolution, that if he discovered the deception, or afforded me any reason to believe he was a man of abilities, and acquainted, in any measure, with the *Materia Medica*, I would immediately publish his fame, and vindicate his character against every false calumniator ; and especially from the many aspersions contained in the above-cited publication : but, alas ! I was totally prevented in my benevolent design towards the Doctor, by his manifest ignorance and consummate assurance. After I had waited a considerable time in an apartment adjacent to the Doctor's, amidst a croud of unhappy deluded objects, many of whose cases called forth my commiseration, and excited all those feelings of humanity with which Providence may, in some degree, have blessed me, I was ushered in to the Doctor by his door-porter, who converses with the patients (previous to their admission into the presence-chamber) with little less freedom, and with much less modesty, than his master. However, being thus introduced, I stepped forward and presented the sagacious Doctor with my vial, which contained no other than the urine of a young gelding. He looked at it with much seeming attention, and turning round, enquired whose

water



water it was. Instead of giving him a direct answer to the question, I told him I came from my wife: this response, which by no means would have been deemed satisfactory to a cautious physician, well satisfied this Water-doctor, who, very significantly shaking his head, and drawing up his shoulders, cried, with a kind of transport at his intuitive knowledge, *Oh! I did tink it was a Lady's water—it be no good—she be very bad.*—Upon which the following conversation and particulars ensued.

*Patient.* What do you think is her complaint, Doctor?

*Doctor.* It be, Sir,—it be a disorder in her womb—her womb—her—her womb be somewhat affected—she have a pain across her loins—she be very bad—I do see she be very bad.

*Patient.* The water seems very clear, Doctor; don't it?

*Doctor.* Ah! Ah! It look so to you; but I do see—I do see a slime upon the kidneys—she be very sick at the stomach—she have a pain in her head, and in her limbs.—Has she had many children?

*Patient.* Two, Doctor.

*Doctor.* Her pains in labour be very bad—be they not?

*Patient.*



*Patient.* Why, Doctor, I think all women say labour-pains be very bad; I cannot speak from experience.

*Doctor.* No! No! No!—your wife's temper be much affected by her disorder—it make her very peevish—very fretful—passionate—every little ting—(here he paused, and gazed once more on the gelding's urine, and turning round, cried) every little ting, I see, puts her in a passion—Does it not?

*Patient.* Why, Doctor, she is as most woman are, not always in the best humour.

*Doctor.* Ah! Ah! There you do see—I did say so; she has had this complaint—yes, she has had this complaint these *three years*—I do perceive dat—and she always be coughing.

This last piece of presumption, in attempting to ascertain the precise time in which he supposed my wife to have been seized with these several chimerical disorders, operated too powerfully on my passions to admit my remaining any longer the auditor of such ridiculous conjectures; and therefore requested him (in order to maintain the deception) to give me a prescription, which he did. I then gave him half a guinea; for which he returned me a most servile, unmeaning cringe, with a *God Almighty, he grant I may do your wife good, namely, the gelding.*

Mr.



Mr. Printer, That I may not engross too much of your paper by any more particulars, I will conclude with only observing, how much it is to be regretted, that some method or other is not yet adopted, to suppress those daring adventurers in physic. Here is a man, who, unacquainted with the first principles of pharmacy, and an almost total stranger to the constitution of the human system, undertakes to cure disorders which never existed, and to ascertain complaints from a vial of liquid which never came from any of the human species. May every reader, Sir, reflect upon these plain, but well-intended hints, and avoid hazarding those lives which may be essential to the well-being and happiness of numbers.

*Aldgate.*

A. B.



---

### LETTER III.

To the PRINTER of the GAZETTEER.

*Minimeque in rebus multum inter se differentibus perpetuum esse præceptum.* CELS.

**W**HEN people of credulity have once admitted the marvellous, impossibilities are as readily assented to as the most rational truths; the more unaccountable the story, the greater stamp of authority it wears; and it is not unusual to find the deluded person the most anxious to sanctify his delusion, by bringing the whole circle of his acquaintance into the same predicament. This disposition in the weaker and more numerous part of mankind, has proved an useful engine to miracle-mongers in all ages, and supplied empirics in divinity with their votaries, and empirics in physic with their dupes; whilst those who calmly stand forth on the side of reason, have been traduced as the common enemy, or the disappointed advocates of a party.

It is hence probable, that I may meet with the censure of some who have outlived their deception,



and of many more who are unwilling to be undeceived, respecting their weakness, in reposing their lives with a man, who at random ventures to prescribe remedies, without knowing the symptoms of the disease he boldly affirms he will cure. It is unnecessary to say, that I now allude to Dr. MYERSBACH, who was exhibited in the Gazetteer of the 29th of August, as deducing the disease, and even the temper of a very healthy and chearful lady, from the urine of a coach-horse,

In early life I knew several water-conjurors, and recollect many wonderful stories of their detecting specious urine, sent with a view to impose upon them; I have often heard it repeated, that a person who applied with this design to a water-doctor in the north of England, was told by him to feed the patient with *hay and oats*, and let him *work less*: the story was too well adapted for the support of delusion, to escape the votaries of Dr. MYERSBACH; and this wonderful discovery, which to my own knowledge was talked of fifteen years ago, has been recently applied to the German Doctor, and so frequently founded in my ears, with a kind of exultation, that I determined to prove the falsity of the application, by an experiment which is decisive. My coachman procured me the urine of a horse on the 26th of August, which was sent to A. B. of Aldgate, who furnished the Gazetteer with the Doctor's curious remarks upon it: the coachman, who is sometimes witty, declares that the  
urine



urine did not belong either to a horse, or to a mare, but to a gelding. I shall not however avail myself of the distinction he has introduced, but speak of the urine as the product of a horse. Instead of recommending *hay and oats* to this animal, the Doctor wrote a prescription, which I have now in my possession; and after a few observations upon the symptoms of the horse, I shall examine how far the remedy was adapted to the disease.

From the inspection of the urine, Dr. MYERSBACH declared, he saw *a disease of the womb*; and as it is unaccountable how an English horse, or even a gelding, could have a *disorder in the womb*, we must on that consideration give it due credit; for it is too wonderful to be doubted; as is likewise the Doctor's sagacity in finding out the *children* in this horse's water, and the *severe labour-pains* which accompanied their delivery.

To discover these disorders in a horse, was certainly possible, as the Doctor appears to have guessed as near the spot as he usually does, supposing a horse furnished with a *womb*; which is not more improbable than to suppose, that the Doctor saw by the water the temper of this quadruped, which, to use his own words, was *very peevish*, and *soon put into a passion*: This is a severe censure on the character of an innocent animal, who, to the best of my recollection, has not been peevish, or in a passion, during the last four



months; and the coachman confirms this good character, by a more intimate acquaintance with him.

There are some other complaints enumerated by the Doctor, as *a slime, he saw, upon the kidneys, sickness of the stomach, pains in the limbs, &c.* For the first time the Doctor seems to have guessed right, as the kidneys are never without slime or mucus; but as the horse has frequently run thirty miles a day, I should presume, that he is neither *sick in the stomach, nor afflicted with pains in the limbs.* He is now but four years old, though the Doctor declared he had *had these complaints for three years.*

To cure this *disorder in the womb,* and the *peevish temper of the horse,* the Doctor principally prescribed burnt oyster-shells powdered, and some opiate pills: the former, to be sure, was an excellent substitute for *oats and hay;* and the opiate was probably designed to keep the horse from being *peevish,* from kicking and breaking the harness, the consequence of treating him with *oyster-shells* instead of *corn.*

I am sorry to have occupied so much of the Gazetteer, in proving, what almost every one now is convinced of, that Dr. MYERSBACH knows less of urine than a chamber-maid, and as little of medicine as most of his patients. I have just received a case of deception practised upon the Doctor by I. F. and W. N. with the urine of a cow, which I shall lay before



before the public in a few days, and three other cases of deception; and at present conclude with begging pardon of the public for assisting to rouse them out of their delusion, such as Horace's madman is described to have felt, when he cried, " You have undone me, ill-judging friends, in robbing me of such pleasure; in depriving me, against my consent, of so delicious a deception." \*

London, Sept. 3, 1776.

L.

\* ——— Pol me occidistis, amici :

Non servastis, ait; cui sic extorta voluptas,

Et demptus per vim mentis *gratissimus error.*

F I N I S.



I leave the public in a few days, and three other calls of deception; and at present conclude with begging pardon of the public for assisting to trouble them out of their devotion, such as Horace's madman is described to have felt, when he cried, "You have undone me, my judging friends, in robbing me of such pleasure in depriving me, against my consent, of so delicious a deception."

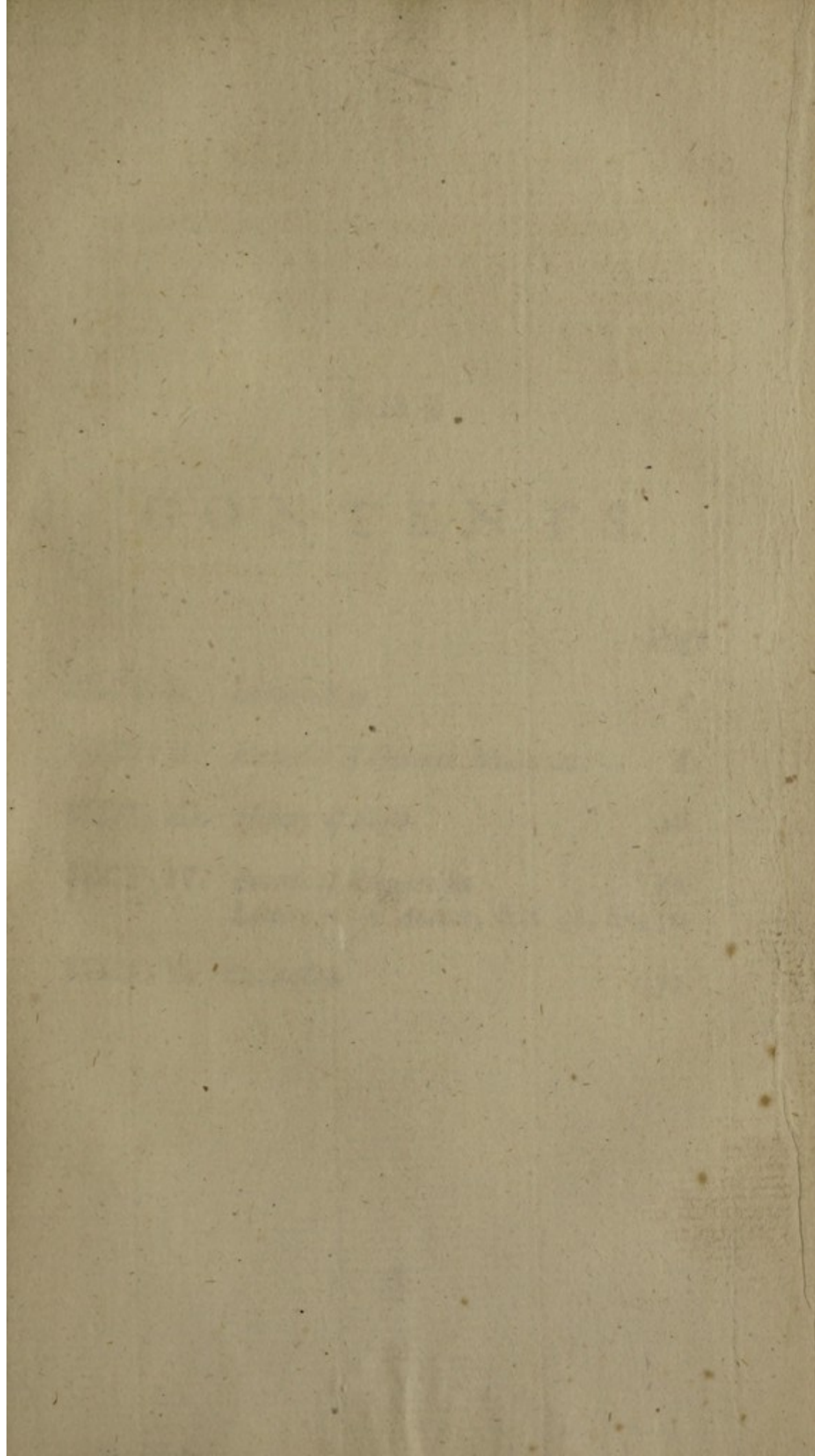
London, 24th 3, 1776. I.

For me cordially, and  
I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
J. H. H.

London, 24th 3, 1776. I.

For me cordially, and  
I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
J. H. H.







THE

CONTENTS

Page

SECT. I. Introduction 1

SECT. II. Principles of General Metaphysics 8

SECT. III. History of Logic 16

SECT. IV. General Principles of Logic 22

SECT. V. Principles of the Science of Logic 26

SECT. VI. Conclusion 72



# THE CONTENTS.

|                                              | Page       |
|----------------------------------------------|------------|
| SECT. I. <i>Introduction</i>                 | I          |
| SECT. II. <i>Formulæ of German Medicines</i> | 8          |
| SECT. III. <i>History of Cases</i>           | 16         |
| SECT. IV. <i>Success of Empiricism</i>       | 52         |
| <i>Letters to the Author, &amp;c.</i>        | 58, 65, 70 |
| SECT. V. <i>Conclusion</i>                   | 71         |



# ADVERTISEMENT

FOR want of **THE** attention to the press  
of the first edition of this pamphlet, which are  
transmitted to the printer, and which are  
are also inserted. It is now in the hands of the  
the author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the

author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the

author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the

author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the

author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the

author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the

author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the

author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the

author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the

author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the

author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the

author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the

author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the  
author, and is in the hands of the



---

## ADVERTISEMENT.

**F**OR want of proper attention to the press, several inaccuracies were admitted into the first edition of this pamphlet, which are removed in the present: many additional cases are also inserted, that have since come under the author's immediate cognizance; which afford as many lamentable proofs of the indiscriminate use of remedies, in the hands of the daring and ignorant. The instances, however, which have fallen to his share alone, must be few in comparison of those which must have occurred to the faculty at large in this great city; but even these are more than sufficient to exercise the judgment of the public, before they trust the dearest of human blessings to the random prescription of an itinerant adventurer.

The author has had no reason to alter his sentiments respecting the impositions practised by Dr. MYERSBACH, and those connected with him; on the contrary, he is confirmed  
in



in the opinions he first suggested, by the testimony of Dr. MYERSBACH's apothecary, who has communicated much more than he chooses at present to repeat, as the whole imposture, to give it the mildest epithet, will soon appear in a court of justice; where he doubts not but the astonishment of the public will be equalled only by their indignation for the insults and injuries practised upon the weak and credulous part of the community.



---

## SECTION I.

### INTRODUCTION.

**W**HOEVER is engaged in Medicine, with that compassion for the miseries of his fellow-creatures, which a physician and a friend to mankind ought to feel, must often lament over the frailty of the human constitution, and the violence and variety of the diseases to which it is liable; some peculiarly affecting the functions of the body, some the powers of the mind, and some too often both. Thus interwoven with the constitution, he will find it requisite to exert the utmost efforts of skill, to discover the causes of diseases, to understand their symptoms, and ascertain the most probable means of removing them: he will see these symptoms daily varying, and as often requiring a variation of remedies; that those which were first indicated, must be omitted, and others substituted, in order to reconduct his patient, as soon as the operations of nature will permit, into the port of health and happiness.

The human body is a compound machine, constituted of innumerable distinct parts, which depend upon the proper action of each other for the preservation and health of the whole; which not only under-



go changes in the same person at different periods of age, but are also attended with certain peculiarities in different persons and sexes; and which are liable to be affected by the mode of living, the season of the year, the temperature of the air, and a thousand other causes operating upon the mind or body, or upon both; and producing effects, the causes of which can only be justly ascertained by a long and careful acquaintance with medicine in all its various branches: these effects are, indeed, so various, that physicians of eminence have declared, that two patients exactly similar, and requiring the same precise method of treatment, have never occurred during their practice.

Whilst the different parts of the human frame perform their action in a state of health, the fluids undergo certain separations, which are necessary to the support of the body; and the superfluous are discharged by various outlets, of which the *urinary passages* are not the least. But as the state of these fluids principally depends upon the state of the solid parts of the body, and the action of the vessels; it is evident, that the state of the secreted fluids cannot be ascertained, without a knowledge of the action of those vessels upon which the excretions depend, and which can be known only by the state of the pulse. And as the body is perpetually varying, from changes in the air, diet, exercise, passions of the mind, and a thousand other circumstances which vary the appearances in the excreted fluids, we may confidently affirm,



affirm, that the state of the urine, liable as it is to so many variations in health, cannot afford a just indication of the state of the body when under disease, without a previous knowledge, not only of the human body in health, but likewise of the various changes produced upon it from different causes, in its sound, as well as its diseased state.\*

Supposing it were sometimes possible to attain a general knowledge of a disease by urine,† or by any other excreted fluid, would it not be judicious in the physician, to acquire the most particular information respecting the causes and the symptoms of the disease, by the pulse, the constitution of the patient, and other means, as well as by the urine; which, alone, must be fallacious,‡ because it is perpetually varying in the most healthy person? When these various indications are neglected by the physician, may we not conclude that he is ignorant of the human body, and the laws upon which life and health depend; and consequently

\* Itaque ut ex urinarum inspectione aliquid minus dubie dijudicemus in ordine ad Morbos, et artem medicam, quopacto se habere debeat urinā in naturali statu, et unde pendeat hic idem naturalis status ejus, intelligamus oportet. BELLINI de Urinis.

† In reality (says D. HEBERDEN, *Med. Transf. vol. 2. p. 505.*) it is but in few maladies, that the urine affords a practitioner much useful information.

‡ BELLINI de Urinis, p. 3. (Uromantes inanes.)



either unacquainted with a rational mode of relieving it when disordered, or else extremely indifferent respecting the health of his patient?

It is true, it may be urged, that a person who is ignorant of the human constitution, and the various causes of disease which act upon it, and who invariably prescribes one set of medicines for all diseases, can have no occasion to know the causes and symptoms of any disease, the state of the pulse, or of any thing else connected with the body. If this be admitted, and at the same time if similar remedies are indiscriminately employed in all diseases, of what use can the urine be? To deceive the public, however, it is necessary to preserve some appearance of knowledge; and when a deception has once prevailed over the understanding of the people, the more irrational it is, the more implicitly and firmly it is believed; and while the wonderfulness of it gains admiration, the credulous are continually, though unconsciously, liable to substitute fables for facts, till prodigies are circulated as familiar truths.

Deceptions, similar in cause and effect, have prevailed over the understandings of men in all ages, and in every department of life; marvellous and improbable stories, if once believed, are always admired and propagated: and thus artful men have found dupes in all ages and professions, the mind being as liable to admit poison as the body; and before the injuries of one species of deception have opened the eyes



eyes of the public, another starts up, and for a certain space of time equally detains its votaries in bondage. Strong indeed must be that bias, which leads a man to apply to a stranger, and repose, in his hands, the dearest of blessings; and callous must be the heart of him, who, ignorant of medicine, trifles with the pains, the miseries, and the lives of his fellow-creatures, for the sake of gratifying a mercenary disposition.

I am sensible it may be said, that many a mountebank and water-conjurer, driven to seek a livelihood by poverty and distress, have assumed a profession, for the sake of present bread, which they at first little imagined could have gained so many votaries, and consequently victims to their ignorance. I have seen the rise and progress of several such pretenders; and could relate many incidents and ingenious methods of deception, were not health and life too serious for diversion, and mankind too ready to improve in deceit, by adding to their own, that of others. It is no crime to have been poor; but whether poison be retailed, or sold by wholesale, the heart of the vender is equally criminal.

One would be apt to imagine, after so many deceptions which men have been led into, that in so important a concern as health, they would seriously consider, that though a quack-medicine may sometimes cure, it more frequently injures the constitution through life, and impairs, not unfrequently, the vi-  
gor



gor and health of succeeding generations. Mistakes in ordinary matters may be remedied; but a body ruined by injurious treatment, is a monument of folly, whose inscription the infatuated object painfully pauses over as long as he lives. Such instances have so often occurred to me, that I think it my duty to expose to the public, some of the practices which have lately deluded a great part of this city; the effects of which I find daily more injurious to the people, having, in my own practice, lately met with many persons, whose affecting treatment has been such, as demands the tear of humanity, and that sympathy; which the distress of our fellow-creatures excites, even when it arises from their own imprudence and misconduct.

Though these medicines improperly applied may be attended with considerable mischiefs, they are, nevertheless, such as may be useful, when their virtues are distinctly ascertained. I have therefore given, in the second section, the formulæ of the German Dispensatory, for the use of those who suppose them capable of very wonderful and salutary effects.

The third section is employed in relating some cases which have come under my own notice; and I have related them nearly as they occurred, without selecting the most fatal, or most successful only; that the public may judge of the comparative qualities of these remedies, with those of other quacks; and of the judgment of the practitioner, who indiscriminately



criminatingly administers them to different ages and sexes, and in all diseases.

The diseases and remedies suggest some reflections in the fourth and fifth sections, which I have treated with brevity, on account of the more general observations offered by writers upon the subject of empiricism, and particularly by Dr. Tissot in his *Avis au peuple*.

The concluding section contains a letter from a physician to the author, on the same subject.

## SECTION



---

## SECTION II.

### FORMULÆ OF GERMAN MEDICINES.

**T**HOUGH it has been my lot in practice to have been consulted in a multitude of cases, wherein Dr. MYERSBACH's medicines have been exhibited, I have seldom had the happiness to meet with those who have thought themselves better when they left him, than when they placed themselves under his care. There are, however, individuals, who entertain the highest opinion of his judgment, to whom it may not prove unacceptable, to see, in plain English, by what means the cures, so pompously related, have been performed; and there may be a period, when the Doctor will think it most prudent to retire from the neighbourhood of those who have preserved the English character, of being taken with novelty, and imposed upon by every thing that is foreign and unaccountable.\* In such an exigence it must prove an essential service to the public, to be furnished, at half-price, with the same remedies as are imported at some expence from Germany; and I doubt not, but I shall thereby likewise oblige

\* England is famous through Europe, for bottle-conjuring, and water-conjuring.

Doctor



DoCTOR MYERSBACH, who, there is reason to conclude, is as ignorant of the medicines he exhibits, as the patients themselves. Their composition is kept a secret as much as possible in Germany : I procured the following formulæ by an unexpected incident, and I am sufficiently satisfied of their authenticity.

To a man who, ignorant of all medical knowledge, administers the same remedies to every patient, a vial of urine is just as good as a vial of vinegar, or any other liquid: it seems to be so with the Doctor, as he has uniformly given, in a multitude of cases successively, of every age, of different sexes and constitutions, green drops, and the deobstruent pills. When the patient returns again, worse than at the first application, the sweet essence is usually ordered, with the silver pills, the red, and the antacid powders: should these likewise fail of success, and the black pills afterwards also; the miserable patient is glad to apply to regular practitioners, lamenting the day that gave birth to his German connection.

I. *Essentia dulcis, or the Sweet Essence.*

Take Foliated Tartar, two drachms ;

Loaf Sugar, two ounces ;

Water, one ounce and an half : boil these together in a glazed vessel, till the mixture acquires a brownish or dark color ; then take it from the fire,

C

and



and pour upon it twelve ounces of the following menstruum ; and after placing it by the fire for a day or two, let it be filtered through paper :

*The Menstruum for making the Sweet Essence.*

Take Rectified Spirit of Wine, four pounds ;  
 Alum powdered, eight ounces ;  
 Water, one pound : mix them, and distill off three pounds for the menstruum.

II. *Essentia amara ; the Bitter Essence, or Green Drop.*

Take Tanfy, one ounce ;  
 Stonewort, Ceterach, or Hart's-tongue,  
 Blessed Thistle,  
 Lesser Centaury,  
 Gentian root,  
 Dock roots, of each three drachms ;  
 Recent peel of green Oranges, half an ounce :  
 cut these ingredients small, and add twelve ounces of rectified spirit of wine ; after a few days infusion in the spirit, filter it through paper. This is a grateful bitter, perhaps equal to that, which in England goes under Stoughton's name, and in the shops is called the bitter Tincture, well known for its supposed stomachic qualities ; though it may be suspected, whether the long use of spirituous bitters, may not, like spirits in general, injure the stomach. One would imagine, from the universal exhibition of these Green Drops, that Dr. MYERSBACH considers them useful  
 I in



in every disease under the sun, as it is the first medicine he ordered for almost fifty different cases, with which I have been acquainted.

III. *Essentia Hypochondriaca, or Hypochondriac Essence.*

Take Vervain,

Rue,

Pellitory of the wall,

Sage,

Sharp-leaved plantain, each one ounce and an half;

Flowers of St. John's wort, one ounce: cut these ingredients small, and put to them one pound of spirit of wine; and in a few days filter it.

IV. *Pilula Polychrestæ; the Polychrest, or Silver Pills.*

Take Extract of Aloes,

Wormwood;

Lesser Centaury,

Water-germander;

Scurvy-grass,

Gum Myrrh, each three drachms;

Hedera;

Sandarach, or Juniper,

Maftich,

Benzoin, each a drachm and an half: make these into a mass of pills, which are to be covered with silver leaf.



I do not imagine the silver leaf will add to the virtues of these pills; but as it is so ordered by the German dispensatory, in which these medicines are described, I have copied the original verbatim for the sake of accuracy.

V. *Pilula Polychrestæ Starkei, or the Black Pills.*

Take Extract of Opium,  
Liquorice Powder,  
Black Hellebore,  
White Hellebore, each one ounce;  
Tartarized Soap,\* three ounces: make these  
into a mass of pills.

One seventh part of this mass consists of opium: as an opiate it resembles the saponaceous pill of the London Dispensatory; and is, in ignorant hands, a very dangerous medicine. This I imagine proved so injurious in Cases 1st. and 2d.; at least, from some experiments I had the melancholy occasion to make in Case 7th, I presume I have just grounds to suspect so.

Both BOERHAAVE and HOFFMAN have recommended the above in dropfies; but in some cases of dropfy they must prove injurious; and in any we

\* This soap is prepared with salt of tartar, and oil of turpentine.

have



have more simple, and at the same time more efficacious remedies.

VI. *Pilule contra Obstructiones; Pills to remove Obstructions.*

These consist principally of Aloes and Steel, and though they may be beneficial in certain complaints, they are not less injurious in others, wherein I have seen them given; as in incipient hectic complaints their stimulus has excited spitting of blood and consumption.

VII. *Pilule Purgantes, or Purging Pills.*

These chiefly contain Aloes and Jalap, or without the Aloes his purging powder is substituted.

VIII. *Pulvis Antispasmodicus, or the Red Powder.*

Take Salt petre,  
Vitriolated Tartar, each two ounces;  
Cinnabar, one drachm and a half; mix, and  
make a powder.

IX. *Pulvis contra acridinum; the Powder to correct Acrimony, or the Antacid Powder.*

Take Diaphoretic Antimony, two ounces;  
Burnt Crabs Eyes,

Burnt



Burnt shells, each one ounce : mix, and make a powder.

Similar to the foregoing, is his Bezoar powder ; the addition of the Bezoar constitutes no other improvement than in the price.

X. *Pulvis Vitæ, or Powder of Life.*

Take Roots of Zedoary, Pimpernel,  
 Elecampane, Galangal,  
 Aromatic Cane, Avens or herb Benet,  
 Liquorice, each two drachms ;  
 Harts Tongue, Speedwell, Blessed Thistle,  
 Flowers of lesser Centaury, each one drachm ;  
 Senna leaves, one ounce and a half ;  
 Seeds of Anise, Fennel, Parsley,  
 Carraway, of each one drachm and a half ;  
 Juniper Berries, three drachms ;  
 Cinnamon, one drachm ;  
 Cubebs, and Cardamoms, each four scruples ;  
 Mace, and burnt Harts-horn, each two drachms ;  
 Rhapontic dock, one ounce and a half ;  
 Rhubarb, a drachm and a half ;  
*Cremor Tartari*, three drachms ;  
 White Sugar Candy, four ounces and a half : mix,  
 and make a powder.

This is a German farrago, whose pompous title is only a cover of its insignificance.



XI. *Balsamum Cephalicum, or Cephalic Balsam.*

Take equal quantities of Oil of Lavender, Amber, Penny-royal, Marjoram, Sage, Rosemary, Savory, Mace, Rue, Mint, Origanum, and Nutmeg; mix, and make a Balsam.

By the foregoing formulæ, the public will see, that these medicines may be prepared at a very moderate expence.

## SECTION



---

### SECTION III.

#### HISTORY OF CASES.

I HAVE already intimated my resolution of laying before the public, the cases in the order they occurred to me. If I had selected the most unfavourable, a just decision of Dr. MYERSBACH's success could not have been obtained; but as justice demanded the whole, it is from thence I shall leave every individual to judge for himself.

As it might be disagreeable to many of the patients, to have their names printed at full length, I have in general given only the initials: the cases, however, of those who have survived the doctor's medicines, I can at any time authenticate by the testimony of the patients themselves; and the fatal cases can also be confirmed by indisputable vouchers.

I acknowledge, that I have omitted four cases for want of proper information; and because two of them were so much indisposed before their application to Dr. MYERSBACH, as left little prospect of recovery, and their deaths could not be attributed to him. The other two were hysteric cases; but tired with a long  
and



and fruitless attendance, they forsook, at length, the Green Drops and Pills, which every one of these patients was ordered to take.

From my period of practice it cannot but be supposed, that my share of patients must be a very small proportion of those unhappy victims, who have suffered from indiscriminate prescription, and afterwards have consulted physicians of more experience and reputation than I can pretend to : for the sake of humanity, I wish I could say, that my dead list is the most formidable of all that can be produced.

#### C A S E I.

In October, 1774, I attended a Gentleman in my neighbourhood violently attacked with a Hepatitis, and a difficulty of breathing. He so far recovered as to be able to remove into the country, but his breathing was still laborious : he sent several times desiring me to visit him in the country, but through some neglect I never received any message, though I heard frequent favourable accounts of his improvement. I had occasion to pass by his lodging about ten days after he left London. He complained of my not having seen him ; and acquainted me, that he had been persuaded to employ a Dr. MYERSBACH, who had visited him two days before. This was the first time I heard the Doctor's name mentioned ; and as I did not know any particulars of his character, I could not approve or disapprove his conduct ; but advised

D

my



my friend to continue with Dr. MYERSBACH if he grew better, and if he grew worse my attendance might be commanded. About a week or ten days afterwards, I was again desired to visit this Gentleman; his case was then greatly aggravated, the urine was diminished, the breathing more difficult, the belly was swelled, and a dropsy advancing, a fluctuation of water being evident. I intimated to the family the danger of the patient's life; and the next day two physicians met in consultation, but we did not repeat the meeting, death having intervened.

I found, in the patient's chamber, green drops, a box of pills, the sweet drops, and the red powder; but I did not then imagine that I should meet with these green drops, pills, &c. in numerous cases afterwards, where the complaints of the patients were totally different.

## C A S E II.

In the spring of 1775, S. P. of Whitechapel, aged 56, was attacked with a difficulty of breathing, severe cough and slight expectoration, with other asthmatic symptoms, which induced him to send a vial of urine to Dr. MYERSBACH, who immediately declared, "*that the patient labored under a disorder in the liver which he would soon cure,*" and his pills and green drops were recommended to effect it. After the use of these medicines near a week, the dyspnœa, or shortness of breath, augmented; the cough be-  
came



came dry and violent, and every symptom of approaching dissolution appeared, on which account I was desired to visit him. When I first saw him, I did not expect he would have survived the night; and his friends attended around his bed in the expectation of laying out the corpse, every expiration threatening to prove the last. As I had not at this period heard Dr. MYERSBACH's name often mentioned, I did not inspect the medicines, and consequently cannot speak of their effects with precision; but I firmly believe, that if the same plan had been pursued a day or two longer, and thereby proper remedies anticipated, the patient would have died.

### C A S E III.

H. W. near Lombard-street, another asthmatic person, who applied to Dr. MYERSBACH some time after I had attended the last-mentioned patient, had a receipt in the Doctor's hand writing, containing steel and aloes as under:

R. Aloes rosatæ\* unciam unam,  
Extracti Panchymagogi † unc. femis.

\* Aloes dissolved in an infusion of roses, which is afterwards evaporated to the consistence of an extract.

† This extract consists of Scammony, Rhubarb, Agaric, Hermodactyls, Black Hellebore, and Senna. The epithet, Panchymagoga is derived from Greek, παν, all, χυμος, humour, and αγω, to draw down.



*Limaturæ Martis, † subtilissime pulv, drachmas duas ; fiant pilulæ.*

I have known eight pills ordered every two hours, as was the case with the last-mentioned patient ; and such frequent doses of steel may enable us to account for the dreadful situation into which he was reduced, when I first visited him.

#### C A S E S IV, V, VI.

In March, 1775, E. F. a lady residing near Gracechurch-street, who had been married a few months, and had been affected with slight hysteric complaints, attended Dr. MYERSBACH with a vial of urine : after he had looked at it, he told the patient she was ill of the venereal disease ; and if she was married, it was given by her husband. When the shock, which such an unexpected decision had given her, was a little overcome, she returned home and acquainted the husband with this heavy charge upon his character : he accompanied his wife to two eminent gentlemen in the profession, to satisfy her of his perfect health, though she never harboured any suspicion of his fidelity. She was by this means convinced of the ignorance of this German oracle, and would not take his green drops and pills. She afterwards applied to a practitioner, who attributed her symptoms to pregnancy, and afforded her suitable relief. She

† Prepared Steel.



is now the mother of a very fine girl, and both parents enjoy good health.

Before this discovery of Dr. MYERSBACH's ignorance, her father had put himself under his care, and likewise a lady of her acquaintance: the father, who was paralytic, daily grew worse, and at length had sense enough to free himself from an ignorant process; and the lady, who was told she had got a dropfy, was happily delivered of a fine child: the Doctor, however, having insisted upon a dropfy, the lady neglected to provide proper cloathing for her infant; a want, indeed, much easier to be supplied than a dropfy was to be removed.

These supposed different diseases were treated in one method, by green drops and pills.

#### C A S E VII.

In August, 1775, I was desired to visit T. W. of Thames-street, about 54 years old; he had laboured under a cough, and a slight difficulty of breathing, and restlessness, for which he had consulted Dr. MYERSBACH about a fortnight before. When I entered the sick chamber, the patient was so near his end, and the family in such distress, that I could not collect a very accurate account of the process he had been under: I found, however, in the room, the green drops, red powder, and some pills: I took the pills to be opium, from the symptoms attending the



the use of them ; as a sleepiness had\* ensued, and continued for three days when I saw him, from which he never was roused ; he opened his eyes two or three times, and I think uttered a few words before he expired.

### C A S E VIII.

In January, 1776, I attended a gentleman in the neighbourhood of Cheapside, whose valuable life is still preserved to his family and the community. In conversation one day, he shewed me a prescription,\* and asked me if it was proper for a consumption: it consisted of steel, aloes, and other stimulants;† and without knowing his view for this interrogation, I replied I should consider it as very dangerous. He then told me that a female relation of his, who was of a very delicate constitution, had consulted Dr. MYERSBACH on account of some suppressed evacuation; but that after the use of these heating medicines, a cough ensued, with night sweats, and hectic fever, which soon put a period to the life of this amiable young lady.

\* This consisted of pills, composed of three articles, described in case 3, for an asthma; and of drops made of the essence, spirit, and extract of wormwood.

† Upon the injurious effects of stimulants in consumptions, see Dr. FOTHERGILL's useful papers, in the 4th vol. of the Medical Inquiries, p. 231, and 289. Dr. FOTHERGILL has since informed me, that additional experience has further confirmed him against stimulants in pulmonary complaints.

### C A S E



## C A S E IX.

W. C. a gentleman 23 years old, applied to Dr. MYERSBACH in the beginning of January, 1776, with a vial of urine : the Doctor, after shaking it a moment, ran his hands on each side of the body of his patient from the shoulders to the abdomen as quick as possible, and with equal velocity in broken English, cried “ *the pain is here, the pain is here;*” imagining, doubtless, that by encompassing so large a portion of the body, he could not fail of including the disordered part. After the Doctor had, in this abrupt hasty manner, guessed for some time at every part of the body as the seat of pain and disease, but the right one ; the gentleman informed him, that he frequently suffered the most accute pain at the extremity of the *penis*, particularly after walking or any severe exercise ; and likewise when he passed urine, which he could effect only by drops. The Doctor as quick as lightning answered, “ *Aye, Aye, Aye,* “ *you are right, I meant that, that is the pain you* “ *have ; it is an uncommon disorder. I have had two* “ *thousand patients in London, and only one (so young)* “ *with your disorder. It is a liver complaint ; but I* “ *will cure you.*” He then recommended him to take some pills three times every day, and also his green drops, and particularly insisted upon the use of much exercise. In compliance with these directions the patient suffered for many weeks the most excruciating pains ; but his confidence in the Doctor prompted him to persevere, till worn down by the most racking  
 pain



pain in the parts first complained of, he addressed him by letter, and sent with it another vial of urine; upon the inspection of which, Dr. MYERSBACH declared his patient was better, “ *that there were three* “ *ulcers in the bladder, which the urine discovered; and* “ *that he would cure them, if his medicines were per-* “ *sisted in for three months, and plenty of exercise was* “ *taken.*”

Thus amused, the patient dragged on a miserable life to the end of February. Agony and violent inflammation in the part affected, having at length become too excessive to admit of using exercise, he was necessitated to keep his bed; and from rest a mitigation of pain took place: this convinced him he had been used improperly, although Dr. MYERSBACH repeatedly insisted upon the use of exercise.

After dear-bought experience, W. C. was too sensible how much he had been deceived, to depend upon foreign emigrants. He applied to Englishmen in the profession; was cut for the stone by a surgeon, who extracted a very large one; and he now enjoys perfect health.

There is one circumstance in the present case which should not be omitted: when Dr. MYERSBACH must have perceived the patient was convinced of his ignorance, he attempted to persuade the unhappy sufferer that he had exactly three ulcers in his bladder, which he pretended to see in his urine—What a misfortune



fortune it was, that all the urine discharged at once was not exhibited, by which the Doctor might have seen, not only the three ulcers, but the stone likewise. This reminds me of a case in the north of England, where water-conjurers abound. A countryman had brought his wife's urine, and after it had been extorted from him that his wife had fallen down stairs, and thereby received an injury; the Doctor over-earnest to shew his knowledge, declared it was four steps she had fallen down; the countryman, however, insisted it was twelve: but, rejoins the Doctor, Have you brought all the water? No, replied the countryman. Aye there it is! concludes the Doctor; you have left the eight steps in the chamber-pot.

The man went home fully convinced of the Doctor's sagacity.

*Observations on W. C's. Case.*

I have not examined the medicines in the above case; but as Dr. MYERSBACH has in many instances, wherein I have been consulted, given steel and aloes in the form of pills, after declaring the liver to be affected, there is reason to presume the same were exhibited here also; and if so, we may venture to say, he could not have administered any medicines more likely to aggravate the pains and other symptoms attending a stone in the bladder. The Doctor recommended with his pills frequent exercise, for a disease

E

wherein,



wherein every physician in Europe would have enjoined rest ; and from the inflammation and agonies which the medicines, or exercise, or both, produced, one may candidly conclude, that a further perseverance in the regimen recommended, would have produced such an aggravation of misery, as could have ended only with the life of this worthy young gentleman. I cannot, even at this period, reflect upon the tortures he suffered, without horror ; as he frequently declared what a mercy he should think it, were death to close his sufferings. But are health and life to be thus trifled with ? What conscience must that man possess, who indiscriminately exhibits the same medicine to every age, and disease, when at the same time he knows he is ignorant of the science to which he pretends ? Are there no laws to punish that man who robs another of health, the dearest blessing of life, without which life is a burthen ?

Before I conclude, I shall notice a flight-of-hand, which has already deceived a considerable part of the town. It was observed in the preceding case, with what velocity Dr. MYERSBACH moves his hands from one part of the body to the other, all the time saying "*the pain is here, the pain is here :*" by this means he must unavoidably, nine times in ten, approach near the part where the patient feels most pain, who immediately mentions where it is ; and the Doctor replying that that was the part he meant, deceives the patient into a belief, that his disease, hitherto unknown, is now precisely discovered, and his admiration



tion is equally excited by the manner in which the discovery is made.

### C A S E X.

M. L. a lady about 34, who, during the space of many months had laboured under an uneasy sensation in the region of the liver, with flying pains about the abdomen, and also under the clavicle of the same side, applied to Dr. MYERSBACH about the beginning of the year 1776; who upon looking at the urine, without asking a single question, declared “ *she had a disease in the kidneys, but that he would assuredly cure her.*” He gave her his pills and green drops, which affording no relief, he added the red and white powders; but the symptoms continuing equally violent, she was induced to apply to gentlemen of character in the profession, who advised such remedies as they judged most likely to remove the gall-stones, which they supposed to be the cause of her complaint, and in which they were confirmed by the temporary jaundice that accompanied every violent attack, which she had undergone. Their practice was successful; many large gall-stones were evacuated by stool, and the lady is now in much better health, happy in her escape from ignorance supported by impudence.

### *Remarks on the above Case.*

The pain which is felt in the biliary ducts, is a proof of the inflammation to which those parts are liable; and therefore every additional stimulus must



aggravate the pain, and encrease the danger of the patient's life. Stimulating pills were excellently calculated to answer these dismal effects, by augmenting the disease: and how far the evil might have been extended, can be conceived only by such as have felt the pangs of the stone, or those from biliary obstructions.

### C A S E XI.

T. W. a gentleman about 36 years of age, whose country residence was at Himmerton, near Hackney, requested my advice early last spring; he had then an abscess of the psoas muscle, attended with hectic symptoms, and great debility; he was, however, just able to enjoy the air in a carriage, and by the use of bark and other tonic remedies, the symptoms were rather moderated; and these, joined with the judicious treatment of his surgeon, T. Armiger, produced a better discharge from the abscess. In this dangerous situation I left him in the month of May on account of my own health, and did not visit him till two months afterwards. In the interval he sent for Dr. MYERSBACH, and his method of treatment has been communicated to me by the surgeon.

“ Dr. MYERSBACH, as soon as he was introduced  
 “ to the patient, gained his confidence, by the most  
 “ positive assurances of his recovery, offering to wa-  
 “ ger *an hundred guineas that he would cure Mr. W.*  
 “ He began the cure by giving aloetic pills, and  
 “ some



“ some drops. The first dose of the pills gave this  
 “ debilitated gentleman about forty stools, and the  
 “ purging continued for some days successively were  
 “ though with less violence ; the pills, however,  
 “ repeated in smaller doses. These excessive evacu-  
 “ ations, and washing the abscess with lime-water,  
 “ agreeable to Dr. MYERSBACH’s directions, confi-  
 “ derably diminished the discharge from it, and en-  
 “ creased the hectic symptoms ; and for the first time  
 “ during his illness, a total loss of appetite succeeded.  
 “ The Doctor directed also hot applications to the  
 “ leg and thigh of one side, which brought on an  
 “ enormous swelling of the limb, and the most ex-  
 “ cruciating pains, which even large doses of opium  
 “ could never remove.

“ In this dreadful situation he lay for about two  
 “ weeks, the Doctor all the time insisting that *the*  
 “ *patient was in a good way* ; and when the limb put  
 “ on the appearance of mortification, within two  
 “ days of the patient’s death, the Doctor declared  
 “ he was recovering : and so deluded was this worthy  
 “ gentleman with these confident assurances, that he  
 “ continued to his last moments fully persuaded he  
 “ should recover.”

*Observations on the foregoing Case.*

Though every attempt of the faculty to detect ig-  
 norance and imposture, will by the weak and the in-  
 terested be ascribed to envy or resentment, yet when  
 a cler-



a clergyman of Dr. W—'s eminent character stands forth on the side of truth and justice, with that candor and philanthropy for which he is most distinguished amongst those by whom he is best known, we may hope, that the veil of delusion will at length be removed, and the people again restored to the exercise of reason and common sense. Dr. W. with that openness which always accompanies a conscientious discharge of social duties, has permitted me to make use of his name in the following letter ; but as I have hitherto principally used initials, I shall prefer that method in the present instance, not doubting but that the candid recital contained in the letter will be attended with equal conviction and approbation.

To Dr. LETTSOM.

SIR,

THE following are the queries I proposed to Dr. MYERSBACH, and the answers he returned to me, relative to the disease of which my dear brother lately died. I should have proposed many more could I have prevailed with the Doctor to sit down a few minutes, but he politely excused himself, as being in a great hurry to go home. As I am no adept in medicinal science, I should not, however, have taken any liberty of this kind with a regular practitioner ; but I was prompted to it in this case from a secret suspicion (which many concurring circumstances had excited and confirmed) that Dr. MYERSBACH was  
not



not that skilful phyfician which his many admirers had boasted him to be. I think it proper to obferve that his being called in to the affiftance of my brother, was merely to prevent any cenfures being thrown on the family, as having neglected any means in their power, and to fatisfy the importunity of fome friends, who were very confident in their hopes, from the advice of this wonder-working empiric. I was on a journey at the time, and knew nothing of it till my return. But in a very little time I faw reason to fufpect his ignorance of my brother's cafe. I obferved that fome of the medicines prefcribed were (as far as could be determined without an analytical procefs) to all appearance the very fame which I had feen at the houfe of another of his patients, whose complaint was as different from my brother's, as it was poffible for any two cafes to be. And what ferved both to confirm my fufpicion and excite my indignation was, the confidence with which he repeatedly expreffed himfelf as to the recovery of my brother, who had been given over by all the regular practitioners who had attended him. On his firft vifit he told him, that he had had a brother exactly in the fame way and much worfe, whom he had perfectly cured. And in the laft vifit but one or two, when the patient was evidently finking apace, he faid he would lay *an hundred guineas he fhould cure him*. But what put the matter out of all queftion with me, was the favourable view in which I found he had reprefented what every man's common fenfe was fufficient to inform him moft undoubtedly indicated the progrefs of the diftemper.



distemper : and upon this circumstance I grounded my fourth question ; his answer to which was perfectly satisfactory to me, that I had neither mistaken the man nor his medical talents.

Though, therefore, I am far from thinking that my brother's death is to be imputed to the Doctor, yet I am firmly of opinion, that his attendance upon the deceased, viewed in all its circumstances, affords a strong presumptive evidence, at least, that he is a bold and ignorant adventurer in a profession, which requires much more knowledge of the human frame, and of the medicinal art, than Dr. MYERSBACH is possessed of. I am extremely happy in the thought that my brother did not fall into his hands till the regular and qualified practitioners had pronounced his case to be desperate; and I should be equally unhappy to have any beloved relative or friend of mine entrust themselves to the skill of this popular professor. But though I can entertain no high opinion of Dr. MYERSBACH as a physician, I must do him the justice to say that he appears to be a man of abilities in other respects, has a polite and obliging address, and was very far, in my brother's case, from discovering any thing of an avaricious or mercenary temper, having frequently refused a fee when it was offered him. You are at liberty to make what use you please of the preceding account, and I am, Sir,

Your most obedient

Humble Servant,

*Tooting, Sept. 9, 1776.*

S. W.

Q. 1.



Q. 1. Whence do you think the matter arose, which has been discharged at the abscess?

A. It comes from the liver, the overflowing of the gall all down the kidneys, and so into the hip.

Q. 2. Do you not think that some of the muscles are affected?

A. O no; it is a bilious complaint: it is from the blood, which, to be sure, should nourish the muscles, and so in time they would be hurt.

Q. 3. But you do not then think the complaint is seated in the psoas muscle.

A. O no, no such thing; if that was the case, there would have been mixed convulsions.

Q. 4. Pray, Doctor, what did you mean by saying, when you was first informed of the swelling in the knee, "That it was all right, and what you was aiming at"? With what view did you aim at it? Or how did you suppose that would operate in his favour?

A. He seemed much staggered at this question; was silent for a little while; and then replied, "*You see I would bring all de matter together.*"



Q. 5. Do you think that the collection of matter in the knee, is at all connected with the former collection of matter, or that it proceeds from the same source.

A. O no, *not at all*. It is quite a separate thing.

### C A S E S XII, XIII.

M. E. of Swan-street, Minories, 13 years of age, was attacked, about the middle of May, with a fever, accompanied with an acute pain in the head, and a vertigo to such a degree, as rendered her incapable of moving in her room: at the commencement of this fever she was affected with hot and cold fits, which in a day or two recurred at more distant and regular intervals, the fever usually returning in the evening and remitting towards morning. On the 24th the family sent a vial of the patient's urine to Dr. MYERSBACH, who ordered his pills and green drops to be persevered in till she recovered; but the fever and delirium were daily so much augmented, as to induce the parents to desire my attendance about four days afterwards, when the symptoms were such as excited their tenderest and most alarming apprehensions. The pulse at this time beat 120 strokes in a minute, and felt hard; the head-ach was so excruciating, that stepping over the floor was almost intolerable, and so was the light; a cough attended, and delirium; and the little slumbers were disturbed  
with



with convulsive motions in the limbs, eyes, and muscles of the face. I saw that time was precious, and ordered cupping-glasses to be immediately applied to the head and neck, by which several ounces of blood were procured. Antimonials and relaxants were the remedies I employed; and a cooling diet was adopted. At the commencement of June she was relieved from her complaints, and went into the country to recruit her strength.

*Remarks on the foregoing Case.*

The fever which attacked this girl was attended with such a delirium and acute head-ach, as appeared to me to threaten a rupture of some vessel in the head, which might end in suppuration and death: this consideration induced me to order the patient to be cupped; and, with the loss of blood, the delirium ceased, and the head-ach and fever were greatly mitigated, as might be expected from the previous state of the pulse, the phrenitic delirium, and other symptoms.

The candid reader must perceive to what a precipice of danger this only child was exposed, by taking such hot stimulating medicines as Dr. MYERSBACH'S pills and green drops in a raging fever; and will be ready to conclude, that if regular practice had not been requested at the very instant it was done, her life must have been the silent victim of presuming ignorance.



As I had attended this family about twelve months before, I could not avoid upbraiding the parents for their ingratitude, as well as their credulity, in trusting to a stranger the life of an only child: they excused themselves by assuring me, it was submitted to at the pressing sollicitation of a particular friend, who stiled him, *the great Doctor*, and had *heard wonderful things of him*.

Many of this *great Doctor's* patients, whom I have been requested to visit, have made similar pretexts, to exculpate themselves from the imputation of folly and credulity; for however weak the English may be in crediting the marvellous, few of them when deceived are willing to have their weakness known: had they acted with that caution and sound judgment, for which they are justly celebrated in other important concerns, the ignorance of *the great Doctor* had long ago been detected, and numerous impositions and mischiefs have been obviated. I make this reflection from an unfortunate circumstance which happened about this time: I was then attending a lady in Cornhill, of sense and discernment, and she was desired to consult Dr. MYERSBACH by a gentleman, who I am persuaded acted from disinterested motives of friendship, as he soon after trusted the health and life of his amiable lady, to the care of this *great Doctor*: when her death was approaching, two or three regular physicians were hastily called in to avert the sudden and melancholy change; but without effect.

Had



Had a *little Doctor*, that is, one who has applied to the studies and duties of his profession with unremitting industry for a series of years, who lives amongst his countrymen with an unblemished character, and pretends to such knowledge only as is rational, and within the compass of human acquirement, this doctor might have lost his reputation by such a catastrophe; but I do not find that the *great Doctor* has descended one step lower since this bold exhibition of the *wonderful and marvellous*.

This evinces how cautious individuals should be who have found benefit from Dr. MYERSBACH'S medicines, in recommending to their friends such an indiscriminate practice; as it is now fully ascertained, that he administers similar remedies to all constitutions and diseases; and common sense must point out, that what is useful in one disease, cannot but prove injurious in a contrary disease, and consequently the doctrine of *kill or cure*, is, to say the least against it, extremely hazardous.

#### C A S E XIV.

J. T. of Charles-street, Hatton-Garden, 25 years old, of a thin spare habit of body, from some diminution of the usual discharges, was persuaded to have the opinion of Dr. MYERSBACH; but her diffidence preventing her from attending in person with a vial of her own urine, a lady of her acquaintance accepted the office, and the Doctor, immediately after inspecting



ing the urine, declared, “ *the young woman was in a dropfy, but that he knew he could cure her.*”

On the 11th of June I visited this unfortunate young woman : it was then a week after this Doctor of urines had sent his pills and green drops to remove this supposed dropfy. The appearance which she now made excited compassion and horror. She had kept abroad as usual before the German medicines had been taken. A cough had since ensued, with other hectic symptoms ; the stomach was racked by retching ; the eyes were sunk ; and the feeble voice scarce able to relate the source of her miseries, from which I daily expected death would release her.

*Remarks on the above Case.*

The friend who presented the young woman's urine, observed to me, since she overcame her own deception, that all other patients, of different ages and sexes, were treated with the same pills and drops. Yet so deluded was she, by the positive assertion of Dr. MYERSBACH, that he would cure this dropfy, as to administer to her friend those very medicines, which she knew had been given by the Doctor for very different complaints, an instance of which amongst others she gave in the case of a coachman in the neighbourhood.

This affords a striking proof to what a degree the human mind may be blinded, by the voluntary suppression



pression of that reason, which if exerted in the least degree, might have detected the imposition. I ought to do justice in this place to a lady of my acquaintance who visited Dr. MYERSBACH a few weeks before, with a vial of urine, and half a guinea, and received in return a direction for medicines, from his apothecary, amounting to eight shillings. She attended in the shop till her medicines were prepared, during which time she saw eighteen persons, *women, girls, boys, and men*, receive their respective medicines, which she observed were poured out of the same bottles; and this circumstance at once appeared such an evident mark of want of skill, and injurious indiscrimination, as to induce her to lose her money, rather than risk her future health; and she has not yet repented of her choice.

#### C A S E XV.

*June the 12th, 1776.*

W. S. a young gentleman in Holborn, of a hectic habit, but at this time without any urgent symptom, excepting remittent feverish heat, and a slight cough; applied to Dr. MYERSBACH, who assured him he had *a scurvy in the kidneys*, and gave him green drops and pills: after continuing these about a week, he thought himself much worse; the fever was increased, the cough more violent, night-sweats had come on, and great debility ensued; which induced him again to consult the German oracle, who insisted  
his



his patient was in a very favourable way, adding, that before the getting well, it was usual to be worse from the first use of medicine : the patient was ordered to take the sweet drops, and to continue the other medicines, in hopes that as he had survived the first onset, the good effects were now to be expected ; but after ten days further perseverance, he unfortunately found himself considerably in more danger, and this induced him to seek relief in a rational manner : he applied to an apothecary in Gracechurch-street, who recommended such a course of medicine, that when I saw the patient, I made no alteration but in the article of diet.

#### C A S E XVI.

In the beginning of June, 1776, J. White, of Bishopsgate-street, 40 years of age, applied to Dr. MYERSBACH for a swelling in his legs ; the Doctor, after inspecting the urine, told him, "*it was obstructed slime in the kidneys, which he would remove.*" This he attempted to do by his green drops alone ; but a few days after the patient returned with his thighs, as well as his legs, greatly tumified ; the Doctor told him he was better, and that the disorder was moving downwards, and added the sweet drops, and the red powder, each to be taken three times every day ; and every morning he gave a strong purging powder, for 21 days successively ; at the end of which time the patient's body became much enlarged, a fluctuation of water was evident, and a  
3
general



general anasarca spread over the body; the breath was now laborious; the thirst intolerable, and death seemed approaching, although the German oracle would have persuaded the patient at the same time that his cure was advancing: I saw him on the 26th, and am doubtful of his recovery. Dr. KOOYSTRÄ attended me in this visit, which was my first, and heard the patient relate the above particulars.

*Remarks on the above Case.*

I do not imagine that the green drops or tincture of tanfy, could have injured this patient; neither do I lay much charge to the red powder, which is principally salt-petre; nor to the sweet drops, which contain chiefly sugar; but this I will venture to say, that in a dropsy and anasarca, like the present, where the patient was primarily feeble, the administering frequent strong purges, was the most dangerous practice that could have been adopted, and must soon have proved fatal, had not their use been interdicted: the event, indeed, still appears unfavourable to this deluded man. I have known one strong purge prove fatal in a dropsy; but is it not a species of manslaughter to exhibit one every day, till the miserable victim of ignorance sleeps in his grave?

C A S E XVII.

E. J. a lady residing in Thames-street, applied to Dr. MYERSBACH, near the beginning of June, with a  
G
vial



vial of urine, which he inspected in a very slight manner, and told her she had the *rheumatism in her stomach*, and a disorder in the womb. She suspected that her symptoms arose from pregnancy; but the Doctor assured her she was not with child, and that he would cure her complaints very soon: at her first application she had drops and silver pills; and some little addition of medicine upon her second application; but when I saw her, some of the remedies which had been prescribed were mislaid or lost. However, after using them about a week, a flooding ensued, which induced her to consult a medical gentleman, who is an honor to his profession, and he very soon cured this *rheumatism in the stomach*, by delivering her of two dead children. She told me that she must have been six months gone with child, when Dr. MYERSBACH first discovered by her water, she had the *rheumatism in her stomach*. She confirmed, what I had often heard before, that she saw some of the same persons at the Doctor's house on both her visits, who proclaimed in a very powerful manner, *what wonders the Doctor had performed, where others had failed*; which has occasioned several real patients to suspect, that these trumpeters of the German's fame do not exhibit without a suitable gratuity.

This is not the only example of a flooding, with which I have been acquainted, after the use of Dr. MYERSBACH's stimulating pills; and therefore it becomes women who wish to raise a young family, to consider how they trifle with their own health. Such



a complaint does not always end so favorably as the present, with the death only of two children; it is not unfrequent for the mother likewise to share the same fate.

### C A S E XVIII.

In the beginning of August I prescribed for a lady near town, who had been about eight months under the care of Dr. MYERSBACH, and though she found no benefit from his drops and pills, he asserted so positively that his patient was daily growing better, that she continued under the imposition for so long a period; at length, however, she assured him, that she perceived her health declining, and her strength daily diminishing. He then repeated his assurances that he would cure her, but that she must wait till he could receive a *powder from Germany*, which could not be procured in London: this not satisfying her, she mentioned the case to one of her acquaintance, who happened to have been deceived in the same manner, and was then also waiting for this *German powder*: they found soon after, that some others had been imposed upon by the same pretence, and their eyes were effectually opened, without the application of the *German powder*.

### C A S E XIX.

August 10th, 1776. This day I was desired to visit the wife of J. S. in Cannon-street, a young wo-



man who had long laboured under various nervous complaints, the usual concomitants of a delicate person and a weak habit of body. Her husband, who was anxious for her health, applied to Dr. MYERSBACH about midsummer last, with a vial of his wife's urine; but as J. S. is himself a thin person of a valetudinary appearance, the Doctor imagined he came upon his own account, and told him, as he does his sex in general, that *his disorder was in the liver*; but J. S. assured him, the water belonged to his wife, on whose account he then attended him; *Aye, aye*, replied the Doctor, *me do see, it be a disorder in de womb*, the complaint he generally applies to the female sex.

The drops and pills not removing this imaginary *disorder in the womb*, induced her to apply to me; and the Peruvian bark, and other tonics, have afforded her so much relief, that there is no reason to doubt her recovery.

## C A S E XX.

August 10th, 1776, Elizabeth Nottingham, of Tower-hill, applied to Dr. MYERSBACH in the preceding year, with a vial of urine: he told her, *the disorder was in the womb*, which he attempted to cure by green drops and pills. These she continued to take for about a fortnight, although she grew daily worse in health; but she persisted longer in the use of medicines she found manifestly injurious, from the positive



sitive manner in which the Doctor affirmed her cure should be compleated.

When she applied to me, she suffered a variety of nervous complaints : her strength, her appetite, her spirits were totally impaired ; and she declared, with a hopeless remorse, that she never expected those affecting symptoms to be removed, the existence of which she attributed to the use of these German medicines,

*Remarks on the above Case.*

I have never yet been requested to see any of Dr. MYERSBACH's patients, without being informed by them, that the Doctor had given them hopes, that he would most certainly cure them. He has told many, who daily grew worse with the use of his medicines, that before the disorder was totally removed, they would probably appear in a more dangerous situation, but that that was only a prelude to their sudden and happy recovery : under this false hope, many a valuable life has been reposed in his hands to the latest moments, expecting in vain that sudden transition to health, which he had promised, till death has closed the scene.

CASE



## C A S E XXI.

August 14, 1776. John Horner, of Fenchurch street, informed me that he consulted Dr. MYERSBACH with a vial of urine in May last, who told him, he had *slime in his blood, and the scurvy in the kidneys*; for which imaginary disorders, he gave him green drops, silver pills, and black pills; when after two months fruitless dependence, the patient requested my advice.

I found he had laboured under a sciatic complaint, and rheumatic pains in his joints, for about six months: I adopted a plan recommended by Dr. FOTHERGILL,\* and in ten days time, I had the satisfaction to find my patient nearly restored to health.

## C A S E XXII.

August 14th, 1776. John Rivington of Seacoal-lane, applied to Dr. MYERSBACH, in the beginning of June, with a vial of his urine: the Doctor after examining it, told the patient *the disease was slime in his blood*, which he promised soon to remove, and for that end ordered green drops and pills; these the patient continued to take till near the middle of August, and *the slime* still remaining where it was in the commencement of June, he applied to me. I found he was hydochondriac, and laboured under many ner-

\* Medical Inquiries and Observations, Vol. 4. p. 69.



vous symptoms ; but with the use of the usual nervous remedies, and gentle exercise upon horseback, he recovered his former health in the space of a few weeks.

### C A S E XXIII.

Mary Badman, of Duke-street, Spitalfields, applied to Dr. MYERSBACH early in July, with a vial of urine ; who told her *she had a disorder in the womb*, which he would relieve, and gave her his usual routine of medicines. From the day she began the use of them, her pains were augmented, and continued to encrease till I saw her on the 18th of August.

The tortures she suffered were violent beyond expression ; they had deprived her of sleep for near a week past, and in the height of the fits, it was necessary to hold her in bed, to prevent her throwing herself upon the floor. From the seat of the pain, which was in the region of the kidneys, and from other circumstances, it was evident, that there was an inflammation of those viscera, and that the pills which Dr. MYERSBACH had ordered her to take had aggravated the disease ; as she told me, they were so violent in their operation, as to purge excessively, and even abrade or tear off the mucous of the bowels ; a flooding likewise ensued, to which she had not before been liable : they tasted bitter, and I doubt not but they were his deobstruent or aloetic pills, page 13.

The



The danger of giving heating medicines in an inflammation, is known to every body; and had this woman been pregnant, there cannot remain a doubt, but a miscarriage must have succeeded the flooding, as was the case of E. J. page 41, who I have already intimated had two dead children in consequence of it.

#### C A S E XXIV.

M. L. a married woman, of a delicate constitution, resident near the Royal Exchange, received a disease from her husband, which made him avoid consulting medical gentlemen of his acquaintance, and induced him to apply to Dr. MYERSBACH, with a vial of his wife's urine, at the same time acquainting the Doctor of her unfortunate situation. It was natural to expect, that a disease so universally known, would have been treated in a manner somewhat different from a fever, a dropy, an asthma, the stone, a consumption, pregnancy, rheumatism, inflammation of the kidneys, or hysterics, which I have observed were all treated in a similar method: but the patient acquainted me, that she first had green drops and black pills, then the sweet drops and red powder, agreeable to the Doctor's usual routine; that after a month and two days attendance, she found her complaints were aggravated, her strength was reduced, and her stomach so weakened, that it could neither retain the green drops, which are a tincture from tansy, nor even the lightest food. She lamented in the most affecting manner  
her



her delusion ; and she might with reason, for I think her life is in danger from the ravages of a disease, which, at its commencement, might have been cured by any apothecary's apprentice.

### C A S E S XXV, XXVI, XXVII.

On the 23d of August, 1776, J. C. a gentleman near Aldgate, whose excellent character will give weight to the following facts, attended at my house for advice, upon his own account ; before he left me, another gentleman came in, and informed me that his servant girl, who had a few months before consulted Dr. MYERSBACH without any benefit, was now restored to health by having been delivered of a fine child. I replied, that the Doctor must have acquired great credit by this patient, as he usually says to women, *their disorder is in the womb*, and in this instance he must have guessed pretty near the mark. J. C. who was then a stranger to me, listened to our conversation, and interrupted us by saying, that his wife and his mother were then under the care of Dr. MYERSBACH, the former since the 1st of August for some nervous complaints, and the latter since the beginning of July for a deafness ; and he added, that he entertained no opinion of his judgment, since to both patients he said, *the disorder was in the womb*, and drops and pills were exhibited to both : this gentleman likewise told me, that as his wife and his mother were rather worse than at their first application, and as he found all patients were treated in a similar

H

manner,



manner, he would advise them to relinquish the German Doctor. I begged him to persuade his wife once more to attend ; he concluded by assuring me, he would send *his* water, instead of his wife's, in order to ascertain the Doctor's sagacity.

On the 24th of August, J. C. waited upon the Doctor with his own urine, and introduced it as belonging to his wife : he looked at the urine, and told the husband that *he perceived by it, that his wife was better in her complaints*, and he would order something that would forward her cure.

I have the Doctor's prescription in my possession : it contains the Bezoar powder, and some pills. The patient was now convinced of the consummate imposition she had been brought under, and requested my attendance in future. She likewise presented me with some of Dr. MYERSBACH's silver pills, of which I had before several boxes, and as many of the other medicines as might furnish a country quack's shop ; but in London, where the people are exceedingly wise, the marvellous and incredible are swallowed by wholesale.

#### CASE XXVIII.

John Lethin of Gloucester-street, Queen's-square, was attacked with a catarrhal complaint in July last. The cough soon became very troublesome, and a feverish heat accompanied it, which induced him to send



send his urine, by his wife, to his countryman Dr. MYERSBACH, who, supposing it was her own, told her, she had a disorder in the womb: but she replied that it was her husband's water; *Aye, aye, aye*, rejoined the Doctor, *I see it belong to a man, he be very bad indeed.*

On the 2d of September, the patient consulted me, when he intimated that his health had been ruined by taking the German medicines, as a spitting of blood had succeeded the use of them, with an encreased fever, night-sweats, great expectoration, loss of strength and flesh: his symptoms indeed forebode a hasty dissolution, which probably might have been prevented by suitable remedies and diet at the commencement of this disorder, which the Doctor saw in the womb.



---

## SECTION IV.

### SUCCESS OF EMPIRICISM.

**T**HE skill of the best physician has been baffled by the obstinacy of some diseases, or the misconduct of patients or nurses. When a man is disappointed of a hasty cure, he often flies to pretenders in physic, and continues with regularity the use of their medicines ; and whether by length of time, in which nature cures herself, or by the random exhibition of a remedy, they sometimes gain the credit of a cure where regular practitioners have failed ; and when such instances occur, they are blazed about in all companies, with a thousand wonderful additions, which captivate the attention of the ignorant, and delude their understanding : were the patient worse, or even destroyed, shame ensures silence, and public infamy is obviated.

Upon an average, out of every hundred patients, there is reason to suppose, eighty would be restored to health by the efforts of nature, without the use of medicine : out of the twenty remaining patients, suppose the empiric cures ten, and kills as many, there will be ninety remain to proclaim the character of the Doctor, while the victims lie silent in the tomb.



tomb. Had these hundred patients consulted a regular and rational physician, and every one had recovered, scarce a syllable of praise had been heard, and silent approbation alone must have rewarded his conscious heart. It is thus that one successful case, under the management of an empiric, meets with ten times more reward, than the same success would have ensured to a man of skill and probity.

There are certain æras favourable to the views of cunning and self-interested men, and though quackery has been fashionable in this city in all periods, the present seems peculiarly adapted to promote its success: several celebrated quacks have lately paid the last debt of nature; and the chasm has been supplied by Dr. MYERSBACH, who, by water-conjuring merely, without a tenth part of their medical knowledge, has acquired double their practice: so little does fortune depend upon merit.

I remember an artful conjurer in the north of England, who raised an ample fortune from the ignorance of the country people, that came from several neighbouring counties to consult him. He tutored his son, a forward youth, to receive the votaries in an antichamber; and to propose such questions to them, as should extort the motives of their attendance; during which time the father placed himself behind a screen, so as to hear all the conversation. When the son had gained sufficient information, a certain tap on the screen was agreed upon as a signal  
to



to introduce the patient to the father, by the most indirect turnings the house afforded, into a remote apartment, where the father had previously retired, to repeat to the patients, on their entering the room, what the dialogue in the antichamber had furnished. By this device the Doctor acquired great reputation; he could tell the disease without the help of urine; and the deception was not known till he retired upon his fortune, and disclosed his own stratagems.

In the time of Dr. RATCLIFF, water-conjurers were much in vogue, and it was usual for patients, who consulted even regular practitioners, to bring with them a vial of urine. The Doctor, who knew that reasoning would have little influence upon those, who had surrendered up that faculty before they applied to water-conjurers, took an opportunity to try the effect of ridicule upon a shoemaker's wife, who applied to him with her husband's urine: the Doctor, after pouring out the contents of the vial, put into it as much of his own urine, "*Go, said he to the woman, tell your husband to make me a pair of shoes by this water; for he will know by it how to fit my foot, as well as I can by his water what disease he has.*" RATCLIFF's character gave the joke some weight, and injured the reputation of water-conjuring, more than a hundred cases of manslaughter would have done.

I doubt not but the unaccountable method of discovering diseases, which water-conjurers pretend to,  
is



is one means of recommending them to the confidence of weak minds, who admire every thing that is beyond their comprehension ; though it is evident, from the circumstances above related, that Dr. MYERSBACH knows no more of urine than the patient, but to all kinds of diseases exhibits nearly the same medicines ; and bad must they be indeed, if in some instances the patient does not meet with relief, especially as they are often directed to be persevered in for three months, during which period the change of weather, or the change in the patient's constitution, as has been already observed, may probably effect that cure which has been ascribed to the medicine.

It is curious to observe the arts made use of by the German Water-Doctor, to induce his patients to believe that he has discovered their disorder, by their urine, as in case 9th, and in other instances which I have avoided the repetition of. He sometimes runs his hands over the whole body, till the patient, whose mind is enfeebled by disease, or hurried by the evolutions performed about his body, fixes the seat of his pain, which the Doctor immediately repeats after him, and the deluded person, who has already surrendered up his judgment, is too much agitated to discover, that what he told the Doctor is only repeated to him ; and he goes away persuaded, that whatever he complained of was now first disclosed to him.

Some-



Sometimes the Doctor has ventured to guess at the disease, but I know no instance of his guessing right. He seems, indeed, so sensible of this, that he mostly does it with caution, and not till the eagerness of patients to tell their complaints, has afforded him some means of deceiving them.

People who are easily deceived are very apt to suppose, that the doctor's grimace, and broken sentences, amount to a description of what they feel, and they return fully persuaded that all their ailments are discovered. I have heard of a maid-servant, who applied to a physician with her mistress's urine, to know what disorder she laboured under. The physician surprized at the ignorance of the maid, asked her, if she expected he could tell, *how many teeth her mistress had, by looking at her water?* The maid returned and informed her mistress, that *the Doctor told by her urine that she had no teeth*; and this interpretation happening to be near the truth, the physician's reputation was more firmly established in the family and neighbourhood, than regular practice could ever have made it.

In general, so far as I have remarked, he tells male patients that they have either *a disease in the liver, or slime in the kidneys*; females, that they have *a disorder in their womb*; and when they are young people, of either sex, that they have had *the venereal disease*. I am sorry to observe, that the fashionable vice of the age should be that which en-



bles him to guess the last disease too often justly; though, in the cases I have fairly related, he happened to guess wrong: but let the maladies be ever so various, nearly one universal sameness of treatment is pursued. When the patients do not attend in person, but send their urine, he supposes they labour under severe indisposition, and therefore commonly says, *they are very ill; they have been long afflicted; they are very thin; &c.* sometimes he asserts that *they have been ill for several months or years, that they do not walk straight;* or ventures any other strange supposition, that comes first into his head: occasionally he declares that *their tempers are bad,* and that *they are fretful;* which he guesses may probably be the case, when long indisposition has worn down the strength and spirits.

I have heard of some who have been cured by this method; I think it probable; and so would it have been had they taken camomile tea.

The following letters to the author are inserted in this section, as they relate to the subject of it.

I

Extract



---

Extract of a Letter from a Physician to the  
Author of Observations preparatory, &c.

—In respect to Dr. MYERSBACH, I know not that any thing I can say will contribute to open the eyes of the public concerning him. Indeed I have not had many opportunities of knowing much about him : what I have learned has been casual ; and what I did learn was far from giving me much reason to seek his acquaintance.

I have been called to some cases, where he had promised great benefit, and done hurt. His advocates have made way for him, into very few families I am acquainted with ; at least, if he has been admitted into them, they have concealed it from me ; which is often the case with physicians, when their patients have been prevailed upon to pursue measures which their own better judgment disapproved, and by their suffering, have often paid dear for their credulity.

It is a prevailing opinion among the lower class of people, the women especially, that much information is to be gained from the urine in every human malady. There is scarcely a county in England, where  
there



there is not a *Professor*, who gains his livelihood, perhaps a fortune, by propagating this opinion amongst the vulgar: a great part of nurses, old female servants, and the humble dependants of most families, consist of this class, and are from the country, where they have imbibed these opinions, and where belief in the possibility of discovering all diseases by the urine, is as universal, as it is erroneous. When it began to be a little rumoured that a person who practised in this way was fixed in the metropolis, these people became his devotees immediately—and in every house (and there is none without them) where any obstinate chronic had fixed its abode, this *urine-caster*\* was most strongly recommended. All the tales they had heard of cures performed were recounted, and no stone was left unturned to interest their patrons in favour of a person who practised in a manner so suitable to their prejudices.

\* Another term for *water-doctor*. These impostors abound in the north of England; their prices for telling *diseases by the urine* are various, according to the ignorance and wealth of their votaries. I knew one *water-caster*, who, at *three-pence* a vial, had accumulated a considerable fortune; and another at *ninepence* a vial, had acquired affluence; but Dr. MYERSBACH takes *half a guinea*, besides *a share of the shop-trade*, as his *apothecary assured me*; and there is now no doubt but MYERSBACH, KOCH, and the porter, are leagued together. Dr. MYERSBACH had half a guinea for discovering that a carriage-horse *had a disorder in its womb, and bore children with great labour-pains*; and the like sum that C. Kearsley's cow *had been too free with the ladies of the town*.

L.

I 2

Such



Such were the common messengers between the sick and this *Professor*. They were enjoined by the patient to give no account of the disease, but to leave the urine to disclose the whole history. This they faithfully promised; but faithfully related to the empiric every circumstance they knew. They brought back an opinion as consonant to the patient's own notions, as could be wished, and medicines suited to such an opinion. Most, at first, were female patients; and many of these of no small degree—for great families have always about them such humble female dependants, as are most diligent in such secret services. Some uterine disorder, hitherto unobserved by the family-physician, was frequently the answer; and this, coinciding with the prepossession of the patient, secured a most implicit faith and obedience. Such, as far as I know, has been the rise and progress of this epidemic madness. A lady of quality, of excellent understanding, who had endured for a long time a chronic malady, which had baffled every rational effort, at length resigned herself to empiricism. A trusty female recommended the *Urinarian*. The lady sent her own water, with a most strict injunction that no symptom of her malady should be disclosed to him by any other means. This was faithfully promised, and as ill observed. The old woman brought back a report exactly suited to the lady's own ideas of the case. This startled her, and made her suspect that her messenger had given full information of her case. She sent a younger servant, who had more regard for her lady, and less confidence in



the man. She told him nothing; and he could give her no opinion. The lady saw through the fallacy, and gave up the pursuit.

It is certainly a humane disposition to prevent such knavery and imposition, when the health and lives of our fellow-creatures are at stake; and yet it is a most thankless office to interpose. I do not, therefore, wonder at the backwardness of the college of physicians, to exert the authority with which they are cloathed for the suppression of such pretenders. They know enough of the world to see that such exertions would be construed by the vulgar, as the effects of interest or malevolence; and that the object, though deserving of their highest censure, would most probably be deemed a persecuted man, and of consequence be entitled not only to compassion, but a more zealous support.

This kind of reasoning may be politic; nay it may be proper. But was I one of that body, I would not hesitate to summon any man before the college of physicians, who took upon himself the practice of physick, the moment he became notorious.

I would enquire into his abilities with the utmost candour. I would allow every thing consistent with the public safety, and discourage no appearance of useful talents.

The



The bold, daring, ignorant impostor, should not fail to meet with the full force of those provisions made for the public safety, let him be supported by whom he might, or let the consequences be what they would. — If the laws empowering the college to act for the public good, are too severe, let the legislature relax them ; but whilst they continue in force, it is the duty of the college to put them in execution, without favour or affection.

I would no more countenance a dispensing power in the college of physicians,—a power to overlook when they please the most notorious offenders, against the very spirit of their institution,—than I would assent to a like power in any other hands whatever.

I do not mean to excite them to call this Doctor of urines before them ; in respect to him, the credulity of the public will probably soon be satiated : but I hope their future conduct will be regulated on such principles as the spirit of their laws directs ; and that whilst they countenance every useful improvement, every ingenuous mind, they will rescue their powers much rather than see them contemned, or convert them to the humiliation of their brethren, without effecting any of those purposes for which these powers were solely granted to them.

I own I think the faculty too much indebted to empiricism, to frame a wish to suppress it, was it in their power—I do not mean from the pecuniary advantages they frequently derive from it, in being ob-  
liged



liged to repair the mischiefs done by ignorant adventurers ; but there is a more important benefit derived from people of this temper, and from the humour of many persons to confide in such irregulars.

To whom are we indebted for the knowledge of a solvent for the stone, the liberal use of soap and caustic alcalis ? Would not the most hardy of our predecessors have shuddered at giving daily, and for years together, such quantities of soap, lime-water, the strongest lees, as are now daily given, not only with perfect safety, but advantage ? A woman introduced the practice, and established what the faculty perhaps never would have attempted.

We learned from a Ward, that opium might be safely given, in combination with other substances, to a much larger extent, than was ever known before. We are obliged, indeed, to a physician, compelled by his necessities to commence empiric, for the restoration of antimonials. His practice was as much conducted in the line of empiricism, as the most irregular pretender. For this I call empiricism, when a man conceals the medicine he makes use of, and gives it promiscuously in all cases. And indeed I do not recollect any very useful and efficacious medicine, for which the faculty are not obliged either to chance or empiricism, the hemlock excepted ; for the introduction of this medicine was solely owing to the heroic courage of a physician, who first tried its effects upon himself, and then directed its efficacy to  
the



the cure of others. If it has not answered in many respects the sanguine hopes of its inventor, yet it will long remain a monument of his intrepidity, and a resolution to assist mankind, though at the risk of his own suffering.

I do not mean to write the eulogy of empiricks; I wish only to delineate the just bounds of their permission. Whilst with one efficacious medicine, they in any case do more than the common means we use can effect, by all means let the inventor reap the fruits of his good fortune or ability. It is our own fault, if we do not avail ourselves of his discovery.

But if we see a man seducing the lowest and most credulous of the vulgar to become his followers, and by their means creeps into the chambers of the unfortunate, with medicines either of little efficacy, or which require parts to direct them superior to the illiterate professor's—disrobe the ignorant impostor—he is an enemy to mankind, means nothing but his own emolument, and for it would sacrifice a hecatomb of human victims.

To such only the bitter sarcasm of Pliny is strictly applicable—and doubtless the character was drawn from such impostors.

*Discunt alienis periculis, experimenta per mortes agunt: & medico solum hominem occidisse summa est impunitas.*

I am, &c.

Extract



---

Extract of a Letter from Dr. MYERSBACH's  
Apothecary to Dr. LETTSOM.

SIR,

FOR some time before I perused your publication intitled "Observations preparatory," &c. I had been very uneasy with my situation in Mr. MYERSBACH's house, where I was a witness for upwards of six months to the most consummate ignorance, impudence, and imposition; for Mr. MYERSBACH took no precaution to hide his practices from his apothecaries in the shop; and he has frequently before me expressed his astonishment at the folly and credulity of the English, in being so easily duped by him; some of the means he practised for effecting this, I shall now communicate to you.

In general, the patients are so eager to tell their complaints, that Mr. SCHROEDER the porter (who is in league with Mr. MYERSBACH and his head apocary, Mr. KOCH), is able to collect their diseases, which are related to Mr. MYERSBACH before the patients are introduced to him; by which stratagem he is capable of repeating what they complained of.

K

Sometimes



Sometimes persons apply, who are not easily deceived, or who are minute in their queries ; in these instances, Mr. SCHROEDER has orders to introduce another patient into Mr. MYERSBACH's room, in order to interrupt the first conversation, and dismiss the sooner the inquisitive patient.

If neither Mr. SCHROEDER, nor any of the other servants who are dispersed in different apartments to overhear the discourse of the patients, and thereby gain some account of their complaints, should not at first succeed in their attempts, such patients are made to wait two or three hours, before they are admitted to Mr. MYERSBACH, that by exhausting their patience, they may be induced to complain of the urgency of their diseases, and afford an opportunity to the servants to collect, at least, some of the symptoms, which are communicated to the oracle, who afterwards admits them, and repeats what his domesticks had previously informed him of.

When a friend brings the urine of the patient, whose disease neither the porter nor the other servants are able to collect, Mr. MYERSBACH usually first inquires if the patient is ill in bed, the answer is, that *he, she, or it*, is confined in bed ; by the *he* or *she*, he discovers the sex of the patient, and by *it*, he supposes a child, and replies accordingly : thus, if the person says, *she* is confined to her bed ; Mr. MYERSBACH immediately rejoins, *he sees by the water, that it belongs to a woman, &c.* This supposed discovery  
so



so surprizes weak people, that afterwards, as I have heard Mr. MYERSBACH say, they will swallow any thing his broken English expresses ; though in general the patients are so agitated, and eager to believe all he says, as first to tell him their case, and then admire his repetitions of what they had related.

When a person of rank applies for relief, and the porter, &c. cannot learn what his disease may be, Mr. MYERSBACH is denied being at home, and the patient is desired to leave his address, and to attend next day ; and in the interval the servants endeavour to learn the nature of this complaint. Many of the nobility I have known thus duped into a belief of Mr. MYERSBACH's discernment, when his information was procured by his servants.

As Mr. MYERSBACH is not a physician, and is unacquainted with medicine, he carefully avoids meeting any gentlemen of the faculty ; but if such an accident should happen, he pretends to be in a very great hurry, being expected in some other place, and thus escapes a discovery of his ignorance.

After the patient receives his prescription, and comes into the shop to have it made up, Mr. KOCH pays very little attention to it, but mentions whatever he pleases to be substituted for it, although it have no connection with the prescription ; which, indeed, is only held out to the patient to cover the deception.



Nearly one uniform routine of medicines is given to the patients, beginning with the green drops and polychrest pills, and proceeding with the sweet drops and red powder, or the bezoar and absorbent powders, and the same pills without being silvered; but if the patient still remains unrelieved, similar medicines are continued differently coloured, with the addition of the black pill or some other medicine.

While Mr. MYERSBACH resided in Berwick-street, the shop was very ill furnished with drugs; and when he removed to Hatton-street, I represented the necessity of procuring some, lest any medical gentleman should pay us a visit; a fresh assortment was therefore procured from Messrs. Corbyn and Brown, druggists in Holborn, as very few were exported from Germany.

As I not only resided in Mr. MYERSBACH's house for several months, but likewise made up the medicines in the shop, I shall add a few remarks upon the manner I compounded them, as this was particularly my department, during at least two months of our greatest run of business, before Mr. LEITTEMIT was taken into the shop as an assistant; Mr. KOCH then being occupied in writing directions for the patients, and in receiving money for the medicines, one third of which was Mr. MYERSBACH's share: you will observe that our formulæ varied in some respects from those you have described.



I. *Essentia dulcis, or Sweet Essence.*

Take Spirit of Wine, one pound ;

Sugar, burnt to a brown colour, one ounce and a half ; mix, to make the sweet essence.

II. *Essentia amara, or the Bitter Drop.*

This tincture or essence is made from wormwood, trefoil, gentian root, and cascarilla bark, with the addition of a very small proportion of essence of amber.

VIII. *Pulvis antispasmodicus, or the Red Powder.*

Of this, we kept six kinds, containing different proportions of cinnabar, in order to deceive the patients by a greater variety of colours.

IX. *Pulvis contra Acredinum, or the Antacid Powder.*

We kept different sorts of this powder : one kind had the addition of anise-seed powder ; another was made of a blackish colour, by the addition of bread toasted brown.

I am, &c.

*Jean Ulric Haussmann.*

*Charing-Cross, Sept. 18, 1776.*

Extract



---

Extract of a Letter from a Countryman of  
Dr. MYERSBACH, to the Author of Obser-  
vations preparatory, &c.

———Mr. MYERSBACH sent for me to visit his wife in a little lodging he had in a shoemaker's house at No. 24, Rupert-street, Goodman's-fields, in November, 1773: he consulted me as being himself totally unacquainted with medicine; and as I found him in distressed circumstances, I did not then demand any gratuity for my attendance; I knew he was trying various schemes to get bread, and particularly to get employment with Mr. Hill, a starch-maker of Bow in Essex.

This not succeeding, he made attempts of different kinds, till he fell into water-conjuring. I found lately by the public papers, that a Dr. MYERSBACH had duped many families by this scheme, and had gained a great deal of money: I sent to know if this Doctor was the same Mr. MYERSBACH, whose wife I had attended; and finding him so, I demanded payment of the medicines prescribed for his wife, which he complied with in the presence of Charles Wittik.

*Johan Toennius.*

*Manfell-street, No. 50. Sept. 12, 1776.*



---

## SECTION V.

### CONCLUSION.

I AM unacquainted with Dr. MYERSBACH's person, though I have often been desir'd to meet him upon his own patients. I have not, to my knowledge, lost the attendance of one family by his practice, but I have gained several by it : I have therefore no other inducement for writing the preceding observations, but the public good. In every unhappy case, wherein I have followed Dr. MYERSBACH, my heart has bled over the folly of my fellow-creatures, and lamented that confidence which any thing out of the path of reason and common sense has inspired.

Throughout these observations I have given this foreigner the title of Doctor, agreeable to public appellation. It is not material to the world, whether this title has been conferred, or is only assumed :\* it is from serious facts which I have seen, or from

\* A medical gentleman of great candour and veracity, who practis'd medicine a few years ago in Germany, has assur'd me, that a Doctor's degree might have been purchased by any person for about *three shillings and six pence* : but I understand that the price



from the relations of patients or their friends, that I have drawn my conclusions ; and therefore have avoided all reflection on his origin and education, with which, I presume, many persons are already well acquainted. I wish only to appeal to the sober sense of the public, how far I have supported the character of an honest man, and of a conscientious physician.

I am sensible that what I have written cannot affect the independence of Dr. MYERSBACH, who has, as I am well informed, already made a princely fortune, which probably he will soon return to Germany to enjoy, with many a hearty laugh at English credulity : happy would it be for numerous individuals, if their implicit confidence should not deserve commiseration more than ridicule !

The reputation of AILHAUD'S POWDERS is recent in every person's memory : so rapid once was their sale, that the vender was soon enabled to purchase three baronies, though at the expence of many deluded victims, as the experience of the celebrated Dr. TISSOT fully evinces, with whose remarks I shall conclude this performance.

price has been since advanced, and more precaution adopted, in consequence of an insult to the University of Erfurth, by a gentleman, who bought a Doctor's diploma for his mastiff dog.



“ Fortunately for the human species, but few  
 “ nostrums have attained an equal reputation with  
 “ the Powders of AILHAUD, an inhabitant of Aix  
 “ in Provence, and unworthy the name of a phy-  
 “ sician; who has overrun Europe for some years past  
 “ with a violent purge, the remembrance of which  
 “ will not be effaced before the extinction of all its  
 “ victims. I have for a long time past attended se-  
 “ veral patients, whose disorders I can only palliate  
 “ without hope of ever curing them; and who owe  
 “ their present melancholy state of body to nothing  
 “ but the manifest consequences of these powders;  
 “ and I have actually seen, very lately, two persons  
 “ who have been cruelly poisoned by them. A French  
 “ physician, as eminent for his talents and science as  
 “ estimable for his moral character, has published  
 “ some of the tragical consequences which these pow-  
 “ ders have occasioned; and were a collection made  
 “ of their effects, in every place where the use of  
 “ them has been introduced, the size of the volume  
 “ would be enormous, and the contents *horrible in-*  
 “ *deed!*”





" Fortunately for the human species, but few  
 " notions have attained an equal reputation with  
 " the Powder of Alchamir, an inhabitant of Aix  
 " in Provence, and now worthy the name of a phy-  
 " sician; who has overthrown the hopes for some years past  
 " with a violent purge, the terror of which  
 " will not be effaced before the extinction of all his  
 " victims. I have for a long time past attended to  
 " several patients, whose distresses I can only relieve  
 " without hope of ever curing them; and who owe  
 " their present melancholy state of body to nothing  
 " but the manifest consequences of this powder;  
 " and I have actually seen, very lately, two persons  
 " who have been cruelly poisoned by them. A French  
 " physician, as eminent for his talents and science as  
 " estimable for his moral character, has published  
 " some of the tragical consequences which these pow-  
 " ders have occasioned; and were a collection made  
 " of their effects, in every place where the use of  
 " them has been introduced, the file of the volume  
 " would be enormous, and the contents terrible in-  
 " deed!"

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*