

**Physick is a jest, a whim, an humour ... To which is added, a discourse or letter on the degree of doctor, in this profession / [By D. de C].**

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De Coetlogon, Dennis, -1749.

**Publication/Creation**

London : T. Cooper, 1739.

**Persistent URL**

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P H Y S I C K

I S A

Jest, *a* Whim, *an* Humour, *a*  
Fancy, *a mere* Fashion,

Even full as much as

D R E S S

O R

D A N C I N G.

To which is added,

A DISCOURSE OR LETTER on the  
Degree of Doctor, in this Profession.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for T. COOPER, at the *Globe* in  
*Pater-noster Row*. M.DCC.XXXIX.

(Price One Shilling.)









## PHYSICK is a JEST, &c.

**O**UR Title will, I doubt not, give great Umbrage to some; and if a few of the more thinking Part of Mankind should not be so greatly surprized thereat, yet 'tis likely that the Generality will be ready enough to conclude it next to an impossibility, we should ever be able to make good our said Title, as that of, *Physick* being *a jest*, &c. Let us try then how we can make out this first grand Article. I know it will very freely be advanced and ask'd, Can any such Profession be a *jest* by which there is so much good Money to be got? But if that be the Case, or an Argument of any weight, I know not whether artful *Gamesters*, *Usurers*, or gallant designing *Ladies*, &c. may not likewise as readily advance, that their Business is no more a *jest*, than that of the former. Yet I would again ask, (by way of return on the other side) how we are to find out or know a truly-able and well knowing Physician, whose Knowledge is *no jest*? Or otherwise, to put it as yet in other words, the certain *Criterion*,



or Rule, by which we are to judge of any one of them knowing more than any of *their Neighbours*? In a word, that Person of such *superiour Knowledge*, whether it be by his instructing, or teaching Mankind those his superiour Talents: or that it be by any other means he makes them truly and justly sensibly thereof. For if it be only by the foresaid Rule of him that gets the most Money, (according to our but too common way of reckoning) it will then, I say, appear to be no more nor less a jest than the former. And now, should we again think fit to put it to the Test of their own Words, we should I doubt find, that the one knows just about as much as the other, if we depend upon them, and take their own Words for it, or that of their Friends. More especially, if they cannot make the World more sensible thereof by their approved Productions, or by some evident Proofs of such their undoubted Superiority and Knowledge. Being, as we have observed the World in general is ready and apt to judge, or consider them to be pretty equal, and accordingly do hardly make a Shilling difference betwixt the one and the other, in their *Fees*, being in that nearly alike: particularly with those of the same Class; of which kind there still are several, even of those we can reasonably presume are the best paid. And any distinction (being made) in this, it is rather in proportion to their Riches, and the Figure they make



make in the World, as that of their Equipage, or expensive Living, &c. than from any real or solid Consideration, as that of the real Merit and Knowledge of any such Person. And next, if we privately examine each, separately, as to his Opinion of the rest of his said Brethren, he will very readily insinuate to you, that such know but little of the matter, in comparison with himself. Now as to the Good that is done, or how many are preserved by the one, more than by the other, may be the question. If then we would be determin'd in this by the Opinion of Apothecaries, whom Patients commonly agree to be far better Judges of such Matters than they themselves are, 'tis well if these Practitioners do not determine the Affair in favour of those as the very best, whom they have the *greatest number* of *Bills* from. In fine, we shall observe some Male, or Female, of the first Rank, to recommend some one Practitioner, by which such Physician shall advance into an extraordinary *Credit, Money, and Business*: Whilst another (at the same time) who is possibly much more knowing, or, modestly speaking, knows full as much, is forgot or entirely neglected: or, according to the modern Phrase, is little better then starved. Is not all this Affair then of Physick, or the Practice thereof, a mere jest? Yes, say you; but I must take care of, and recommend my Friend. But then again, say I, it would by this Rule seem that the one

is



is even as good as the other, and consequently not much material which it is of the Profession; that is, in effect, it is thus little better than *a mere Jest*. But perhaps this Assertion will yet still appear more plain, when we come to consider the Management of this Affair under the Head of *mere † Humour*. What I mean by *Humour*, is where Mankind are more particularly guided by their favourite Inclinations or Passions: or are thus somehow sooth'd or cajol'd in their favourite Follies, rather than in making a truly, just, and reasonable Choice of Men or Things; that is, from the real Merit to be found in such, without the least Bias from the Passions, altogether unprejudiced, entirely from the Strength of Reason. Thus then we shall observe, that Men are commonly led by their private Interest or *Avarice*, their *Fancy*, or by particular Affection; in fine, by some one or other of their Passions; otherwise by common Custom, like Sheep, are led to follow one another, or at best some scabby *Bell-weather*, so implicitly directed and conducted by *one*, whose principal Interest it is to lead them wrong, according to his own proper Interest, without hardly having a Vote in their own Affair, even though a Matter of the greatest moment, to wit, that of *Life* or *Death*. And all this from that silly idle pretence of their not being, say they, *sufficient* Judges of these Affairs.

† As to the considering this Profession as a *Whim*, it is so, more particularly spoke of hereafter, under the Notion of *Fancy*, &c.



Affairs. And how, I pray, is it very certain, that those they depend thus greatly on, are much more so? Or any better Judges (surely not less unbiass'd and disinterested) than themselves, tho' strongly, and no doubt sufficiently pretending thereto. But alas! when the same is duly considered, we shall more probably find it in reality to be an idle, negligent, inconsiderate Pusillanimity and Fear, rather than from any real and just Cause, without that proper use of their solid Reason duly: themselves to inspect and examine therein. For without supposing them to be proper Judges of particular Arts, Sciences, or Professions, or that they are obliged to study them, (though if any, that, methinks of their Health, ought to be the first, which would not be the worse for them when ill) yet admitting they do not incline, or are not to trouble themselves with this part; I cannot however by any means be of opinion, but that the Study of *Mankind* ought (at least in some degree) to be their Care and Application: Whereas we but too commonly, in reality do find, that they even know and apply themselves full as little to that, as to the former. When were they, I say, duly to consider, study, and know, which is that Man or Person of real and solid Sense, Integrity, and Judgment, (which ought indeed to be the Study and Consideration of every one) and that, without the least regard to Party, Humour, Recommendation, Shew, idle, glary Embellish-



Embellishments, Interest, or Biass, they might then justly enough conclude, that such Person so duly weigh'd in that true manner, could hardly be greatly deficient in what he applies himself to, (at least not less than others, not thus duly poised) since such Person of Integrity, Honour, and Knowledge, will scarce apply himself ineffectually to any thing he much inclines to. Nor will he pretend to impose on those (more especially) who put a Confidence in him, by unjustly undertaking more than what he well knows himself fully capable of. Whereas those who are deficient in such like true Qualities, they are on the other hand justly to be suspected in every respect, not only as to Capacity, but even as to their Integrity. Yet so I say it is, that most Men do generally sacrifice their Knowledge, Reason, or Judgment to their particular *Humour* or *Passion*; since nothing is more common than that they prefer such and such, as being of their Party, for the more effectual Support thereof, &c. when nothing can in reality be more stupid; since true Knowledge in Physick can be of no Party. However, they are often thus still willing to sacrifice their Reason, as well as possibly their Lives also, merely to their *Humour* or *Passion*. And so it is in like manner that Avarice, or Interest, often leads them; Relationship, or other Ties, &c. whereas such, or any *Passions*, or *Humours*, have not in the least to do with real *Skill and Knowledge* in  
this



this Profession. Well, but the Answer readily is, *such a Friend* may do well enough *on a slight*, or common occasion (which may be very true, being there may not be any) yet do they still know the occasion there is? But if those suppose the one to be good as the other, then indeed we must give up our Reason: or 'twere full time to give up the *Profession*, there being *at that rate, little or nothing in it*; which if so, they might methinks e'en just as well save their Money (given in such way) in their own Pockets. *Humour*, as yet shews itself so very strong in most cases, that whilst in the fit of an *Humour*, or Passion towards some particular Person, whether from Love, Interest, or mere Whim and Fancy of pleasing us during the time, we then admire and look on such with the greatest Pleasure and Satisfaction: Nay, they then do in reality appear to us with the Faces, and Graces, of *Angels*, when we are so catch'd, and if it happens, or is still so continued when dying, being in that delusive or affectionate *Humour* that moment, are ready to leave all or most to such. Whereas if either then, or before, this Person upon some trifling occasion happen to disoblige such dying Person, they then appear hateful and like *Devils* to him; as well as that their Perfections do but too commonly seem Imperfections, and are thus as suddenly struck out of all favour: which I doubt at such time proves to be but too much so,



even with the very best of us : yet surely this can, or ought to have nought to do in matters of Physick. It would indeed be needless, to enter into all the variety of *Humours* Men are possess'd with, every Particular readily knows his own Inclinations, if not that of his Friends also; and it is not a little surprizing to see with what Warmth, *Sophistry*, *Rhetorick*, or *Jargon*, every one justifies and supports his own dear *Humour and Inclination*, or that of his Friend. Thus I know not whether *Fancy* is not properly enough to be considered under the Denomination of *Humour*, or whether it ought rather to be class'd under its own distinct Head. Yet in the latter there would seem to be somewhat more of the whimsical, or *Je-ne-sçay-quoi*, more than in the other. So a Physician is often chose by mere *Fancy* by some Lady, &c. tho' they can hardly discover why or wherefore. Often a mere *Whim* : If not accompany'd likewise with the utmost Inconstancy, and altogether *fantastical*. But when a real *Fancy* for the Person of the Man, for reasons best known to such Female, the Affair then is in itself somewhat more excusable. Altho' it may not be so readily allow'd, that it is the true Standard, we are to be ruled by, such as that of the real and true Knowledge of his Profession.

Thus Practitioners are now employed proportionably to the Interest and Friends they have, or can make, and very rarely or ever any other-  
wise,



wife, such as by that of their real Knowledge, &c. Neither is it indeed an easy matter truly to find out, that the one Practitioner is any way more distinguishable for his real Knowledge than the other, as times go. Since they live and make a figure in their Business proportionably to the Interest and Friends they can make: or are indeed employed (in a great measure) according to the Show, Manner, and Expence of their way of living; that is, proportionably to the number of their friendly Acquaintance; or that of the Ties or Company they or their Family have, or keep. Nor seems it hardly worth the while, to shew our so great Spleen or over-much Anxiety against the one, or the other, tho' even the most successful in attaining a great deal of Business in this way in the present Mode. Since there are very few, perhaps hardly two to be named, who in reality do get more by Business than the real Expence of their Families, or to defray the usual Expence of their manner of living. Particularly when we except the Principal and Interest of that they may paternally have had, or by Marriage, &c. Which Sums (peradventure) in the Term of many Years, may advance to somewhat considerable. As to Surgeons, or Apothecaries, who generally live at less Expence, together with the different Nature of their Business, or Demands, &c. it is not altogether so. Dr. *Ratcliff*, and perhaps some others formerly, did indeed make real Estates, properly by their Business:



but then they were in their time also allowed to be the first (of the Profession) without controul, as *Ratcliff* no doubt particularly was; whether altogether owing to his Merit and real superiour Knowledge or otherwise, is not greatly material here, but 'tis certain there were many particular concurring Circumstances, which contributed likewise to make him so: such as that of the Support of *Oxford*, (whether from Expectations, &c.) as well as many other favourable Singularities, possibly not a little, of that commonly term'd the quacking part, and even that of selling at his Apothecaries the principal Medicines he used, or prescribed, kept, as I am inform'd, in a Chest, under Lock and Key, and a certain Quantity occasionally weigh'd out. Whereas in other Businesses which require nothing near the like Study, Application, Learning, or Knowledge, such frequently amass very great Fortunes thereby. Now whether the fore-said so little Success, in this Profession, proceeds from the want of that real superiour Knowledge therein, or from any other Defects or Chances, is what I shall not now pretend to determine, but leave it to the Judgment and Determination of the more considerate Reader. Yet this methinks may freely enough be added, that according to the present usual Acquisitions made in this way, (as observed) the great bustle, intriguing, back-biting, &c. commonly used to attain the same, it seems hardly worth that trouble.

But



But now as to *Dress*. What Comparison (says my inquisitive Reader) can there be betwixt that and *Physick*? I shall first then observe, that the *Chaldeans*, as well as the *Egyptians*, wore *long Robes*, *Caps*, and long *Beards*, &c. all in the simplest and plainest manner, as well as that their *Dress* was solemn and grave, corresponding to their Customs, and Ceremonies, which were so. Thus *Physick* was seemingly at that time in its primitive State, plain and undivided; altogether under the Knowledge of one *grave Person*. Such Knowledge being principally taken from the Accounts of those who had been ill, which were written and publickly recorded in their own Language, in the *Highways*, on *Columns*, or in their *Temples*, &c. so that the Priests were then learned therein, and were often accordingly consulted in this way.

After which it was carried over into *Greece*, by that inquisitive stirring Nation: who may justly enough at that time, be said to have been the active bustling Travellers, the polite People; in a word, the real *Frenchmen* of that early time, thus running about and teaching their Knowledge both at home and abroad, to the more barbarous, or in short to all the other Nations around them. And thus being carried into *Greece*, *Dress* was there again re-modell'd. And though still retaining the plain and grave, as that of the long *Robes*, *Beards*, and *Caps*, with that of their own native  
Language



Language only, &c. yet Physick was still in a great measure new-fashion'd by them, even as much as the other. In a word, it was now thrown into a much better Order, and *Decorum*, far more properly cut out: or better digested, particularly in the time of *Hippocrates*. It was however there, and even about that time, the many extravagant *Whims*, or fantastical *Fashions*, *Modes*, and *Opinions*, of idle, vain Philosophers, or others, creep'd in, and were introduced into this Profession. But without so very much dwelling on the many and various *Sects*, of these so philosophick People, we shall now content ourselves with observing only, that this Profession was in time cut out, by that very fashionable, busy, bustling *Nation*, into many various Shapes, according to the luxuriant Fancies of such its Practitioners. And thus there arose the following *Fashions*; such as that of the *Empirical*, the *Gymnastic*, and *Bathing Practitioners*, the *Dogmatists*, or Reasoners, the *Methodists*, the *Episyntheticks*, or Trimmers, the *Eclecticicks*, who were for picking or culling from all, with the *Pneumaticians*, for the Spirits, &c. And thus also the Method of the Practice of Physick alter'd in its Fashion accordingly, in the like manner becoming more confused, &c.

After this the said Knowledge or Profession travell'd to *Rome*, where, though the *Greek* Masters and Fashions were all the Mode, and  
that



that such *Greek* Artists, and Masters, were the only or principal People who were in any esteem there : yet all this Learning, and Doctrine, was still in some, or a great measure, mixt with the *Roman Customs and Fashions*. And thus it was that these so very ambitious insatiable People, greatly thirsting after *universal Power and Riches*, on the attaining that, did accordingly become *luxurious, idle, pompous, &c.* And though they thus still, in a great measure, kept to somewhat of the *Grecian Dress and Customs*, yet latterly became vastly more vain, pompous, and showy : particularly after the *Africk and Eastern Conquests*, especially in the *imperial time*. It was for a considerable time, the Gravity of *Beards* were laid aside, whilst themselves and their Garments were so much bedaub'd with Gold, such as those of *Chains, Rings, Bracelets, or Bullæ*, as well as ornamented with all sorts of *precious Stones*, whether plain, or more artfully cut, by the nicest and most curious Workmen. It was then in this time, much like, and in the same manner, that the Practice of Physick became so very perplex'd with that *boundless Superfluity, Vanity, Pomp and Show*. It was now also that *Galen*, tho' a *Greek* (then in *Rome*) introduced that infinite Variety of Medicines, that numberless Farrago of Compounds, so greatly since used and followed. Thus it was that *Luxury, Show, and Superfluity*, went hand  
and



and hand, in Physick, as in Dress: Rather still losing, than gaining, any or the least Ground amongst that *idle, extravagant, ambitious, and so highly luxurious People*. From henceforward then, or upon the entire and total Destruction of this Empire, as well as the utter Ruin of that of the *Greeks*, this Profession accordingly took its flight, or next travell'd amongst the *Arabs* and *Africans*. Here it was again new re-modell'd, and afresh *vamp'd up*, and thus thrown into a very different Dress from any of the foregoing. The Habits of that Nation being, according to their own particular Customs, Humours, Religion, or Conveniencies, &c. Thus these People resumed again the *Beards* with the *Turbans*, as well as different Habits, greatly variegated, and of gay Colours, as the Reds, Greens, &c. And here *precious colour'd Stones* became greatly fashionable likewise, as well as that the highest *Superstition* was so, in Matters of Religion, and that of the Cabalistical, and magical Art. It was now also, that † *Chymistry* was introduced with all its *mystical* and *whimsical*

† Thus at first simple Medicines were the fashion, after which it came to the Galenics; now Chymistry was all in vogue, so Alkalies are one time much in fashion, another time 'tis Acids. Antimony was formerly in great use, now it is in little use. Thus Bleeding is greatly in vogue at certain times, or with some, whilst others disapprove thereof. So sometimes the hot Regimen is the fashion, and at another time the cold. Some depend on Systems, some on Mathematicks, whilst others depend only on Observation, probably the safest to be relied on. Sometimes Simplicity and Truth is the fashion, as Falshood, Ornament or Show is in times of Luxury and Iniquity.



*fical Doctrine*, and Notions, so usual and particularly at that time adapted thereto. A Profession generally judged to be entirely new, especially as to its great Use and Application this way. Since not known (from what we can learn) either amongst the *Greeks*, or *Romans*. It was now also, that the Sugar'd Tribe, so very pompously appear'd; and were added to the foresaid many various *Galenic Compounds*; such were their *Confections*, *Conserve*s, *Syrups*, &c. And thus Physick was in such manner likewise alter'd, according to the *Taste*, *Fashion*, *Time* and *Place*, of that rough Nation. And now it was (as before observed) that *colour'd precious Stones* became in that great use amongst them for *Dress and Ornament*, and so they were in the like manner introduced, and used, in the *medicinal way*. And as great *Superstition* (as likewise has been said) was the *Fashion* of these Times, so it was even also introduced into this Profession, for the Cure of many Maladies: whether by that of *Conjurations*, or certain odd Words with various strange Forms, or Trifles, as well as by many different Forms of *Amulets*, with some *conjuring Inscription on them*, &c. Thus several hundreds of Years after the *Decay*, *Division*, or *Downfall* of that *Monarchy*, this Profession return'd back into *Italy*, *Spain*, and *France*, and to these our northern Parts. 'Twas then that it was again re-modell'd, changing likewise its Lan-



guage, as well as its Religion; that is, instead of the *Arabian Tongue* and the *Mahumetan Religion*, it took to the *Latin Language*, and Popish Forms, thus receiving, entirely, and blindly submitting itself to be transform'd, remodell'd, approved, and the Practitioners thereof dignified with Honours, *Titles*, &c. as the sovereign Pontiff was pleased to determine, or approve. And thus it was that the *Latin* in particular, as well as the *Greek*, *Logick*, *Philosophy*, and *Metaphysicks*, were by this great and universal *Father of the Church*, judged absolutely necessary to be learn'd by every *Ecclesiastic*, as well as all such who could be thought to have any use for *Letters*, or in a *studious way*; who accordingly were order'd to be coop'd up in *publick Schools*, (founded or approved by the said *Roman See*) thus to be properly qualified with this kind of *modish Education*. And so it was in like manner concluded and determin'd, that Physick also required this sort of fashionable Learning as much as any, to wit, as either that of the *Church* or *the Law*. It was now that thus the foreign, or dead Languages became the Fashion, or Mode, for all Physicians so to be furnish'd therewith; particularly that of the *Latin* and *Greek*. It was some time thereafter that the great Formality of *prescribing*, and that in the most *pompous manner*, was introduced, and ever since so greatly followed. But now (I doubt) it may be alledged, tho' I may here have said something to make  
good



good so much of our foresaid *Title*, yet that the principal Difficulty still remains so also to make out that Physick changes its *Figure*, *Form*, and *Fashion*, even as *Dancing*, &c. we shall then observe that amongst the *Ancients* Dancing was considered with them in a quite different light, to what it is at present amongst us. *Socrates* regarded dancing amongst the serious Discipline of his time, more especially as to Health: and so is said to have learn'd it in his old Age. *Theseus* is by some thought to have been the first Institutor thereof (after his killing of the Minotaur) in Dances perform'd before the Altar of *Apollo*, in the *Isle of Delos*. That it was in high Perfection amongst the *Ancients*, is easy to be gathered from great variety of the Writers of that time. The *Lacedemonians* were said to have been the first who built the *Gymnasia*, or *Palestræ*; which was however soon follow'd by the rest of *Greece* and *Italy*. These were publick Buildings extremely large and spacious, with long Porticoes, and proper places to run, walk, or exercise under a Roof, being many Buildings join'd, sufficient to contain many thousands of People all together: and that without the least Disturbance or Interruption to one another. Those for Exercise had their particular Masters, named *Gymnastæ*, and the Servants that were under them were call'd *Pædotribæ*. All sorts of Exercises were used there, as well as Dancing. The Σφαίρισθηριον or Sphæ-



risterion, was a *Dance* of a sphaerical Movement, accompanied with tossing, and catching of Balls. The Ancients had many different kinds of Dances, that of the religious or sacred, the warlike or military, as that of leaping and jumping in Armour, called by them the *Pyrrick*. There was also the *civil* and that of *Love*, or some of these mixt, &c. *Herodicus*, Master of the great *Hippocrates*, is said to have been the first Inventor of the *Gymnastick Physick*, or Exercise, who being then Master of an *Academy*, observed the Youth thus to become more healthful, by such their Exercises there, as well as much contributing to prolong his own Life thereby: tho' at the same time he is said then to have had an incurable Malady upon him. Some of the Ancients in those Days are likewise reported to have cured most of their Maladies by *Musick* and *Dancing*. *Galen* mentions *Æsculapius*, for curing the Disorders of the Mind this way; as the *Phrygians* did all manner of *Pains* thereby. *Apollonius* speaks of its Use in *Epilepsies*, and the Distractions of the Mind. *Thales* of *Crete* is thus said to have cured the *Lacedemonians* of their *Pestilence*; and *Democrates* taught it as a Cure for most Distempers. *Pythagoras* (as *Jamblichus* relates) used it in the Cure of *venomous Bites*, as well as in other Maladies. *Hieronimus Mercurialis* particularly describes the healthful Uses of the *Dances*, as well as the other Exercises of the Ancients.

The



The *Cubistick* or tumbling Dance, he recommends for the strengthening of the Arms and Thighs, though probably not so advisable for the *Back* or *Bowels*, *Head*, &c. *Aretæus* likewise advises much *Gesticulation*, or various Motions for various Maladies; as *Chironomia* or moving of the Arms and Hands, with Boxing, for *Vertigo*, &c. The *Ægyptians*, *Grecians*, and *Romans*, still used Dancing in their sacred and religious Rites and Ceremonies. *Orpheus* and *Museus* affirm'd, that *no Person could be initiated into holy Mysteries without Musick and Dancing*. Neither was there indeed any thing transacted in *Delos* without it. The Priests ('tis said instructed by *Rhea*) danced with *Shields*, *Swords*, and  *Armour*, in warlike and furious Postures, being call'd *Corybantes*. And thus the *Ægyptians* and *Scythians* in Dances adored the *Sun*; as the *Indians* (probably from them) do even at this day. So the *Romans* had their *Salii* or dancing Priests, whose Office it was to *celebrate* the Rites of *Mars*, perform'd in warlike Habits, thus praising the *tutelar God* of Battle with *Musick* and *Dancing*. The Vow of *Tullus Hostilius* (which he made in Battle with the *Sabines*) was to institute twelve more of the dancing Priests, as the most agreeable Offering he thought he could make them. Many other different Dances were instituted on various occasions, as those in honour of *Apollo*, *Minerva*, and *Diana*; such were the *Pythian* and *Olympick Games*,



Games, as well as those in honour of *Neptune* the *Charities* and *Graces*. So in like manner the *Ludæ Magalenses* to the *Mother of the Gods*, and the *Bacchanalia* or Feasts of *Bacchus*, in honour of him. The *Palilia* to *Pales* the *Goddeſs of Shepherds*, to preserve their Cattle from Diseases, Wolves, &c. by dancing round Heaps of Straw call'd *Palea*. Thus then after the total Dissolution of the *Roman Empire*, *Physick* (as has been observed) travelled next into *Arabia* and *Africa*, where it again took a *different Shape*; or was there afresh *re-modell'd*, as well as *Dancing*, according to the *Custom*, *Whim*, and *Fancy* of that rougher Nation, who danced with their *Pipe* and *Tambour*, &c. Thus Dancing, which was arrived to the highest Perfection amongst the Ancients, did finally like other sublunary things fall again into Decay, upon the Destruction or Downfall of those People. And now the *French* 'tis true have of late Years introduced some trifling insignificant *Dances*, such as those of *Love* and *Gallantry*, or altogether *lascivious*, otherwise of no real Significancy or Meaning; so that there hardly seems to be any thing of that true Knowledge and Art to be remaining amongst us, which was so well known to the Ancients, entire Histories being express'd with them, by Signs, and Dances. And thus it was that *Physick* itself did in like manner also degenerate into *mere Forms*, *vain Grimace and Show*, rather than into any *Realities*, or that of the true



true Knowledge and Improvement of this Profession. It will then (probably) sufficiently appear, from what has before been advanced in our forefaid *Title*, That *Physick* (as used) *is a mere Jest, a Whim, an Humour, a Fancy, a downright Fashion,* even as much as *Dress* or *Dancing*.

But now since we have here hinted at the many new Forms and Fashions, thus brought in amongst the Moderns (particularly those latter mentioned) which were introduced by the Power of the *Roman Pontiff*, to wit, the fashionable Education of the Times, accompanied with the pompous Title of the Degree of *Doctor*, &c. I shall then at present content myself by recommending to my Reader, the *following Letter*, more fully treating of that Subject in particular. And now I cannot at the same time forbear very heartily smiling, when I observe and consider the extraordinary rout, noise, and bustle, which is made by that notable *Female Mrs. Stevens*, (with her so greatly celebrated *Nostrum*) nay, that even Doctors and some of the most *noted Surgeons* highly admire, praise, covet, and follow her, for this her wonderful Knowledge: yea, that she is by their assistance even greatly taken notice of and rewarded by the *Publick*. Now if so it be then that she knows, and does more than even the Doctors, &c. why do they not give her that Degree also? More especially, since she will not be the first Female who has had it. And should she arrive to be President  
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of the C—— she might not possibly do much less good than some have.

Yet am I in a Dream? Or shall I as yet trust to my Senses, either Eyes or Ears? And are there as yet on Earth such regular Pretenders in Physick, who follow and puff up the mighty Feats of this simple Female? Yes truly there are, even such knowing *Scioli*: nay, who have also gain'd some Credit with the more unthinking and unknowing part of Mankind. Neither do I incline to assert it to be from any private or interested Views in them. But is it even yet possible, and will Futurity ever credit it, that there are or were in these our Times, such who pretend to, or have received their Doctor's Degrees, such as a *H—ly*, *Sh—* or a *S—s*, &c. that so adore, follow, extol, and recommend this most notable Woman with her non-such Medicine. Or are there even as yet of our most noted Chirurgeons of our Hospitals, the so renown'd *Lithotomists*, (and who so highly value themselves on their great Improvements) the never-to-be-forgotten *Ornaments of the Profession Ch—n* and *Sh—p*, together with *H—ns*, who all together, as well as the former, even humbly submit to play the Journeymen, Assistants, and Testimonies or Vouchers to this so wonder-working Female, and all without the least View of any private Interest, as it is well known that *Ornaments of the Profession* always do. And thus these  
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excellent Proceedings ought ever to be recorded to all future Ages (for the Benefit of Posterity) with that admirable Operation of the Drum of the Ear. But it would, I doubt, seem somewhat likely (if not to appear over-plain) that these *Scioli* (possibly besides other weighty reasons) may be in hopes of attaining to, or of learning from this so scientific Female, a much easier Method of relieving Mankind from the Stone, than that hitherto practised, and so particularly, and so very successfully perform'd by those noted and most celebrated *Ornaments of Surgery in general*, and of *Lithotomy* in particular. And that they would now seem shrewdly to suspect there will be little or no further occasion for them in their former operative way, though always so wonderfully successful. And shall we as yet believe that the Publick appear seemingly inclinable to indulge the Fair Sex, by demanding only to hear those of her side, without desiring the Information, summoning or enquiring (at the same time) of those of the other side, and the reasonable Objections to be made by such, or who might perhaps too plainly shew the Folly of the trifling Tittle-tattle, laid before them by these busy forward *Scioli*, with all their pretended Demonstrations. But I shall refer (at present) my further Thoughts on this Head, and proceed as hinted on the Letter spoken on the Degree of Doctor: which Dignity one might be ready to imagine



when so bestowed as what we have been mentioning, might be apt to induce some of real Knowledge to neglect it, if not to despise such trifling Doings : or, in a word, scarce to think it worthy the Acceptance.



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# LETTER, &c.

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**S**INCE charged with Singularity of Opinion, in relation to the Degrees of DOCTOR (more particularly in *Physick*) and that you desired me more fully to explain my self on this Head; you will by this I here write you, better judge of the Reasonableness of what I advance.

I am not insensible of the daring Boldness of broaching such Opinions, and of the vast Crowd of Criticks, Hornets, &c. I must naturally expect to attack me on this Singularity of Thoughts; yet, as Men who have Souls, dare to start out of the common Tract, more especially to follow Truth, though ever so simply array'd; so my Endeavours have always been to keep as near and close to that as possible, let the Consequences be what they would. Now whether by the Assailants



called ignorant, unlearned, undignified, or wanting Capacity, &c.

*Facta est Alea, valet quantum valere potest.*

Before *Hippocrates's* Time, there appears not to have been a sufficient Degree of Application and Observation, either in *Physick* or *Surgery*; so that in his Time it seems to have been brought to the highest Degree of Knowledge: Nor do we know, or will it, I believe, be advanced, that we have had any one Person who has ever yet arrived to his Degree of Knowledge since his Time (all, or most, ever since, that is good, being taken from him.) Though I cannot see why we might not as much improve; as he did, on those before him, and consequently even surpass him in Knowledge; when such naturally sagacious Men are to be found (of which all Ages, I doubt not, have produced some) and who, applying themselves in this Profession, strictly following plain Truth only, as he did, might consequently succeed as well: Yet, how difficult this must be, in a Time or Place of Luxury and Corruption, so contrary to the common Customs of such Times; or how little any such Men would be minded, I must leave you to judge.

If Formalities, instead of Realities, have been the principal Things improved or minded  
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ed ever since, to wit, this two thousand Years, What great Matters then have we to brag of? or, Where are our great Advancements, as to the Realities of Cures? It may, perhaps, be advanced, that we have made some Improvements in the Anatomical Way: Now, even admitting this, Can we prove that it has advanced us one Jot further towards a Cure in *Physick*, or even that of *Surgery*? Nay, I may, perhaps, without great Hazard, venture to add, or even to perform any one Operation better than in his Time, it being a Thing well known to Anatomists, that the Vessels, &c. from the Wantonness of Nature, keep not always the same Situation: Thus in some Bodies, there are only found one pyramidal Muscle (in Place of two) and in others none. The Advancements then that we have made, may possibly be as much Matter of Curiosity and Speculation, as that of being greatly Useful as to Practice. But as this seems to lead me into another Field, to wit, that of the Nature of Practice in this Art; I shall, at present, choose to refer that to another Opportunity, and keep here to the Subject proposed.

There was not any such Custom as that of Degrees of *Doctor* in those Days; nor for, at least, twelve hundred Years thereafter; or, perhaps, even so long after *Galen*; though so great an Improver of Words and Formalities. *Hippocrates* made himself well known in this Art,



Art, and wanted no such Formalities ; but received the universal Voice with divine Honours, &c. The Word *Doctor*, amongst the *Romans* themselves, was no otherwise known or understood, than as a Teacher of their Language ; that is, in more plain *English*, a School-master ; *Medicus* being the only Name known for a *Physician*, till after the Destruction of the *Roman* Empire.

'Twas then the Bishops of *Rome*, the Papal Authority, begun more particularly to shew it self, by the great Concessions given from *Charlemain*, to *Leo* the Third, in the eighth Century ; still increased by succeeding Emperors and Princes. 'Twas then the See of *Rome* so advanced their vast Authority, and such large Pretensions ; particularly in every Thing which had the least Regard to Letters. Schools in common Use in the *Roman* Time, for the Teaching of the *Roman* Language, so necessary in those Countries they had subjected (for the better Understanding of their Laws, &c.) were, by the foresaid Authority, brought into a prescribed Method, and thus turned into Seminaries, Colleges, and Universities, where the Metaphysics, and Philosophy of those Times were taught (*viz.* the *Aristotelian*) or some Cobweb Chimerical Notions, the Product of puzzling unexperienced Brains (without cultivating and judging from natural Experiments) thus idly presuming to explain by  
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hard Words, the hidden Laws of Nature, and first Laws of Motion, &c. To this was added, their Logic, or approved Method of Reasoning: Which Liberty of Foundations, or at least, Confirmations, were thus, at first, granted from *Rome* (and the Example followed by latter Princes;) the Masters of such Schools or Colleges, &c. being, in general, Monks or Ecclesiasticks, were only to teach such Doctrine as was approved of, as well as that themselves were to be approved of, and under the Jurisdiction of the See of *Rome*. The methodical prescribed Forms of Living, Praying, Cælebacy in Fellowships, their singular Dresses, Names of Colleges, together with the common Sloath, Riches, or Fat and Formality of these Times, and Customs, seem, as yet, plainly to appear in our own two great Universities. Nor was this Power and Honour only; but likewise proved greatly profitable to the *Roman* Pontiff.

That Divinity should be taught there, and thus made proper Seminaries for Divines, approving and granting them all Sorts of Honours, Degrees, &c. need not seem strange: Nor need it appear so very Wonderful, if their Christian Religion was, in some Measure, blended with some Ceremonies or Customs (at least) of the ancient *Romans*; which might, in some Measure, favour of such Customs, Ceremonies, or Opinions, interwoven, and introduced into all the Learning, Laws and

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Customs of the ancient *Romans*; any more than as all Religions whatsoever have still been, more or less, tainted with those (as well as that of the Nations) they descend from, or border upon. Now if the same Ecclesiastical or Papal Power, should even also pretend to Authorise, Tutor, Approve, and consequently Dignify, or give Degrees also to such as studied the *Roman*, or other Laws of each Country, intermix'd with the *Roman*; or even if more or less blended with Gothic, Feudetary, or Municipal Laws; especially having some Mixture of Canon or Ecclesiastical Law, still, in some Measure, interfering, or some way thus made dependent on this said Jurisdiction, or so pretended to, need not seem greatly strange to us. But, in the Name of Wonder, and the highest Admiration! how *Medicine*, or *Physick*, should also be here included into these Seminaries, or Colleges (Hospitals, surely, being much the more proper place for such, and hardly known to the former) is a Thing I cannot so well comprehend; unless it were, as the Story is told, That in those, or some such illiterate Monkish Times, *None should be made Bishops but such as could read*. So possibly, it might then also be thought Necessary, by the foresaid Authority, that those likewise applying to *Medicine*, should not only be able to read, but also to learn the *Roman* Tongue (the *Greek* being but little, or not used,



used, or known there, till lately) together with the Doctrine, Philosophy, and Logick of those times. There was, indeed, something further thought Necessary, as the having Masters for that End, to read some publick Lectures on *Medicine*, &c. But how far succeeding Ages advanced in real Knowledge in this Art, by such Method, is what I will not (at least, here) pretend to determine, but rather choose to refer such Thoughts to another Opportunity, should I find it necessary to broach my Sentiments on the Nature of Practice, &c. Yet this I will, at present, venture to say, that *Hippocrates* knew nothing of this Sort of Education, or of the *Galenic* or *Chymic* Medicines, introduced in after Ages: And, as to *Surgery*, the most certain Part of Knowledge of the Profession, that was entirely neglected, particularly as to the Practice, so as to be in a very low State, if not in a Manner quite lost for, at least, fifteen hundred Years. It was however not only thus, I say, that the Papal Authority transmitted their Honours, Degrees, Diplomas, &c. but this Authority (by Diplomas or Licenses, &c.) was even delegated to their Archbishops: Nay, even every Bishop had the like Authority granted them in their particular Diocese, who, I doubt not, could read: But what Judges they were of those duly qualified for the Cure of human Bodies, I leave you to consider.



But, methinks, the Clergy may freely enough allow themselves beholden to the See of *Rome* for the great Power and Authority they are arrived at, their Honours, Dignities, &c.

And thus even when Kings, Princes, or Subjects, followed the Pontifical Example of founding of Colleges, yet still it behoved them to be confirmed by the Consent and Approbation of this Sovereign Pontiff; who granted his Briefs, or Bulls accordingly; as also reap'd the Profits of such Foundations, Masters, Scholars, &c. by the *Peter's Pence*, or yearly Money paid him from thence; besides the great Power, Authority and Honour, he acquired thereby until the Reformation. But it had been well, methinks, for *Physick*, had he no way meddled therewith; but entirely confined his Seminaries and Favours to his Divines properly (or if the Lawyers please, he might even have them also.) Thus, after the Reformation, I say, Kings and Princes likewise followed this said Example made them; founding Colleges on the like Plans; as also making Doctors of *Physick* by Mandate, or the Chancellor doing it by Recommendation, &c. Yet, whether this (by Mandate from the Prince) was done before the Reformation, may be a Question? or whether it has since been practised, as being Head of the Church, or, properly, as Sovereign of the Realm,



Realm, is what I cannot pretend to decide, or of their Comprehensions in these Affairs: But it is well known, that the *Roman* Pontiffs have not only taken upon them to give Titles to Emperors, Kings, &c. but even to degrade them, take their Crowns, &c. as Witness King *John*, with others, when disobedient to the said Pontiffs.

From these like Examples, and these latter Times, it was (possibly also, by particular Favour) that the Profession were incorporated into distinct Bodies, with Grants and Charters in their Favour; 'twas now also that Parliaments thought proper to enter into the decision of this Knowledge (especially with us) granting Powers accordingly; yet, what great Advantages have been reap'd from such like Methods, I must leave them to judge; or what Care any such incorporated Bodies have taken, as to the Knowledge of those they admit, so they get the Pence, is sufficiently known; but certain it is there was no such Thing till of later Years. *Hippocrates* made himself sufficiently known, esteemed, and honoured in his Time (as all Men, truly knowing, no Doubt, may.) Inferiors or Ignorants, will die away of themselves, when not attempted to be oppressed, restricted, or minded; and will only serve to give more Lustre to those truly knowing; which still, sooner or later, appears; tho' the Ignorant, or Unthinking, are often dazzled



with the first Eclat, or Show, till they have sufficiently bought their Experience. In *China* it is still so as formerly. It is not judged necessary to meddle with any one as a *Physician*, no more than with any Man's Cook; for if either, or any Man, poisons or plainly does Mischief, he is accordingly liable to be called to Account, and punish'd for it by Law; and so, no Doubt, all ought to be, whether of incorporate Bodies, or otherwise.

The Custom, or Sanction of giving Degrees, Honours, or Authority, to such as do not deserve them, must surely do more harm than good; and so also of those that have the Authority and Power of granting and giving Degrees, Licentiating, &c. who often know as little, or nothing material in this Profession. Now how much Good then this does to Mankind, or what Honour, Men truly Knowing, do acquire by receiving those Forms from such, is what I leave you to judge of.

Nor can I see why, in *Physick*, as well as in Law, there should not be Chamber-Council; or, as of old, amongst the *Romans*, who had it from the *Greeks*, that is, the *Juris Consultus*; thus giving the Advice, or first general Opinion, with the Method to be followed by the Practitioners; rather than to follow, or, at least, closely to be ty'd down to Practice, or common Attendance, themselves;



selves ; which they may be supposed sufficiently to have seen, or run through, in the former Part of Life. Such surely as judge themselves capable, might put themselves on that Foot ; yet, probably, there may be fear of venturing to lose their Practice ; (if so, they may go on and keep to that) yet I cannot imagine, if prudently managed, they would, or ought to be less Valuable in Consideration of Interest, if truly knowing : Besides their being capable of doing universal Good, by extending their superior Knowledge and Method to all Mankind ; since otherwise the most Knowing, who closely attends Practice his whole Time, shall be principally, or entirely taken up with closely attending, some twenty, or thirty, considerable Families, and that too in great Hurry, especially if a much greater Number : So that the rest of Mankind, consequently, are left to be help'd as they best can, or to suffer and perish for want of the Advice of the most Able. For if there be any Preference, or any Difference, as to greater Truth and Knowledge in this Profession, it is then unquestionable, that the true Knowledge of the Malady, the first setting out well, is the Principal ; since the Cure is much more rarely wanting when we once know the Distemper ; it being the want of a thorough and sufficient Knowledge in that, which occasions that infinity of Errors, which Practitioners, in general,

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are so liable to: Nor have such Practitioners (spoke of) a sufficient Time to think, and duly to digest, consider thoroughly, to weigh, and justly to examine a Case, even when supposed to be sufficiently capable; but if otherwise, that they are also wanting Capacity, in such Case we can only leave the poor Patient to the Prayers of the Faithful.

Whereas in such, or the like Case (I say) by the Method aforesaid, of determining and directing, whether by writing, or otherwise, this Person's Judgment and Capacity would accordingly be observed or discovered by the Practitioner, as well as the Patient; and so, on the other hand, such a Person would be most able, and soon discover who were the most capable of practising well, and making the most just Observations; and thus, on very extraordinary Occasions, Alterations, or Changes, when greatly diffculted, they might still have Recourse to consult the former (a good Practitioner, still readily knowing the general and common Changes, &c.) Thus the Practitioner would, in Time, come to be apprised of the whole Method of judging of the foresaid judicious *Physician*; and such his Knowledge consequently become universal; and, in reality, the Patients, with their Cases, with more certitude, more perfectly, and effectually taken Care of, than in the common confused and hurrying Way, so often without due Consideration or Examination;



mination ; and surely must still be much worse, if any room to suppose him also a blundering Practitioner. 'Tis true, indeed, that the greater Part of most Cases, are cured by kind Nature, in spite of all the bad Practice, or repeated Errors of such ; but it is in the intricate, difficult, and more dangerous Cases, that the extraordinary Knowledge is discover'd ; or otherwise, by the Ignorance and Blunders of the Practitioner, that the Patient, once for all, pays the Whole : But I know not whether some may not be ready to object to having either Truth or real Knowledge too plainly discovered ; those however, who truly seek the Good of Mankind, as well as their own, will not.

Such Method, I say, of Writing, Reasoning, or Directing of Cases, would be a much more effectual Way of discovering Knowledge, than by the common Forms of Disputation in Schools, or by *Thesis*, &c. so often borrowed, or principally made by others ; the former being the truest Specimens of real Knowledge and just Observation, founded on immediate Practice, as they do immediately appear before us ; since all Cases, probably, are more or less differing one from another, and consequently to be judged of accordingly : And therefore the general Method laid down, whether in Fevers, Smoll-pox, &c. can be of little or no Use, there being no such Thing as any Certainty of *Crisis*, so com-

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monly laid down; since varying according to Sex, Age, Strength, or particular Nature of the Constitution, Variation by Accidents, known or unknown, as Heat or Cold, the Season or Change of Weather, Aliment, &c.

The great Benefit which Divinity or Law may have reap'd from the vast Variety and Multiplicity of common Forms, I must leave to others to decide: But I will venture to say, that Multiplicity, with the idle Shew, and pompous Forms in *Physick*, have, in reality, eat up the whole Substance.

*Hippocrates* was greatly knowing in all the Maladies, Diseases, or Misfortunes, incident to the Solids or Fluids of Human Bodies, practising *Surgery*, with all its Operations; yet I am scarce of Opinion, that he himself practised that to the last, which, methinks, cannot well be supposed; or that it was possible for him to have attended that with his Multiplicity of Physical Practice; and therefore it seems probable, that he left the Chirurgical Part more particularly to be practised by his Sons or Disciples, they, probably, still consulting him; all which might be, more especially, in his latter Time. After him, both *Physick* and *Surgery* appear to have been upon the Decline; since its Professors left Truth, and strict Observation, following Chimerical Systems, &c. So even in *Greece*, where this Art was yet more especially cultivated



tivated than elsewhere, it afterwards visibly dwindled ; nor any Authors worth the Notice, besides a few of this said Nation ; yet even these, with all since his Time, seem to have been but mere Compilers from him, or from such as had compiled from him.

As to the *Romans*, they hardly had any such Profession amongst them, or were scarce acquainted with it, till after the rich Spoils of *Asia* and *Africa*, that Luxury and Sloath were got amongst them : Thus as Luxury, Sloath, Corruption, Insincerity, and Chimerical Philosophy increased ; thus flying from original Plainness, and Truth (so as observed) this Profession dwindled into infinity of confused Mixtures and mere Forms. *Hippocrates's* Time being towards that of the *Peloponnesian* War, appears to have been the critical Time of the greatest Power, with sufficient Opulence of the *Greek* Republicks, though not yet arrived to that Height of Luxury and Corruption as thereafter. It was then that *Hippocrates*, by his great Integrity, and strict Search after Truth, raised the Knowledge of his Profession to that Height : But as these People thereafter, by Degrees, fell into Corruption, as from the Time of *Philip* of *Macedon*, to that of *Mithridates* ; so Truth, no longer sought after, this Knowledge also became corrupted ; and, as we have said, shrunk into mere Forms. As to the *Romans*, they appear to have known very little of it,

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before the Time of *Mithridates*, *Pompey*, or *Julius Cæsar*. It was about the Time of *Mithridates*, that *Asclepiades* left *Greece* (being of *Bythinia*) and came to *Rome*, where he at first taught Rhetorick; but not finding his Account in that, he undertook the Study and Practice of Physick; more particularly practising that of Bathing, inventing hanging Beds with such Baths; together with Abstinence, Friction and Exercise. 'Tis true, indeed, *Areagathus* was at *Rome* about one hundred Years before him; but his principal Practice being by Cutting and Burning, he was said to have been banish'd from that City. In the Time of *Augustus*, commonly reckon'd the most polite Age, and he the great Incourager of Arts and Sciences, the chief Physician we then hear of in *Rome*, at that Time, was *Antonius Musa*, noted for his Recovery of the said Emperor from an Indisposition, by advising him to the Cold-Bath; and for which he was highly gratified, being honour'd with the Liberty of wearing the *Bulla Aurea*, as well as all the rest of the Profession, for his Sake: Nay, so high did the Humour run at that Time, for this Cure, that the Senate even also thought fit to erect a Statue in Brass (to his Honour) placed by the Side of *Æsculapius*, though, probably, likewise by way of Compliment to *Augustus*. We are nevertheless told, by the same Historian (*Suetonius*) that, by the



like Advice, which he gave to *Marcellus* (Nephew, and adopted Son of the said Emperor) this Youth thus made his final Exit; so ill seems he to have known how to distinguish. 'Tis true, indeed, that *Livia* has been charged, or suspected, by some, on this Occasion, to have prompted *Musa* thereto; though there appears not the least just Ground for it; since he could not promise upon any such certain Effect, no more than on the good Effects: Nor can we imagine *Livia* to have been so weak, as to discover her self upon such an Uncertainty, even supposing *Musa* to have been so base to his generous Master, and to his Prince, with his own Loss of Credit, Hazard, &c. besides that, we very well know, that it was his common and principal Practice; having also recommended the same to his Friend *Horace* (as that Poet himself observes;) nor do we, indeed, hear much of his other Knowledge: What else we know of him, being of no great Moment, or Consequence. And, indeed, from this Time forward, Baths appear to have been in great Use at *Rome*, both for Health and Pleasure. But, before I leave this polite Reign, I must beg Leave to observe, that it is not a little surprizing, that the most certain Branch of this Profession, to wit, that of *Surgery*, appears then hardly to have been known, or minded; nor do we know, or hear, of any noted Practitioner



in this Way, at that Time ; which is greatly amazing, considering then the Blood-shed, Wars, Gladiators, Publick Games, &c.

In the Reign of *Tiberius*, we do not hear of any Improvements in *Physick* or *Surgery* ; but that one *Charicles*, a *Greek*, was consulted, in Relation to the said Emperor, seemingly by those about him, rather than by himself ; who neither received any Medicine, or Direction, from that Physician : For this shrewd Prince, besides his very low Opinion of their Knowledge in that Art, as well as his natural Jealousy and Suspicion, did not think fit to use any ; saying, that a Man, after thirty Years of Age, ought to be ashamed to let a Physician feel his Pulse ; yet *Plutarch* writes it sixty Years ; though, 'tis certain, that *Tiberius* made no Use of any after thirty : Yet, as *Pliny* observes, he nevertheless allow'd very large Salaries to those he had appointed as his Physicians.

After this Time, we hardly find any Thing worth our Notice, either in *Physick* or *Surgery*, until the Time of *Marc. Aurelius*, in whose Time *Galen* lived. 'Tis true, that the principal, or only one (especially *Roman* Author) worthy our Notice before that Time, amongst the *Romans*, or even, at least, till towards the fourth Century, that is, to the Time of the Emperor *Justinian*, was *Celsus*, a Philosopher, and Disciple



ciple of *Asclepiades*; though we have not so much as any Certainty in what Reign he lived; nor is it any way probable he ever practised; but appears merely to have been a great Compiler, principally out of *Hippocrates*, &c. whom he names, *Omnis Medicinæ Parens*; such as the Philosophers and Writers of these Times were, as *Pliny*, &c. who, in general, pretended to some Knowledge in this Art, yet did not practise: And there are, indeed, several Things which *Celsus* writes, in relation to *Surgery* in particular, which sufficiently shew him to have been no Practitioner himself. It is, however, likely he might have lived in the Reign of *Tiberius*, and had, no Doubt, deserved the best, to have been that Prince's Physician (which he certainly was not) had he, I say, been a Practitioner. *Quintilian*, who mentions him, says of him, *Mediocris vir ingenii*; and, consequently, did not consider him as a great Genius in any Way; but rather, as we have observed, as a Compiler, &c. And thus he writ of Rhetorick, Poetry, Agriculture, and the whole Art of War, as well as of Physick; and yet we know not of his Practice in that Way, no more than in the other.

*Dioscorides* also lived in the same Age, tho' he was, properly, a *Grecian*: Nor have we any Thing from him, as to Method of Practice, in this Profession, but hath left us a  
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*Materia Medica*, or Description of Herbs, &c. with an infinity of Virtues ascribed to them by him.

After this, for above an hundred Years, we have very little, or nothing, until the Time of *Galen*, towards the End of the second Century, in the Reign of *Marc. Aurelius*; though *Galen* was also of *Pergamus* or *Greece*; yet even he also can only be consider'd as a mere Compiler, Translator, or tedious, verbose Commentator on *Hippocrates*; whom, by his bewildring Philosophy, he has rather confounded and spoiled, than amended; 'twas he that so much infested, and brought the Practice into so much Confusion; he is said to have writ two hundred Volumes on this Subject. He seems but little to have minded *Surgery* (nor hear we of its being much minded by any other in his Time) although he treats, 'tis true, of the Disorders of the Bones, &c. It's said (not however to his Credit) that he was so frightened on Occasion of the Plague, which happen'd in *Rome* at that Time, that he left it on that Account; notwithstanding his greatly valued Antidote he made, and so much used; that notable confused Compound, the *Theriac*. And though even valetudinary, and that he lived to a considerable Age; yet that seems more particularly to have been owing to the Strictness of his Diet, than to the Use of his Medicines.

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From henceforward, or soon after, *Physick*, as well as *Surgery*, seem to have left *Rome*; nor do we, indeed, any where hear of any such Thing for near two hundred Years; during which Time, it seems to have been entirely lost. It was during this Time, 'tis true, that Divisions and Persecutions were in *Rome*, and that the *Roman* Empire was now invaded and rent, so greatly infested by the *Goths*, &c. which travelling, hardy, half starved Nation, seem to have had no Occasion for the Medicinal Tribe, principally increased by Luxury, Sloath, and Irregularity; since Men do thus accordingly apply to the Study of Remedies, proper to cure the Dregs of those Evils.

Towards the End then of the fourth Century, this Art appears again to have return'd to *Greece*, or *Constantinople*, in the Time of the Emperor *Justinian*; who not only order'd the Body of the *Roman* Law to be collected and digested, but even that also of *Physick*, in which *Oribasius*, a Physician of that Time, was principally employ'd; though *Ætius* also writ about the same Time, and in the like Manner; they were however both *Greeks*, not *Romans*. *Oribasius* is said to have writ no less than seventy Volumes on this Subject, though most of them are lost; yet they cannot well be consider'd, but as mere Compilers, principally from *Galen*,



*len*, &c. and *Tralian* and *P. Æginet* (about the same Time) mostly Abridgers of them.

From henceforward the little Pretence of Knowledge which remain'd, together with most of the *Greek* Writings, were convey'd by the *Saracens* or *Arabians* into the *Mahometan* Empire, establish'd about two hundred Years thereafter; though what we have that appears the most considerable amongst them, was that of *Avicenna*, *Mesue*, *Averroes*, &c. who were about the tenth or eleventh Century; their Theory, and principal Method of Practice however, appears, in general, to be taken from the *Greeks*: 'Tis true, indeed, they added Chimistry (the Product of *Ægypt*, about the eleventh Century) but at the same Time neglected, or, in a great Measure, lost the more certain and useful Knowledge in this Profession, to wit, that of *Surgery*; it being very plain, that there were a Sufficiency of Remedies before this Time; since *Hippocrates* did certainly do more without it, than they could ever do with it; there being, before that, in all human Probability, a Sufficiency of plain Remedies for all Maladies, whether in the Vegetable, Mineral, or Animal Kingdoms, or even enough in any Country, to supply itself; since Providence seems to have provided so for the Maladies common to each Climate, that there also their proper Remedies



dies do grow. 'Tis true, indeed, that the *Arabians* have made us acquainted with some good Simples ; as the Rhubarb, the *Indian* Aromatic Spices, the Produce of *Asia*, as well as those also of the Countries they possessed ; yet whilst (I say) we so much employ our Time in studying these, we readily neglect our own. But as they discover'd a few Simples to us, so they also confounded us with others ; as the Use of precious Stones in Medicines, Gold, Silver, &c. and at the same Time, pester'd us with that infinite Variety of Compounds, or Mixtures ; such as the Sugar'd Tribe, the Syrups, Juleps, Conserves, Confections, Electuaries, &c. So that, in short, they much more confounded us, than better'd us ; and were, at best, but a practising Sort of Apothecary Chymists ; they, indeed, discover'd the Small-pox, unknown to us before ; yet left us but little the wiser, as to the Cure. Nor were there any such Things as Universities in Use amongst them, or any Dignities of that Kind.

About this Time, or towards the twelfth Century, the Holy War being then carried on, it was thus those *Arabians* were introduced to us from *Syria* ; these were the only Books minded, and translated from the *Arabic*, by the Monks, &c. who taught them in the Schools, till after the taking of *Constantinople*, in the Year 1453. that by Means of several *Greeks*, which came from thence,



into *Italy*, they also brought several Manuscripts in their own Language, and first taught it there. After which, Printing followed; when, towards the End of this Century, or Beginning of the next, the Years 1526, to 8, *Aldus* then first printed *Dioscorides*, *Hippocrates*, and *Galen*: Nor was the *Greek* Language hardly known, nor taught in the Schools, till about this Time; nor *Hippocrates* little minded, taught, or read, till after this Time. And thus also it was that these, as well as the former, were accordingly introduced into the Western, and these more Northern Parts.

It was now, or before this Time, that Hospitals also came in Use, as well as that the general Chaos clear'd up a little, and that Mankind became somewhat more Inquisitive into the Reality of Things, by Observation and Experiences. Thus *Surgery*, hitherto almost lost, begun again to rear up its Head: Nor did *Physick* lose by Hospitals and Observation, probably improving more this Way than by all that was taught in the Schools.

It was now (I say) in these latter Times, as towards that of *Henry* the VIII<sup>th</sup> (that absolute Prince) that Societies, and Companies, were establish'd amongst us, as has already been observed, their great Use, &c. The Apothecaries, till of late, were Grocers, Druggists, and Compounders of Medicines; and  
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the Method and Custom of prescribing was hardly, or not at all, known, till about that Time. The *Arabians*, from whom we seem to have borrowed most of their Compositions, Chymistry, Method, and Practice, used entirely their own Language, whether in Writing or Directing, &c. (as the *Greeks* had done in theirs;) the *Arabians* (I say) having no way minded the *Latins* or *Romans*. 'Tis true, indeed, that the *Romans*, according to *Pliny* (at that Time fond of the *Grecian* Language) did sometimes use to write, or direct in *Greek*, for Medicines from the Druggists, or Compounders of Medicines; with which, however, he finds Fault, as merely political, as being thus more valued (says he) by not being so commonly known.

From all which, *Sir*, you will observe the great Reason our Moderns have to mind, or any way to follow, the *Romans* in this Art; or I might, perhaps, without great Danger, even add in any Art or Science; since it was the *Greeks*, who not only brought this Art into *Rome*, practised and taught it there, but likewise all the great Artists then were, in general, of that Nation: For the *Romans* were a proud, haughty, aspiring People (and, when Luxury and Physick came in) became Sloathful, and were always principally addicted to War: 'Tis true, there were a few who apply'd to Philosophy,



phy, Poetry, and the writing of History; but mostly borrow'd, or following the Examples of the *Greeks*; which Language, in the luxurious flourishing State of the *Roman* Empire, they learned; and many went into *Greece* to learn it, and to be educated there; as *Cicero* did, &c. and as the *Greeks* were wont to do into *Egypt*, or as we do into *France* at this Time; these being the then living Languages, from whose Customs, Manners, and Knowledge, with their Observations on the Living, they thus learn'd, and profited more than by the Dead, which they had but little Regard to.

Thus the *Greeks*, I say, went into *Ægypt*, and had their Learning from thence; not from the old *Phœnician*, *Hebrew*, or *Chaldaic*, or any other dead Language whatsoever. The *Romans* did, indeed, at first, by their Power, force their Laws and Language upon us; after which, by Custom, and the Power of the See of *Rome*, with some Necessity, for the better understanding of their Laws, Religion, &c. it was endeavour'd to be render'd universal, and thus went on.

When we consider then, that we *Moderns*, in a great Measure were, and still seem to be, the immediate Disciples of the *Arabians*, particularly, and closely following their confused Farragoes of Medicines in Pharmacy and Chymistry, I cannot



not apprehend consequently, why the Students in this Profession, should not much more reasonably have studied the *Arabic* than the *Roman* Tongue; and, that the Practitioners should not thus, still more reasonably, have accordingly made their Prescriptions in that Language, if afraid those not of the Profession might otherwise discover too much, since thus more hid. But alas! ignorant, mean spirited People, may fear these Things; but Men of true Spirit, Generosity, real Knowledge, or good Will to Mankind, never will; but, on the contrary, will endeavour to render Mankind as Knowing as possible; it being rather the great Misfortune of Men of true Knowledge, to have to do with Fools, or Ignorants: Neither is it so easy to render People Knowing in any Way (as Men commonly imagine) and yet more particularly in this Profession, nay, often not even those bred to it. Do we not plainly observe, that it matters not so much the Knowledge of a Medicine, as the right Method of using it; the *Quantum*, the *Quale*, and the *Quomodo*, variable according to Season or Particulars, as the good Judgment shall direct; or when to use, and when to abstain, &c? Thus (next to knowing of the Malady) these are the principal Marks of the Physician. Do we not plainly observe, that every one knows the *Peru* Bark cures Agues? yet few know how successfully to use



use it ; nay, might we not venture to say, even of the Profession ; else, What Occasion would there be for calling in others ? And thus it was that Dr. *Ratcliff* often cured such with this, or the *Hypocacoan* in Fluxes, or with the same very Medicine which others had been long unsuccessfully using before him. Were it not for these Reasons observed, a *Charlatan* Tinker, or pretending Woman, might play the Professor as well as the best : Besides, that it's commonly observed, that notable Doctorizing good Women, are commonly the best Friends, and bring Business to the Profession. For my own Part, I was always much more afraid of Ignorance, or of Mens knowing too little, than of their knowing too much.

Nor does any Thing appear more ridiculous to me, than that of crying, Such a Man has served his Time, or been taught his Trade, and since in vast Hurry of Business all his Life ; and therefore (say they) must consequently know, &c. Yet nothing more common, than that they blunder, and jog on so in Life, to a great Age ; and lastly, die without ever having known any Thing material in their Business, whether in this Profession, or any other ; and yet still less in this, so little visible to the common Eye. Do we not daily observe, in the low and more common Parts of Life, that, but a very few Coblers well know how but to Heel-piece



piece a Pair of Shoes, so as they ought to be, though at it all their Life-time? Nay, even a Porter (unless one in Fifty) shall hardly rightly know how, properly, to manage, and to carry a Burden, if any way uncommon, or out of his common Way; or even to deliver a Message as he ought, tho' ever so plainly told him. Thus there must be that natural Sagacity (as well as a sufficient Degree of Experience) which natural Sagacity Men are not to be taught. Now if a little of this be so absolutely necessary in the most plain and commonest Affairs of Life; how much more absolutely necessary is a much greater Share of this natural Sagacity, and solid Judgment, to such who pretend to decide in the most intricate and difficult Parts of Knowledge, on which human Life depends? Neither is this necessary only to that Province, of ordering or administering of Remedies; but the like Solidity, Knowledge, Sagacity, Penetration, and Judgment, are no less necessary to judge, and well to perform any of the principal Operations of *Surgery* (to wit, the when, the how, and where) as well as the judiciously and properly treating them thereafter: For the Want, or Deficiency of which Solidity of Judgment (I say) infinite Blunders and Mischiefs are committed; which, with utmost Care, will be endeavoured to be hid, and concealed from the Publick; whilst



whilst a little accidental Success shall be most carefully trumpeted about by the impudent or ignorant Operator. In a Word, for my own Part, I should choose, and prefer, a judicious Nurse, though but of a Year or two's Experience, before an injudicious one of ever so long Experience, who will be sure to presume on such ill digested Experience; whereas the other will, at least, be cautious, when any way doubtful, of doing Mischief.

But to draw towards an End, *Sir*, you will observe, that I seem insensibly to be led in to treat of the Nature of Practice, which I would, at present, refer to another Occasion: Let it now suffice, that I have hinted to you somewhat of the Nature of *Degrees*, &c. As for the particular Appellation of DOCTOR, so frequently and commonly used to such as practise Physick, whether but *Masters of Arts*, or *Batchelors* only, &c. that may be understood as a distinguishing Appellation in what they profess, as Counsellor at Law; or Discretionary, as judged to deserve it, by their great Knowledge in this Profession; in giving some new Light, instructing or teaching Mankind further Knowledge in this Art; or more particularly, to have distinguished themselves in this Profession, without troubling *Holland, France, Germany, or Switzerland*, (by *Præmium*) to find



find out our Knowledge, or any other interested Method, or Society of interested Men, whether at home or abroad.

As to the Powers granted to particular Societies (as has already been observed) of what great Significancy, I say, is it, if not only the different Branches of this Profession do interfere, and are confounded, one with the other, without any due distinguishing Marks for the Bounds of either? Or if, as yet, those not regularly bred to any of its Branches, do, without Controul of any such incorporate Bodies, what they list; nay, if Directors in the legislative Power do favour them, and they are even pleaded for by them, thus supporting them by Way of doing Justice, to what Purpose then such Grants, or Acts of Parliament for suppressing them? (not that I am for Persecution, as has already been hinted.) But how is it then, I say? Are such Bodies of Men only incorporated to give particular Trouble to the more regularly bred, of Understanding and Capacity, as being the most Dangerous? or, on the other Hand, if we find the very Members of such incorporate Bodies, running after (to be taught by) such as they allow not to be Regular, What shall we say of such Regularity?

To conclude, *Sir*, I know not what Notions you will form to your self from what



has here been hinted ; but 'tis well if your Idea of the Profession (from this) be of a superior Form than that of their being multiplied by Luxury, and consequently, and principally, the mere Scavengers of the Effects of that Luxury and Corruption, Sloath, Intemperance, and Irregularity of Living, rather than from that of the Defects of Nature or Accident ; are, in fine, thus the grand Soothers of Mens Folly and Extravagance ; so that the Wise and Regular, are but rarely Customers : And though the more immediate Gain of common Riches seems to attend the other Side ; yet, for private Satisfaction to Men of Knowledge, such will still wish to cultivate the latter, as I would yours, &c.

*I am, &c.*

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P O S T S C R I P T.

**E**VEN the Word *Αρχιατρικόν*, or, *first Physician*, seems a Question, whether known, or in Use amongst the *Romans*, till towards the Time of *Constantine*, or the first Christian Emperors.



I am just now so stunned with a continued Noise of *Nostrums*, so much the Taste of the present Age, as well as that of Miracle Working, &c. that though a little wide of my intended Purpose, yet cannot forbear acquainting you with this short Hint on *Rheumatism* (for which Remedies are so daily advertised) that, to cut short, I know not any strong Evacuator, whether by the Skin, or by Vomit, Stool, or Urine (or even of more mild and constant Continuance) that will not be successful in *Rheumatism*, or even in *Gout*, that is not over rivited by Stones, or old Age. Thus all the bold, idle People in Town, may set up as soon as they please; *Hit or miss, Luck is All*: Very visible ill Consequences happen but seldom; *A gold Chain, or a broken Leg. Let those look out who have the Watch.*





I have been thinking of you very much lately  
and wondering how you are getting on.  
I hope you are well and happy.  
I have been very busy lately  
but I have managed to find some time  
to write you a few lines.  
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