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# MEDICAL ESSAYS.

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Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri  
Nec sequar aut fugiam quæ diligit ipse vel odit.





THE following trifles have met with their share of praise and of abuse ; the former was eagerly swallowed by the keen appetite of a literary adventurer, and the shafts of the latter were blunted by juvenile vanity, that soothing kind of self-approbation, which by a specious, and perhaps an allowable deception, secures the slender portion of happiness allotted to mankind.

In reply to what has been advanced against my ideas of Solvents, I can with truth assert, that, after having minutely re-considered the subject, and adverted as well to my own practice, as to that of a numerous and respectable medical acquaintance, my opinion is still the same.—If I have, by the essay on that subject, rescued one patient from the ravenous jaws of a quack ; and if by the second, I have kindled one spark of candour or liberality of sentiment in a breast not already enlightened, ample has been my reward.

As I now take leave of Physic and all its appendages, I embrace this opportunity of bidding adieu to all my friends, in a part of the world where I practised several years, and of acknowledging the more than common marks of friendship I received.

The

The formality of taking a personal leave, would have been a fatiguing and a melancholy task.

To the gentle hints which mistaken partiality has suggested, of the culpable danger of strong passions and active talents, undirected and unemployed, I can only reply, that I could not stop my ears against the syren voice of independance, which, in exchange for midnight dangers, deranged feelings, and the frivolous ardor of petty competition, offered literary leisure, select society, and the luxury of ease.

Nor can that man be said to have passed his life wholly unuseful, who, while death and calamity were stalking through his family, devoted the fourteen best years of his life, to the study and exercise of a liberal but laborious profession.

J. W. NEWMAN.

DORSETSHIRE,  
October 3d, 1787.

A  
SHORT ENQUIRY  
INTO THE  
MERIT OF SOLVENTS,  
So far as may be necessary to compare them  
with the  
OPERATION OF LITHOTOMY.

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B Y  
J. W. NEWMAN,

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*Hoc opus, hoc studium, parvi properemus et ampli,  
Si patriæ volumus, si nobis vivere chari.* Horat. Epist.

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THE SECOND EDITION.

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T O

Dr. WILLIAM CADOGAN,

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF  
PHYSICIANS, LONDON,

THE FOLLOWING ENQUIRY

IS HUMBLY INSCRIBED,

AS A PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF GRATI-  
TUDE AND RESPECT

DUE TO HIS EMINENT PROFESSIONAL AND LITE-  
RARY ABILITIES,

BY

HIS OBLIGED HUMBLE SERVANT,

The Author.



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## P R E F A C E.

**I**T is not intended, in the following enquiry, to enter into a chymical examination of the several remedies, which have been proposed as solvents of the stone in the human bladder; the basis of most of those compositions being generally known.

In the present instance, the author wishes to take a view of the general method of treatment by internal medicines, and its general effects; and, in as concise a manner as may be, to compare the advantages and evils resulting from a reliance on that mode of treatment, with those attending the extraction by manual operation.

Thus a question of no less concern to the lives of patients, than to the honor of surgery is considered.

For if it should appear that we are at this time possessed of a safe and efficacious internal medicine, as a solvent, we certainly are not authorized to persist in the operation of cutting for the stone.

If, on the contrary, it should be evident, that most of the methods of internal treat-

ment have not only wanted efficacy, but have been highly injurious: justice and humanity require us to place no further confidence in them; nor in that case can we be justly accused either of rashness or cruelty, in asserting, that lithotomy remains, as our last, our only resource.

It may possibly be asked, Why a subject of such importance is treated in so superficial and cursory a manner? The author can only lament, that his abilities have not kept pace with his wishes, otherwise, this his first effort should not have been submitted to the public in so defective a state.

The common excuse, of meaning this weak attempt as an incitement to some more able hand to take up the subject, might be here made use of; but expressions of that kind, though they wear the face of humility, carry with them a degree of importance, which, in a Preface to a bare recital of facts, with short comments, would be misplaced, unnecessary, and absurd.



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A

SHORT ENQUIRY

INTO THE

MERIT of SOLVENTS, &c.

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CHAPTER THE FIRST.

*A Prejudice against Surgeons considered.—Introduction.—Lithotomy.—The Opposition it met with, and some Reasons for it spoken of.—The general Theory and Basis of Solvents.—Mrs. Stephens's Preparation mentioned.—An extraordinary Case. — Its Consequence. — A Proneness in Mankind to encourage Error and Imposture.*

**A** PARTIALITY for operations has been, for many ages, a commonly received idea, annexed to the character of a surgeon. — This scandal has been heightened by the force of ridicule, and supported by serious assertion; and that which first originated from resentment against the igno-

rance of pretenders, has been indiscriminately charged on modern professors; who, though surgeons, are not observed to divest themselves of that tenderness and humanity which they ought to possess as men.—The number of dismembered objects occurring in the streets of this metropolis, has been produced in favor of the argument; but if they, who mention this, would be candid enough to consider, that every one of those objects was in a situation, in which, saving of the limb was incompatible with the preservation of life, and determine how they would decide in such circumstances, the objection will be fully refuted. Besides, we ought to consider that London, from the vast concourse of persons of every description to it, is the last refuge of most objects in the whole kingdom, who, from the loss of health or limbs, may be supposed to excite pity and relief.

Among the variety of operations, which from disease and accident become necessary to be performed on the human body, the making a lateral incision into the neck of the bladder \*, as it has been improperly called, and

\* That the antients took most of their anatomical descriptions from the dissections of brutes, is clear, and particularly so, when they describe the bladder; which in man really has no neck. Though at present we retain the

and extracting the calculus or stone, has raised at different times no small opposition.

The horrors of patients, who shuddered at the thoughts of a painful operation, naturally inclined them on the side of its opposers, and added weight to their cause: these, assisted by a love of novelty inseparable from the human heart, and attracted by a rich harvest of emolument to adventurers, afforded a temporary triumph to the enemies of lithotomy.

Each armed with a specific, arraigned the folly of patients for submitting to it, and the obstinate cruelty of surgeons for persevering in it.

They proffered comfort, ease, and a radical cure to the afflicted; whilst they alledged, that the operation, independent of its pain and danger, which their interest taught them to aggravate, was at best but a palliative

the name for conveniency, it conveys an idea of its shape so exactly opposite to its natural one, that the part of the bladder, where the urethra enters, is larger than the fundus, and its connection with the urethra may be compared to a spherical body pierced by a cylindrical tube. This error has been zealously embraced, and accurately copied, both in plates and verbal descriptions, in all the editions of books of anatomy; where the compilers paid an implicit confidence to the assertions of others, without being at the pains of dissecting and examining the parts themselves.

ure : as, to make use of their own language, the wretched patient, after being tortured by the bloody *apparatus*, was in a few years, if not months, liable to a return of his disease, and to an equal necessity for a second operation.

Their assertions were received with the most implicit faith, and their medicines swallowed with avidity.

Fear and credulity, two infirmities to which all men in a greater or less degree give way, were in the present case turned to good account, by those who had greater dexterity in the arts of deception, than real necessary knowledge, and who were more dexterous as casuists than as physicians : with them, as with most branches of the medical profession, an artful application to the passions, the prejudices, and even the follies of mankind, is a much easier road to emolument and fame, than the rugged and difficult paths of study, diligence and application, which generally prevent the attainment of that versatility of manners, and that winning deportment, without which so little can be done ; and a son of science might spend many unavailing years in anatomical pursuits, and pore over Hippocrates and Van Swieten in obscurity, while a genius of an illiterate, but more sprightly cast, would make his way to affluence and honors untainted by the dissecting-room, and

his hand unsoiled with the rust of any books, but those of Machiavel, Voltaire, and Chesterfield.

The above truth, and a melancholy one it is, urged me to deviate somewhat from my subject.

Without entering into a fatiguing detail of the several particular remedies, that have been offered to the public as solvents of the human calculus, which would be neither interesting, useful, nor necessary: the whole number may be comprehended under the two titles of alkalies and acids, taken either by the mouth, or injected into the bladder.

The general theory of their action was accounted rational, and thought incontrovertible, by patients, who took them with as flattering hopes, and as earnest a reliance, as a person, to whom poison had been administered, would swallow the most undoubted antidote.

The solvent medicine, as the name of it signified, was supposed to act upon the stone, by dissolving the glutinous matter, which united like a cement, and bound the earthy particles of it together; as the texture of it was thus destroyed, it would naturally crumble to pieces, and its component parts be discharged from the bladder with no great inconvenience. Besides this, it was also concluded, that the same remedy, which dissolved, would

effectually prevent a re-production of calculous matter.

*Calculi* that had been extracted from the human bladder, were submitted to the action of the solvent, and this experiment of their effects on concretions *out* of the body, strengthened their theory, and induced the encouragers of the internal method of treatment, to draw a prognostic in favor of their efficacy *in* the body.

But we ought to remember, that it was their business, at all events, that the medicine should act on the stone; and we are justified in supposing, that their effects in this instance, were the consequence of such a degree of strength and causticity, as rendered their admission or retention in the bladder impossible: besides the palpable difference between the vessel they made the experiment in, and the internal coat of the bladder.

This reason is so insuperable against the use of solvent injections, that I see no probability of their being ever made use of with advantage. But, unfortunately for the medicines, as well as mankind, these antidotes for the stone were in many cases found ineffectual, and generally injurious.

Nor is it improbable, that the introduction of alcalies into the human body, in such quantities as they have been generally exhibited,

hibited, should be productive of very distressing, and in many cases of fatal effects.

An extraordinary effort of nature, in the constitution of a patient, under a course of a celebrated solvent, seemed to remove, and indeed, for a time, did remove every doubt of its efficacy. I trust that it will not be thought foreign to the subject, to speak further of this case, as it may serve to teach us a very necessary lesson—to be diffident and guarded in our opinions; and points out to us the mistakes, the best informed of us all are liable to, in tracing causes and their effects, and that too in an instance where there seemed the least probability of being deceived.

A patient was produced by Mrs. Stephens, and it was agreed that he should be a decisive test of the merit of her medicine. A stone was plainly felt, and, by several gentlemen of eminence appointed for the purpose, unanimously allowed to be at that time existing in the bladder.

There medy was administered to the patient; the quantities given, and the time it was persevered in, being left to the disposal of the inventor.

After such a space of time as was supposed to be sufficient for a due exhibition and operation of the medicine, the patient was again produced, and after as judicious and accurate an examination as the circumstance seemed to require,

require, the gentlemen appointed to decide on the fact, gave in a report, which by the world was thought decisive in favor of a medicine, that, as far as could be judged, seemed to promise such permanent benefits to human nature.

They reported, that at the time they searched the patient in question, they had the most unequivocal proofs of a stone in the bladder: that for such a time the medicine had been given, and that on a second careful examination nothing like a stone could be felt.

A liberal gift, worthy a British parliament, was the immediate consequence of this report: the case was generally thought so decisive, that a further trial of it was judged unnecessary: the medicine was made public, and enjoyed the temporary reputation of an undoubted dissolver or breaker-down of the stone in the human bladder.

But death brought truth to light, and neither popularity nor confidence could enable it to survive the patient, whose case gave it so great a sanction; the total loss of its fame, which had been gradually declining, was the consequence of his death.

This happened some years afterwards, and afforded an opportunity for inspecting the body; when nothing of a calculous nature could be discovered in the bladder, but on a  
further



further search, a stone was discovered in the cavity of the pelvis, surrounded by a quantity of adventitious cellular membrane, and inveloped in a portion of the internal coat of the bladder.

It appeared, that a part of this membranous coat, containing the stone, had been forced by some præternatural irritation into the pelvis, through or between the fibres of the muscular coat, which forms the external covering of the bladder, and is called by anatomists, *Musculus Detrusor Urinæ*; the alteration which took place, was very similar to what happens in the ventral hernia, where the *peritonæum*, the internal membrane which lines the *abdomen*, is protruded, with its contents, between the fibres of the abdominal muscles.

In the present remarkable instance, the muscular fibres contracting, and co-operating with the weight of the stone, which could not fail dragging down the *sac*, effectually prevented a return of the protruded parts.

The world is generally rash and precipitate either to condemn or applaud, and the warmest advocate for this medicine could not pretend to attribute so extraordinary an effort in the body to any specific power it possessed.

*Abundans cautela non nocet*, is a safe but unfashionable doctrine: had it been adhered to in this case, perhaps no resolution would have taken place, until the body of the patient

tient had been examined after death, and the public money would have been saved.

The report the gentlemen made was couched with all necessary caution, and though it amounted to nothing more than a bare recital of facts, it answered for a time every purpose of a decision in favor of the preparation.

When we consider this case, we may account for the immediate cessation of bad symptoms which is said to have taken place; and we can as readily believe, that an instrument introduced into the bladder for the purpose of searching, could not come in contact with the stone.

But it must be a matter of surprize, that a medicine, which in the instance above recited was proved not to have produced any solvent effects, should have obtained, or have been able to support any degree of credit from the time of its publication, and previous to it, until the death of the patient.

The erroneous opinion of the efficacy of this preparation, was most likely assisted by several complaints having symptoms very similar to those attending the stone in the bladder; and in many of these, nature, by time and accident, without the assistance of much medicine, will often cure herself: so that we cannot doubt, but they had in this case, as in many others, the credit of dissolving the stone, merely

merely from the circumstance of there never having been one in the bladder.

Nor is it improbable, that persons perfectly free from the stone, have been reported to die in consequence of it, when the mode of internal treatment was actually the cause of their deaths; and this supposition will appear still better founded, when we come to speak of the nature and tendency of some remedies that have been made use of.

Among the complaints, whose symptoms are not unfrequently similar to those of the stone, such may be reckoned as proceed from a defect or superfluity in the quantity or quality of the urine; — an undue retention of it, from a variety of causes; — and many temporary affections of the bladder, kidneys, and their appendages, not unfrequently arising from plethora, debility, excess, and local injury.

And on this ground, candour would incline us to assent to the truth of many miraculous cures, related from the most respectable authorities, which, taken in any other point of view, would be contradictory to theory, practice, and common sense.

It is necessary to mention another circumstance, which often confirms patients in the opinion, that several of the disorders I have just spoken of, arise from there being a stone in the bladder; which is, their observing a  
gritty

gritty matter at the bottom of the vessel containing the urine : under this opinion, they often apply for advice and medicines to those who may honestly be of the same opinion, or whose interest may induce them to recommend a course of solvents.

What they observe, is nothing more than the selenite assuming the colour of the urine in which it has formed ; and such a chrysalization will frequently be found in the urine of the most healthy.

What greatly assists this error is, that the urine is generally examined at many hours distance from the time of its being received into the vessel : now gravel, or any calculous matter, by its specific gravity descends to the bottom of the vessel, and may very easily be discovered soon after the urine has been voided ; the contrary to this is the fact respecting the selenite, which requires to be out of the body, and at rest, for a considerable time before its formation takes place ; and if this circumstance should not have been taken notice of until solvents have been given, it will not fail being imputed to their efficacy.

As another reason for this remedy having kept up its name, I can only add a fatal disposition in mankind, to adopt and embrace error and prejudice, rather than truth and plain facts, because the latter often carry unwelcome tidings to the human heart.

The ease with which mankind are duped, is evident enough, were it not proved to a demonstration, by the fraternity of impostors and upstarts in every profession, science, and business, who insult the understanding of the age, and excite at once both anger and contempt.

Had the author, who some centuries since exclaimed, with so much truth and justice,

*Mundus vult decipi ; et decipiatur :*

Had he lived in the present time, when ignorance, effrontery, and impudence, at once draw their support from, and impose on the public, without sense or probability to assist their cheats, he certainly would have added energy to the expression, have adopted a language more severe, and reprobated, with the keenest satire, the insolence of the spurious fantastical tribe.

## CHAPTER THE SECOND.

*Some Causes that hurt Lithotomy considered.—  
 Delay.—Long Courses of Solvents.—A Case.  
 —Mr. Garrick mentioned.—A few Reasons  
 against the Efficacy of Preparations supposed to  
 act on the Stone.—Prejudice and false Reason-  
 ing have been opposed to the Operation.—The  
 Term Anceps misapplied.*

I Have endeavoured to shew, that surgeons have not that predilection for operations, so generally charged on them; as they were ready to forward the success of a preparation, which it was supposed would render lithotomy unnecessary.

It has likewise appeared, that this remedy did not dissolve the stone; which renders it more than probable, that all medicines on the same principle will be equally ineffectual.

I shall next venture to speak of some of the causes, which have co-operated in rendering lithotomy less successful than it would otherwise have been; some of them being equally applicable to any other disease requiring manual operation, does not appear to me any just objection to my mentioning them in this place.

They

They may be considered in the following order ; and in treating of them, I shall be led to speak further of solvents, and some of their general effects.

First—Procrastination.

Secondly—Long continued courses of lixivial and other remedies, intended as solvents.

Thirdly—The contaminated air of hospitals ; most of the patients offering for this operation, being objects for hospitals.

Fourthly — An inattention to a few particulars previous to, and during, the operation.

And first, we cannot but lament the frequency and fatality of delay, which probably induced Frere Jacques to exclaim in his religious zeal for the operation, that if, as its opposers asserted, lithotomy had killed thousands, putting off the operation until the patient's strength and constitution were exhausted, had killed tens of thousands.

Nor ought we to be surprized, that patients are willing to have the operation delayed, when we consider how inherent a principle it is in the human breast to fly from pain. The expediency of suffering a present increase of it, for the sake of future relief, a reason though the most clear and convincing, is what their minds, blinded by the terrors of the knife, either cannot or will not comprehend.

Like the drowning wretch catching at a twig, they eagerly grasp every shadow of  
C hope,

hope, to save them from the impending evil; thus are they fatally deluded and prevented from obtaining substantial relief.

Nor has it unfrequently happened, that persons have been produced, whose situations rendered them fitter objects for the grave than the table of the operator.

In such cases, surgeons generally have mentioned the impossibility of success, and have prudently declined the operation.

Yet, strange as it may appear, persons at other times inimical to it, have not been wanting to enforce and encourage the performance of it at this period, and under circumstances that promised so fatal an event.

The only motive for so contradictory and so criminal a conduct, must be a hope, that from the ill success which would attend it, and be laid to its charge, they should add weight to their arguments against the operation, and that the death of the patient, hastened, perhaps brought on by their specifics, would be imputed to the fatality of cutting for the stone, and save the credit of their medicine. I need not point out the folly and cruelty of such a conduct, nor the character of such men; they must be void of every principle of honesty and humanity.

With respect to delay, in cases of the stone, we may reasonably conclude, that a morbid irritability of the patient's system, a train of complaints of the nervous kind, and an injury



of the functions of the parts affected, may be produced by an extraneous body, irritating the bladder to frequent præternatural contractions; — and these cannot fail being aggravated by the distress of mind, inseparable from a disease, peculiarly excruciating, and the constant dread of an operation.

It must be allowed, that instances have occurred, where it was probable, and almost certain, that a stone must have existed and been forming in the bladder for some time before any disagreeable symptoms came on. A case of this kind happened at an hospital of this metropolis very lately.

The patient had enjoyed a state of perfect health until within a fortnight of the operation; when the usual symptoms of a stone in the bladder coming on and increasing to a violent degree, after being searched, he was cut, and a stone of some size was extracted.

Others have been afflicted with severe attacks for a long period, and their complaints, without any medicine being taken, or any visible cause, have left them for a considerable time, and have afterwards returned in as unaccountable a manner; but a few exceptions can never cancel a general rule.

In the year 1777 I assisted in opening the body of a gentleman aged about thirty; whose general health and looks were so impaired, and his body so emaciated, that the gentleman

concerned with me, thought him at least fifty years old.

As I received an account of this unhappy man's case from one of his relations, having never seen him during his life, I hope I shall be excused on that account, for the imperfect manner I relate it in.

His fits of the stone, as they are generally called, were frequent and dreadful; a convulsion of the whole frame seemed on these occasions to take place, accompanied with a discharge of the contents of the stomach and the rectum. — The knees were forcibly drawn up to the abdomen, from whence every effort to remove them, as long as the paroxysm continued, was ineffectual; as that went off he gradually recovered himself, a cold sweat hung in large drops on the surface of his body, and a faintness remained, under which his attendants supported him with great difficulty: at length death closed the wretched scene, and the harrassed patient, after a fit, which seemed longer and more violent than usual, expired in a kind of syncope.

I was given to understand, that he had laboured under this complaint for more than two years and an half; that at first he was treated by an apothecary with oily, and probably diuretic mixtures, with opiates at intervals; and lastly, Castile soap, which he took in considerable quantities.

The

The ease and relief that he received, were of course but temporary, the symptoms gradually increased, and he had recourse to some solvent that is vended. In this, and in others of the same kind, he persevered for a considerable time; a loss of appetite and digestion were added to his other complaints; and a bottle of some preparation was brought to me, which from its taste and appearance seemed of the lixivial kind; of this I was told he had taken within three weeks of his death.

On inspecting the kidneys, great part of their substance was degenerated into hydatids, the ureters were enlarged, and their oblique perforation, or valvular manner of entering the bladder, was destroyed.

The coats of the bladder were amazingly thickened; or, to use a more technical expression, the muscular coat of it, from its increased action, was *improved*.

A stone was found in it larger than the egg of a hen; the shape was an oblong flattened oval; the surface of it was irregular, in some parts smooth, in others rough and bordering on angular points, which accounted for the extraordinary violence of the symptoms.

For the last six months of this person's life, his bladder lost its retentive power, and the urine dropped from him as it was secreted from the kidneys.

An anxiety to preserve the stone, induced my friend to secure it immediately, which prevented our weighing it at the time of opening the body; and it was either broken or taken from him afterwards, which prevented doing it at all.

The calculus almost filled the cavity of the bladder, which had contracted to such a degree, as to render itself unfit for, and incapable of being a reservoir for the urine; which accounts for the incontinency coming on.

In this case, I fear, the most sanguine promoter of lithotomy would have trembled for its success, even during any of the last twelve months of the affecting tragedy: two of the causes I have before mentioned, combining to render the success of it hazardous, delay, and a long course of solvents.

In circumstances so alarming, in a situation so truly melancholy, patients own their fatal mistake, and lament a reliance on medicines, ineffectual and injurious; but, alas! lament it too late: for on this occasion, as on several others in life, men are apt to neglect evils that may be remedied, because at first they do not seem of great consequence, until the opportunity for being relieved is irrecoverably lost; as, after a certain time, we ought to consider, that every day, nay, every hour, that we lose by delay, will rob the operation

ration of a proportionate probability of succeeding.

Besides, it has happened, that the ill success which was owing to a want of attention to the time and circumstances necessary for its being performed with the prospect of a happy event, has been most unreasonably charged on the operation itself; and this may, with the strictest propriety, be applied to most operations in surgery.

Deductions against lithotomy, from such false and inconclusive reasoning, would be a species of argument similar to, and as rational, as the prejudiced aversion which I was lately told a burgomaster's wife in Holland had taken against bleeding.

This lady could not, for a long time, be prevailed on to suffer herself, or any of her family, to lose blood, because she had been deprived of a distant relation, in a putrid fever, who, it was naturally supposed, died in consequence of phlebotomy being imprudently performed. — A pleurisy which raged soon after, put the zealous matron's resolution to the test; and her mistaken prejudice, but for the interposition and remonstrances of her friends, would have cost three of her family their lives.

With respect to lixivial remedies, it appears to me, that if given with caution, and in small doses, they leave the patient pre-

cisely in the same state they found him; if the quantity is increased, they produce feverish heats, and an uneasiness in the system, disorder the *primæ viæ*, appetite and digestion, increase the secretion of urine, and render it perhaps more turbid than it naturally is: and if medicines of this kind are given in large quantities, and are persevered in, they ultimately tend to destroy the patient; nor indeed can preparations of this kind be given, even in small doses, in some constitutions, without hazarding the life of the patient, and the credit of the prescriber.

Besides this, general practice does not authenticate their having performed any actual cures, where the stone was felt previous to their exhibition; while reason and experience point out to us the fallacy of trusting entirely to symptoms, in determining the difference of diseases; and daily mistakes evince, how cautious we ought to be, in affording an implicit confidence to the descriptions and aggravated feelings of patients.

And indeed we ought not to be surprized at its want of success, when we take a view of the variety of channels and alterations it must pass through, and the diluted state in which it must of necessity pass into the bladder.

From the stomach, we are to suppose it absorbed, and mixed with the chyle conveyed into the blood; then carried to the kidneys  
by

by the emulgent arteries ; it there undergoes a process which we are not acquainted with, compared by some to filtration ; and finally, by the ureters it gets into the bladder to act on the stone.

So that, before it can possibly reach the seat of the disease, the whole mass of blood must become lixivial ; and it would be very unreasonable to suppose, that a preparation, whose activity depended, in a great degree, on its causticity, should become inert and harmless in its passage, through parts so minute, so delicate, and possessed of so great sensibility, as the internal coat of the bladder is more especially endued with, for very obvious purposes : and indeed the irritability of this membrane is such, that no fluid but the natural one can be long contained in it, even pale urine, or urine with matter in it, exciting, in a degree, symptoms of the stone, and forcing the person to void it very quickly.

That delight and wonder of the age, Mr. Garrick, who was as much beloved as his death was universally lamented, laboured for many years under a calculous complaint : partial to medicines, and eager to embrace every thing that possessed or promised any efficacy, he persisted in the use of many solvents ; and a violent pain in the stomach, which latterly was frequent, he generally attributed

tributed to the effects of these medicines, as he had not experienced it until their use.—On inspecting the body after death, the organization and substance of the kidneys were found almost destroyed; a stone of considerable size was found in the bladder; the surface of which plainly evinced, that it had not been in any degree abraded, dissolved, or broken down; though it might have been expected, from the vast quantities of drugs he swallowed, his long perseverance, and the boasted efficacy of them.

Instead of acting as lithontriptics, and destroying the stone, in this melancholy instance, they were generally supposed to have brought on a destruction of the system.— Could Mr. Garrick have been persuaded to submit to the operation before he took the solvents, the world might still have been blessed with his presence, and his friends might not, for many years, have felt the irreparable loss of so entertaining, so instructive, and so amiable a man.

As to solvents, — a long course of them, from their evident effects, cannot be favourable to the operation of lithotomy, the success of which will be proportionably lessened as the general health is impaired.

A languor and debility, with a disposition to feverish complaints, accompanied with a  
loss



loss of appetite and digestion, are, in greater or less degrees, consequences, which I have not in the least aggravated.

Under these, and their attendant circumstances, a disease, not in general dangerous, will often become fatal; stone patients being liable to other incidental complaints in common with mankind.

I have seen two instances, where the patients, in a distinct benign species of the small-pox, both died, though the disease in the neighbourhood was by no means fatal: they were taking solvents when the symptoms of the small-pox came on; and though it could not be certainly said, that the solvents were the cause of their death, the natural and impartial inference would render it more than probable.

A third patient, under a course of solvents, was seized with a putrid fever, and ulcers in the throat, under which he sunk, though Port wine, bark, blisters, &c. were liberally used, and under the direction of a gentleman, who is an honor to his profession: this last patient was remarkably healthy before he was afflicted with the stone. — I was not permitted to examine either of these bodies after death, to ascertain whether they really had calculi in their bladders, and how

far

far the solvents had produced any effects; nor can I help lamenting the mischievous obstructions, which this prejudice lays in the way of surgical knowledge.

Scrupulously observed, in times of abject barbarity, or superstitious bigotry, the student in anatomy will find a difficulty to overcome it in times so enlightened in many other respects as the present; nor is it improbable, that in some remote period, posterity may mention it to the disgrace of an age not hood-winked by superstition, but encouraging most branches of useful and polite arts, that the hands of industry and diligence were tied on so interesting a subject, and that so great an avenue to improvement was barred up, as the examination of morbid appearances after death.

Having endeavoured to shew how far internal medicines obstructed the success of lithotomy, and some other causes; I shall proceed in the next chapter to a short consideration of another cause or two; and after some necessary observations, I shall hasten to a conclusion. And I believe, that most stone patients would readily submit to the operation, were they not deluded on the one hand by flattering, but false promises, and terrified on the other by alarming descriptions.

It

It has been tritely observed, *anceps remedium melius quam nullum*; but remedies, whose curative effects are uncertain, and whose injuries to the constitution are highly probable, cannot, with propriety, be comprehended under the description of this axiom,

## CHAPTER THE THIRD.

*Hospital Air.—Defects in some Parts of the Operation considered.—Fixed Air mentioned.—Some Objections to Lithotomy spoken of.—Circumstances in favor of Solvents proved not to be so.—Mr. Cheselden's Account.—Conclusion.*

**I** Have mentioned the contaminated air of hospitals as another cause operating against the success of lithotomy. As this is acknowledged and lamented by all, I shall be very explicit in considering it. — So far as it affects the general health of patients, it will tend to this purpose.

But the proper digestion, and healing of the fore, are what seem principally to suffer from it.

And whoever has attended to the patients in the hospitals in this city, after they have been cut for the stone, must have observed many instances, where the fore put on a bad appearance, with a thin gleet discharge for months; but on the patient's retiring into the country for a few weeks, a kind granulation took place, the fore soon healed, and the patient perfectly recovered.

The

The general fatality of compound fractures in this metropolis, which surgeons of the first eminence complain of, may in a great measure be attributed to this cause: it remains to be decided, how far it would be either expedient or possible, to erect a building in an airy situation, separate from the hospital, and to appropriate it solely to patients of a certain description.

It may be necessary to observe, that when I said, "most patients, subjects for this operation, were objects for hospitals," I did not mean to infer, that one rank of men were more liable to the stone than another, as I do not know that it is so; what I said, arose from this fact, that the comparative number of those, who were able to employ an operating hospital surgeon at their own houses, was very small.

And the advantages of having recourse to the best medical and surgical advice, which the very lowest people in great cities possess, is a privilege, which the useful rank of mankind, between affluence and poverty, cannot, or must not, take the benefit of; whilst the undiscerning and thankless multitude either demand it with stubborn insolence, or enjoy it with silent ingratitude.

The blessings of ease and comfort should be diffused with a liberal and unreserved hand, to every individual of the creation; and he who does not feel an ample reward, in having  
relieved

relieved a fellow-creature, does not deserve to practise, or even to live.

The last cause I mentioned, was a defect in a part of the operation:—and I speak of it with the awe and timidity of a young mariner, venturing his little bark in dangerous seas, and in the tracts of able and experienced navigators.

The circumstance I meant to speak of, is the external incision; which every one in the habit of attending to operations, must at times have observed to be small and inadequate to the purpose of admitting the extraction of the stone; nor has the whole strength and repeated efforts of the operator been able sometimes to effect it; though *assisted* (as I have been informed) by the arms of an assistant applied round his body.—I have seen two operations performed, where, after several ineffectual trials, the stone could not be extracted until the incision was enlarged. — Nor can I see that any of the dangers, attending an external incision of the common size, will be any ways increased or diminished, by making it half an inch, or even an inch longer or shorter.

The cutting gorget, for which the world is indebted to Sir Cæsar Hawkins, generally makes the oblique internal wound sufficiently large, assisted by the yielding quality of the bladder, to admit the extraction of most stones: the integuments yield but little in proportion, being more rigid and thicker:—  
and

and the great injury the parts must receive, from forcing a large body through a small wound, will add the dangers of laceration and contusion to those common to the operation; and daily experience evinces the facility with which inflammation, from external wounds, communicating with cavities, extends, by what physiologists have called, consent of parts, over their internal surfaces.

A notion that quickness is an indispensable qualification in a lithotomist, has been productive of very fatal mischiefs; and an operator must be possessed of a good share of coolness and intrepidity, who would not be affected by thirty or forty watches being taken out, in a theatre, to determine critically the precise time in which the operation was performing: in such situations I have felt for the patient, and in no small degree for the surgeon.

I am told, that a gentleman who brought lithotomy to a great pitch of perfection, generally gave his watch to an assistant, to determine the time with exactness: both the precedent and principle on which it was founded, are dangerous; it may be taken up by men of equal ambition, but less dexterity.

*Sat cito si sat bene,*

though a less brilliant and less flattering  
 D doctrine,

doctrine, is certainly a more safe and a more useful one: and being five or ten minutes longer performing the operation, will be thought, by prudent men, a very trifling inconvenience, compared to the danger of pushing the gorget between the bladder and the *rectum*, the not being able to extract the stone, and other alarming accidents; which the enemies to surgery will ever be ready to impute to a criminal weakness in the operator, whom they will accuse of sacrificing his patient, to the vain wish of being thought a quick and dexterous operator.

I need not dwell on the necessity for gentleness in searching; the puerile circumstance of the instrument being heard to resound against the stone, by persons at a distant part of a room, will not warrant us in moving the staff rudely and rapidly in the cavity of the bladder, where there is a possibility of striking it against the internal membrane; which, besides increasing the pain, might be productive of disagreeable consequences.

Fixed air introduced into the system, either in the form of brisk fermented liquors, or collected during its escape, from a mixture of alcalies and acids, has been spoken of as an useful lithontriptic in some cases; its total inefficacy in others, and the want of proof, that a stone really existed where it



was supposed to have been beneficial, prevent any thing being decided in its favor.

Though this mode of treatment has not yet been introduced into general practice, experiments, authenticated by the most respectable of all authorities, demonstrate, that calculi which have been extracted from the human bladder, and submitted, for a due space of time, to the action of liquors strongly impregnated with fixed air, have not suffered the least diminution of size; neither have their surfaces been eroded, or their hardness and texture been at all affected in consequence of such exposure.

It has been objected to lithotomy, that there is no probability or possibility of its preventing the formation of a second calculus in the bladder: but this objection may be applied, with equal propriety, to solvents, which cannot possibly prevent the remote causes of calculous concretion, such as intemperance, a sedentary life, and others which we are as yet unacquainted with.

That patients have been cut at two different times, is true; that this does not frequently happen, is equally so.

The little acquaintance we have with the different causes uniting to form a predisposition to different diseases, opens a wide field for theory and conjecture; and the phenomena of nature are so obscure in most in-

stances, as to afford but little satisfactory ground for a rational enquiry or real knowledge.

The accidental circumstance of some extraneous substance being introduced into the bladder, has, in some cases, been the only cause that could be assigned for a calculus forming; as patients, in this case, were perfectly free from calculous complaints previous to the introduction of the nucleus into the bladder, and after the operation, were free from the stone for the remainder of their lives.

In other instances, an unnatural detention of the urine in the bladder, from whatever cause, has seemed to produce a disposition to calculous concretion.

As it was not proposed to enter into a particular consideration, either of the disease or its treatment, I shall proceed no further on those heads; and as to abstruse reasoning and ingenious theory, I have neither inclination nor ability to pursue them.

The great quantities of ropy matter that have been discharged with the urine of those under a course of solvents, has been considered as an infallible proof of their efficacy; as it was urged, that such great quantities of a thick glutinous discharge, if retained in the bladder, could not fail affording a constant

stant supply of materials for the formation of calculous concretion.

The mucus of the bladder and urinary passages, in a natural healthy state, is but in small quantities.

When any irritating cause, either from disease or local injury, affects these parts, the quantity of this mucus is constantly increased.

These are precisely the effects of solvents, which, as they stimulate the surfaces they pass through, excite, and produce, a proportionate secretion and discharge of this mucus.

This is very analogous to, and is clearly explained by, what takes place from any irritating cause that is applied to the eye; which never fails bringing on an increased secretion, and copious discharge of the lacrymal fluid.

I cannot help mentioning a circumstance, which in my own mind operates strongly in favor of lithotomy; it is that inward serenity and content, easier imagined than described, with which surgeons generally proceed to this operation; owing to a rational conviction, that what they are going to do, will tend to the speedy recovery and perfect health of an afflicted fellow-creature — The contrary to this is very evident, in those cases, and too many such there are, where certain and speedy death must ensue, if something is not done,

and where, even after an operation, the prospect of cure, or even of life, is distant, doubtful, and melancholy. The feelings of humanity, in this case, diffuse a sympathetic gloom over the countenance of the operator: — he beholds, with a visible concern, an unhappy wretch sinking under a disease, and submitting to additional pain, when the advantage resulting from it is uncertain; though he is not prevented from doing strict justice to his patient, he is undoubtedly affected with sensations very different from those which arise in the mind of an experienced lithotomist; who is firmly persuaded, that with care, the extraction of the stone is almost certain; that the degree of danger is ascertained; and from former experience, he thinks himself justified in drawing a favourable presage to future practice.

It will be necessary before I conclude, to endeavour to determine, what is the general success of lithotomy; and on enquiry, it perhaps may prove to be much greater than the timidity of patients, the opinions of the prejudiced, and the assertions of the interested, would lead us to imagine.

To do this with the minutest accuracy is impossible; as a list of operations, and their success, if it did not comprehend a period of many years, and a large circle of practice, would not at all answer the purpose.

No regular annual account of this kind is preserved in our hospitals, from the circumstance of the annual succession of house surgeons; who, when they retire from their office, carry with them their own papers and observations.—This culpable defect has been invidiously attributed to a wish to conceal what might injure surgery, from the public eye; under a supposition, that it would be impolitic to expose a long catalogue of operations, various, cruel, and unsuccessful:—the perfection to which modern surgery has been brought, and the ingenuous and candid behaviour of those gentlemen who conduct our hospitals, incline us not to credit the assertion.

That private lists of this kind, which would enable us to form an average account, tolerably accurate, have been preserved by gentlemen who have been at the head of their profession in London for many years, we have little reason to doubt, from their diligence, attention, and fund of knowledge in other professional matters.

What Mr. Cheselden has favoured the world with, of his hospital practice, in cutting for the stone, will afford some very satisfactory materials for judging of its general success under his hands:—nor can I proceed, without paying a tribute of thanks to this gentleman, who rendered such great and essential services

services to surgeons and mankind. — After practising the high operation for the stone for several years, and with various success, he at length relinquished it, in consequence of an accident from an over-distension of the bladder by injection; from the *peritonæum* being cut through or burst; and on account of the general well-founded objection, that the urine lying constantly on the wound, retarded its healing:—but even in this method of operating, which was given up as less successful than the lateral way, at present universally established, he declared (and the world did him the justice to believe him) that he lost but one in seven. — His delicacy in declining to mention the success of his private practice, because he could not sufficiently witness it, is a conduct that has been often commended, and seldom imitated.

The patients he publicly cut for the stone, in St. Thomas's Hospital, were two hundred and thirteen; their different ages, and the number that died, I shall endeavour to arrange.

Number

Number of patients cut.		Years old each.		died.
105	—	10	—	3
62	from	10 to 20	—	4
12	—	20 to 30	—	3
10	—	30 to 40	—	2
10	—	40 to 50	—	2
7	—	50 to 60	—	4
5	—	60 to 70	—	1
2	—	70 to 80	—	1
<hr/>				<hr/>
213				20
<hr/>				<hr/>

The proportion of twenty out of such a number, cannot be thought great or alarming.

Mr. Cheselden observes, that several had the small-pox during their cure, some of whom died.

One of the first hundred and five had a violent whooping cough, which carried him off. In this case, the urgency of the stone symptoms, most likely rendered the operation immediately necessary ; otherwise, waiting until the incidental disease was better, would have been adviseable.

So that from the general opinion of surgeons, from Mr. Cheselden's account, from what has been imparted to me on the best authority, and from what has fallen under my own observation, during my attendance at hospitals ; — we cannot assert with truth, that  
more

more than one out of eleven die in consequence of being cut for the stone.

Were we or could we divest the operation of some of its accidental disadvantages, and be careful enough to guard against some of the causes I have before mentioned, candour might allow us to bring the number to one in fourteen; a degree of danger which attends few capital operations in so small a proportion.

As the method of attempting to dissolve the stone in the bladder, by means of injections, has, for several obvious reasons, fallen into general disuse; I have spoken but little of them in particular, because many of the reasons urged against other modes of treatment, were equally cogent against this.

Should a solvent be hereafter offered to the world, it will be necessary, towards forming a proper judgment of its efficacy, to examine all who take it, after death: the effects of the medicine on the *primæ viæ* and general health of the patient, should be strictly attended to; and the number on whom the trial is made, should be considerable.

Should future ages possess a solvent, efficacious, but not destructive to the system, lithotomy may perhaps be superseded: until then, reason and experience point it out as the best and only resource.

And it seems very clear, that the same,  
which



which the most reputed solvents have acquired, has been built on errors in judgment, or interested views. For the human calculus seems to be a substance, that can be acted upon only by such preparations, the introduction of which into the body, in any necessary degree of strength, is inconsistent with the delicacy of the parts they must pass through; hurtful to the general health of the patient, and peculiarly injurious to the functions of the parts affected, and their appendages.

I shall conclude with advising those, who have prudent resolution enough to undergo the operation, to do it in time, before the irritation of the disease itself, or the deleterious use of solvents, have impaired their general health: for in a morbid state of the blood and juices, no wound can heal kindly; and the operation, however safe and skilfully performed, by such means may be rendered hazardous and frequently fatal.

*F I N I S.*



AN  
E S S A Y  
ON THE  
PRINCIPLES AND MANNERS  
OF THE  
MEDICAL PROFESSION.

WITH  
SOME OCCASIONAL REMARKS  
ON THE  
USE AND ABUSE OF MEDICINE.

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By J. WHITAKER NEWMAN,  
Member of the Corporation of Surgeons, London.

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Ubi verò animus ex multis periculis atque miseris requievit, non  
fuit consilium socordiâ atque defidiâ bonum otium conterere; ne  
vitam silentio transeam sicut pecora, quæ natura prona atque  
ventri obedientia finxit. e SALLUSTIO.

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TO  
ARTHUR NEWMAN, Esq.  
OF  
RINGWOOD,

In the County of SOUTHAMPTON.

DEAR SIR,

I HOPE not to incur the suspicion of interested flattery, in making those acknowledgements which gratitude and justice demand.

The warmth of expression and lively sentiments, which, in general addresses of this kind, degenerate into fulsome adulation, have been thought necessary and decent, when considered as the efforts of filial duty and affection.

iv D E D I C A T I O N.

If I have enjoyed or profited, from any opportunities which my education afforded, either before or after I turned my mind to medical pursuits, it is to your tender assiduity, and anxious endeavours that I owe the advantages of them.

It is you, Sir, I am to thank, for being in the early part of life an eye-witness to the manual dexterity of a Ranby, the philosophic genius and erudition of a Monsey, and the elegant accomplishments of an Adair.

And while I contemplate the exertions of Dr. Hunter, whose merit is as unequalled as his loss will be irreparable, I feel my obligations to you increase, for placing me within the happy influence of his peculiar talents for instruction.

Nor am I less ready to attribute my most fatal errors to neglecting, than I am willing to impute, the most fortunate events of my life, to following the advice and suggestions of parents, whom it has been and still is my happiness to venerate and love.

DEDICATION. v

Under the glowing impulse of such convictions, which I am neither able or willing to resist, it would betray a defect both of the head and heart, not to testify on all occasions, that I am by nature and reason,

Dear Sir,

Your obedient

and devoted

humble servant,

J. WHITAKER NEWMAN.

PREFACE.





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## P R E F A C E.

**T**O defend an extensive Society of men from undeserved reproach, to point out some faults, by way of caution to those who are entering into life, and to inculcate the necessity of liberal behaviour, is the business of this Essay.

Vulgar prejudices, and senseless bigotry, have been, and still are, inveterate enemies to rational improvement in every branch of science.

He who combats such formidable monsters with success, deserves our praise, and an ineffectual effort, perhaps, will not be despised.

As publications on every subject, abound so much, the presenting one

viii P R E F A C E.

*to the public eye, that lays claim to no extraordinary merit, but the negative one, of being without falsehood or absurdity, seems to require some apology.*

*To fill up the intervals of a recovery from a dangerous illness, and to divert the attention from brooding on some domestic calamities, is a reason, but not an excuse for this attempt.*

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A N  
E S S A Y, &c.

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CHAPTER THE FIRST.

*Introduction.—The Incitements and Discouragements of Practitioners mentioned.—A Declaration of Men of Eminence—That the Practice of Medicine is degenerated—That the Behaviour of the World has rendered it necessary.—Some Objections against Medical Men spoken of.—No general Rule without an Exception.*

**T**O alleviate the sorrows of the distressed, and to be instrumental in restoring health and spirits to the infirm and dejected, are pursuits which a liberal mind must engage in, with a sincere and rational delight.

Nor is such an employment without circumstances, which render it a probable source of mutual benevolence and gratitude.

A husband, or a father, restored to the arms of a despairing wife and children; and the grateful voice of a patient, snatched from the jaws of death, and pressing the hand of his benefactor to a glowing bosom, is certainly a refined pleasure, and one of as exalted and exquisite a nature as it has pleased our bountiful Creator to render the human mind capable of enjoying.

So alluring and so flattering does the prospect appear to the eye of a superficial observer; that we ought rather to lament than be surprized at the vast numbers of infatuated parents, who so indiscriminately, not to say cruelly, sacrifice their devoted children, to the attractions, and too often, to the wretchedness of a medical life.

But the experienced practitioner, whose life and habits have led him to a more intimate acquaintance with men and things, has been heard to lament with a sigh, that this enjoyment has its alloy, of neglect, ingratitude, and reproach.

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He has found his best efforts for the welfare of mankind, resisted and traduced by folly, detraction, and obstinacy; while his anxious attendance on the sick, and his mode of treatment, have been imputed solely to motives, as dishonourable and mean as the souls of those who suggested them.

In the place of implicit confidence he has met with suspicion, and the soul-soothing language of lively gratitude, has given way to cold formality, perhaps to keen invective: his attendance and medicines have been either ridiculed or disregarded, and their good effects not unfrequently attributed to the preposterous exhibitions of an ignorant but bold empiric.—If his attempts for the recovery of his patient should not be attended with success, that constant companion (in the world's eye) to real merit, his fame will be blasted by the malignant breath of envy, his reputation be sacrificed by scandal and malice at the altar of private resentment, and his mangled name be offered up to appease the injured manes of a slaughtered friend.

While his calamities are regarded as the avenging hand of Heaven punishing his misdeeds, his prosperity will be considered as

built on the ghastly ruins of mankind, and any eminence he may attain to in his profession, as an ingenious method of torturing the groans, the diseases, and the misfortunes of his fellow-creatures, to the base purposes of avarice and fordid lucre.

He will be accused, of never feeling the soft luxury of a tear, of being callous to those social and endearing ties which bind man to man, and (absorbed in the idea of a fee) of losing all relish for that noblest that best of all fees, the pleasure which results from reflecting on a virtuous and benevolent action.

That such has been and still is the general complaint of those, whose opportunities, application, or abilities, have not been able to procure them rank and emolument, is an acknowledged truth.

But equally true it is, that men at this time in the British metropolis, ornaments at once to the profession and the age in which they live, have declared that they studied physic, and entered on the practice of it, on the broad, liberal, and comprehensive basis, of honour, of generosity, and humanity.

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The task of relating their declaration, would have been a pleasing one, had it gone no farther ; but they added with regret, such was the want of candour in mankind, and such the disposition of the multitude to plunge into the infatuations of error, absurdity, and imposition, that in their own defence, they were obliged to wield the same weapons, which their adversaries had exercised against them with so much severity.

“ *Suo sibi gladio hunc jugulo.*”

Under these circumstances, they found the medical profession reduced, by a strange kind of base necessity, to a low illiberal trade, supported by mean finesse, chicanery, and collusion ; requiring rather the despicable arts of servility and cunning, than the happy genius and enlightened talents of a man of science.

Nor is this to be considered as the fabricated effusion of a warm imagination, but as actually and frequently asserted, by men of respectable age, practice, and ability.

Such have been the expressions of the Faculty, heightened perhaps by the aggravat-

ing colours of resentment, prejudice, and partiality.

Nor has the world been silent in answering or even anticipating these complaints, appealing to experience, and asserting that what they said was the voice of nature; a voice, to which, with more malice than truth, they observed, their antagonists were much in the habit of turning a deaf ear.

By these steady advocates for mankind, the profession have had the tables turned on themselves, and have been boldly accused, of rapacity, want of candour, and even of common honesty. According to these declaimers, those who in the hour of sickness and affliction, have relied on them, have found in this mercenary tribe, for disinterested regard, an inordinate love of gold, and instead of friendly advice or gentle behaviour, loads of nauseating drugs and unintelligible jargon.

Consultations, for the forming of which neither expence or labour have been spared, and on the result of which the lives of the nearest and dearest in the most respectable families have depended, have been too often devoted,



devoted, to idle discussions, uninteresting topics, vague hypotheses, and unmanly altercation.

Nor has the purpose of the meeting been at all attended to, until the plaintive voice of a bereft widow, or a miserable orphan, has driven the remorseless spoilers from the house of sorrow.

Neither have they forgot to observe, that in the prescription of medicines, the nature of the patient's complaint has been only a secondary object of consideration.

The opportunity in this case has been seized on as a happy one, to convince the apothecary how much the physician studies to be grateful, by promoting *trade*, and *loading in* medicines, as it has been emphatically called.

To these charges many others have been added, as caprice or resentment dictated; a distinct consideration of each of them, would be inconsistent with the limits of a short essay.

In this catalogue, we perhaps might find, a general over-rating of merit, and its consequence, demands proportionately exorbitant; a profligacy and relaxation of morals,

with a total inattention to the duties of religion.

The last article of the impeachment, I may be blamed for not wholly omitting, as it has been said, that in the present degenerate times \*, it is too applicable to every rank of men, by those who are so much in the habit of indulging their talent, in declaiming against the peculiar tendency of the age they live in to moral turpitude.

But having frequently been in company with those, whose education, profession, and lives, ought to make them competent judges

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\* There generally have been, and probably always will be, declaimers, that think every age increases in vice and irreligion, "They can remember that things were very different when they were young."

As in the different ages of the world, the manners of its inhabitants must have depended on their degree of improvement and refinement, from the Cafrarian to the polished European; it seems rational to conclude, that their moral defects have (*habita ratione partium*) been nearly equal in all countries and in all ages. And however frivolous and dissipated the present age may appear, it does not seem generally to exhibit crimes, of so black a cast, and so inimical to human nature, as those which stain the annals of two or three centuries ago.

of moral rectitude; and having heard respectable characters among them declare, that they thought the medical profession in its several branches, the most inattentive of any to religious duties, equally, if not more profligate and dissipated than all, I thought it my duty, as well as a respect and deference due to these gentlemen, and their holy office, to give it a place here.

Having been thus led by the nature of my subject, to consider the profession as it stands in its several relations to the world, it would not be wandering far from my purpose to review in a cursory way their treatment of each other.

But previous to such a discussion, it seems a necessary piece of justice, to vindicate, as far as is consistent with truth, the behaviour of practitioners from some aspersions, which have occurred in reviewing the conduct of both parties; and this is a task, which it should seem my duty, my interest, and my inclination to undertake.

I shall also endeavour to set in a clear point of view, some circumstances which have hitherto escaped observation.

These subjects, with some reflections and inferences

ferences which will naturally arise in treating of them, with an enquiry into some of the causes which have united in degrading the profession in the eyes of the world, and injuring their interests, will be taken up in the following pages.

And if in the course of this Essay, some disagreeable truths should arise, which appear to cast any oblique and invidious reflections on either side of the question, the trite but just observation, that there is no general rule without an exception, ought to be remembered,

From the nature of the present system it must happen, that in every extensive society of men, there will be a greater or less number of unworthy members of it.

But he who should be rash enough to assert, that, censuring the undeserving individuals, exposing their faults, and bestowing on their conduct its proper epithets, was aspersing the character, lowering the dignity, and laying the axe to the very root of the whole society, would be equally contemptible for his folly, his falsehood, and his absurdity.

Were a judicious critic to inveigh with  
 I  
 severity,

feverity, against the nonsense, which the English press, like a mountain in labour, every day, nay every hour, groans with; justice, taste, and common sense, would readily acquiesce in the truth. But were he to deduce from this argument, any thing derogatory or unfavourable to the sublimity and classical elegance of a Gibbon, or the chaste imagination and poetical genius of an Hayley, his reasoning and abilities would meet with the ridicule, the contempt they so justly deserved.

## CHAPTER THE SECOND.

*A common-place Observation applied to Practitioners and their Patients.—The superior Advantages of a Physician compared to the Treatment of the lower Ranks of the Profession.—Dr. Rattcliffe's Advice to Dr. Mead.—Observations and Reflections on it.*

**T**HAT the impressions of a favour recently conferred, produce more immediate and lively symptoms of gratitude, than the remembrance of former acts of kindness however beneficial or important, is a fact which experience confirms, but honour disapproves.

A grateful heart, ardently pants to make a quick return for offices of benevolence, leaving prudence and reflection to pause and to delay.—For it frequently happens, that what in the moment of thankful rapture, was magnified as a God-like action, dwindles, in the long-extended perspective of time and policy, into a kindness, a duty, and a trifling favour.

Did a due sense of the importance of obligations, equally diminish in the minds of those who confer and those who receive them, the mutual complaints of ungrateful and unreasonable tempers would not be so often heard.

But it happens unfortunately in the general intercourses of life, that the conferrer of a benefit heightens and overvalues it, in the same proportion, that the person obliged appreciates and lowers it.

From a consideration of these truths, which are deduced from a view of the conduct of mankind in *general*, we can easily account for the same motives operating still more powerfully, in the concerns of the medical profession in *particular*.—A profession which exists in relieving calamities, and lives by being rewarded for it.—The physician, it is true, has often the advantage of receiving his fee, accompanied with the most solemn protestations of respect and esteem, and attended with ten thousand indescribable circumstances that increase its value.

While the impressions of present pain, hope, and fear, are deep in the hearts of the patient and his friends; while the love of  
money

money is repressed by increasing danger and anxiety, he is considered and received as an invaluable friend, as one on whom the happiness and tranquillity of the family depend; while medicine is considered as the last and only method of preserving a doubtful life.

In this case, the present is generally such as a generous mind is proud to bestow, and such as will not disgrace acknowledged merit to receive.

Happy intercourse, where gratitude and liberality increase the pleasure of doing good, and give a zest to that best of all efforts, an effort to bless!

But in branches of the profession, less honourable, less lucrative, but more fatiguing and laborious, the case is far otherwise: these unhappy men are seldom employed from any preference of opinion, but chiefly because their advice and assistance are procured at the cheapest rates, and not unfrequently, because they may be defrauded and imposed on with less difficulty, and less fear of detection and punishment.

It is a matter of ease, and often of triumph, to an illiberal mind, to find out some plausible pretence for disappointment, delay, or refusal:



refusal: nor indeed can it be denied, that the infamous returns of abuse and defamation, are cheap methods of discharging or rather evading a demand.

We may in some degree excuse the celebrated Dr. Rattcliffe\*, for his unjustifiable advice to Dr. Mead, under the supposition that he was irritated by similar treatment, and provoked by ill usage.

An uncomplying kind of behaviour, such as Rattcliffe's, bordering on cruelty, would be unfufferable in a man of less eminence, but would be highly culpable in any one.

His peculiarities, though accompanied by sterling merit, and many good qualities, can only be accounted for and palliated, by his constitutional asperity, and an independent spirit, called forth perhaps by the slavish and unmanly submission, or the injurious treatment of his predecessors or cotemporaries,

\* Mead, you are just entering into practice; it will not perhaps be long before I shall leave it, and I ought to be some judge of the treatment, men in our line have to expect from mankind: use the world ill, or by — they will use you so.

and heightened at last by the petulancy of old age.

His liberal donations to Oxford, and the essential services he rendered to medicine, will be remembered and revered, when his foibles and his singularities are buried in oblivion.

The subaltern practitioner must attain or assume more philosophy, or he must not eat: he must learn to submit with patience to the insults and injuries, which the lower orders of his profession are daily exposed to.

And if he does not receive a considerable gratification from the exercise of a benevolent disposition, independent of the profits of his practice, he may look with envy on the preferable condition of a hewer of wood, or a drawer of water.

The dexterity requisite for effecting a *good day's work*, and the plausible exhibition of innocent no-meaning trifles in all cases, certainly requires no great exertion of the mind in investigating the complaints of a patient, and may be termed an easy way of *doing business*.

But such a conduct, how well soever it may answer the present purposes of profit, will

will afford no satisfaction in the retired moments of unbiassed reflection: when a man shall find that he has lost many opportunities of producing some essential advantage, or removing some threatening evil.

His negative treatment of the patient, and his interested activity with regard to himself, is a contrast which must effectually damn him in his own mind, and in the eyes of the world.

To assert that unworthy and infamous characters are never to be met with in the profession, or to affirm that they never experience ungenerous and cruel treatment, would be assigning them an enviable lot inconsistent with the present state of things.

To suppose that a few shillings, or a few pounds, are a full and adequate return to a practitioner, for being instrumental in saving a life or a limb, and to imagine that all idea of the obligation is cancelled and obliterated by a fee, is a mode of reasoning never the less false for its being frequent.

The loss of rest, the weight on the spirits, and the daily risque of reputation, to which the practice of the several branches of medicine exposes men, may be rendered supportable, by the good offices, the candour, and the friendship of a recovered patient.

But the fee of insulting pride, given without delicacy, shall be accepted without  
C emotion,

emotion, while the poor man's mite, moistened with the tear of gratitude, shall be received with delight.

Whenever the unenlightened idol of ostentation, shall give pain by his manner of conferring a favour, it is the duty of every member of the Faculty to vindicate the dignity of man, as well as the honour of his profession, by supporting this position with decency and firmness—

*A practitioner's love of money may be gratified by an exorbitant present; but he can only receive his deserts, by being treated with the candour, delicacy, and attention, of a friend, a benefactor, and an equal.*

The whiffling apothecary may employ his subordinate bows and abject deportment, from the drawing-room to the butler's pantry, with the self-satisfaction and grimace of a monkey; but he may rest assured, that with whatever countenance or language he is received, his meanness and unmanly behaviour, cannot fail exciting inward contempt and abhorrence.

After he has been made use of as a tool to execute some base and ignominious purpose, he will be deservedly kicked out of door, like that domestic animal whose fawning tricks and despicable gestures, he so closely and so happily imitates.

## CHAPTER THE THIRD.

*A Prejudice against the Art of Healing considered.—Has Medicine upon the whole been most useful or most prejudicial to Mankind.—The Folly of too great a Reliance on it.—The Mischief of having no Opinion of its Use.—The Pleasures and the Inconveniencies of Ignorance. — A Reflection. — Some Instances of Credulity spoken of.—A few Hints on modern Improvements.—It is much easier to contract than to cure a Disease.—A Comparison.*

“GOD never made his works for man to mend,” has been the echo of popular clamour, and the burthen of the poet’s song.

The proposition may appear specious, the verse harmonious, and some arguments offered in favour of it may seem convincing; but should the votary of the Muses, be so unfortunate as to labour under a putrid fever, or to have a rupture of an arterial branch, his conduct on either of these occasions, though it might not immediately overset the assertion, would at once give the lie to his faith and his professions.

Nevertheless, many have still hesitated in pronouncing whether Medicine, under the many disadvantages it labours, has been beneficial or injurious to mankind\*.

That it is like the manna showered down from heaven upon the favoured but ungrateful descendants of Jacob, and meant as a blessing, but converted by their folly and perverseness, to a most bitter and inveterate curse, is in many respects a faithful representation.

The credulous valetudinarian, who *tremblingly alive all over*, sinks under his delicate nerves and exquisite sensibility, and allots to each hour of the day, its draught and its pill, without regard either to diet or exercise, is an object of ridicule and pity.

If he expects to remove his disorders without attending to, and guarding against the causes which united in producing them, he will find himself mistaken, and still worse, when it is too late.

\* “ You see two men whom they are burying ; they  
 “ are two brothers, that were both sick of the same dis-  
 “ ease, but took different measures ; one of them relied  
 “ with an entire confidence on his physician ; the other  
 “ let nature take her course ; yet they are both dead, the  
 “ former from taking all the physic the doctor ordered,  
 “ and the latter because he would take nothing.”

*Le Diable Boiteux, chap. 3d.*

The medical sceptic, who would lie panting and burning under the fell attacks of a pleurisy, without having recourse to the *delusive chimeras of art*, as he terms them, would suffer martyrdom for his criminal infatuation.

His too credulous neighbour might be conducted with him to the cells of a mad-house, with the same propriety that we should fetter the devoted suicide raving for the dagger or the bowl.

The illiterate peasant, enveloped in the shades of ignorance and innocence, who considers Medicine as a never-failing resource, on which he may with confidence rely in the hour of affliction, as a certain remover of every pain and every disease, may be considered as happy in the harmless delusion, which so effectually quiets his fears and his apprehensions.

He may be commended as a supporter of the credit of the Faculty, and as an excellent patient; but is in many respects equally if not more injurious to the cause of enlightened science, than he who has no faith in Medicine at all.

It were rather to be wished, that the fabric should sink, than totter under the weak and ignominious pillars of ignorance and imposition.

A candid patient (thank Heaven such there are)

are) well informed of what Medicine can, and what it cannot do, will be as far from a superstitious confidence in its favour, as he is from illiberal and ill-grounded prejudices against it\*.

Ever ready to make proper allowances for ill success, he will not form unreasonable expectations.

Qualified to judge of what may and what ought to be done, he will readily detect, and justly condemn an ignorant or unprincipled practitioner.

The patient of an opposite description, will be led into error, absurdity, and unavailing disappointment.

He would hear with astonishment, and be convinced with reluctance, that there is no composition in his much-loved dispensary that can cure an hydrocephalon.

He would look with a mixture of pity and contempt on that art, which is frequently obliged to have recourse to amputation, in

\* On this principle I cannot but readily agree with those who consider several late publications as serviceable to liberal practitioners, though they have been strongly condemned by some, under the idea that it was imparting too much knowledge to the world.

“ Excessit Medicina Modum.”



diseases, where his invaluable compounds and his infallible remedies have been ineffectually applied.

When the principles of Medicine, and the laws of the animal œconomy, have been explained to him; when the phænomena of those laws, and the uncertainty of the best of remedies, have been pointed out to him,

———— Pol me occidistis, amici,  
Non servastis, ait, cui sic extorta voluptas,  
Et demptus per vim, mentis gratissimus error.

he perhaps would confess with a sigh, that an increase of knowledge had only produced an augmentation of sorrow.

After all that has been said, it cannot be denied, that this art in able and honest hands is highly beneficial and necessary in the frail and imperfect condition of man, exposed as he is, to internal disease, and external accident.

Like a self-evident proposition, it requires not a proof; to deny it, would be disavowing the efficacy of the Peruvian bark in shortening the paroxysm of an intermittent, or the specific power of mercury in curing the lues venerea.

The Pharmacopœiæ of antient, and some of

modern times, afford remarkable instances of credulity or dishonesty.

The sagacious surgeon, who with gravity and unaffected assurance, would order the weapon with which a wound had been inflicted, to be rubbed with his mystical sympathetic powder, was possessed of at least a harmless secret: provided it was not enjoined that stimulating applications were to be used to the part, and as long as it did not prevent his paying a due attention to the state of the wound.

We may be allowed to smile at the recital, but some modern ideas of curing ulcers on the leg, however various their cause, by large doses of nitre, without rest or attending to peculiarities of constitution, do not fall much short of it in absurdity.

Nor are those less paradoxical, which suppose it possible for an ointment, without internal medicines, to cure a sore, in spite of the most vitiated habit of body.

I have given nitre in long-repeated and large doses, without any benefit to an ulcer, but with evident ill effects on the general health.

And it is hardly necessary to observe, that the best-contrived applications, will neither produce advantage to the patient, or credit to

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the surgeon, without attending to regimen, and medicines capable of correcting a bad state of the blood.

Rest, a light moderate diet, with gentle alteratives, and above all the Peruvian bark, are what I have found of the utmost service in the few years I have lived.

And indeed that most excellent medicine, the bark, with the mere superficial application of dry lint, and keeping the parts clean, with proper bandages, has procured me a credit in some cases, when I neither expected or deserved it.

A Scultetus, or even a Heister, would probably allow but little merit to the present practice of surgery, which confides so little in art, and leaves so much to nature; they would lament to see their powders, their plaisters, and ointments, mouldering into neglect, and giving place to the simplest, the mildest, and the most inartificial of all applications.

The root of Contrayerva, for which England is indebted to Sir Francis Drake, and declared by some to have added as great a lustre to his name as his naval expeditions, seems at present to be deservedly in its decline.

A long and pompous train of restoratives, alexipharmicks, and cordials, the terror of the  
sick,

sick, and the Pactolean\* mystery of physick, have been happily succeeded by the solid and unequivocal advantages of the Peruvian bark.

Nor has the *Confectio Cardiaca*, of long-revered name and memory, been able to support its reputation, with those who have found every desirable effect, from the preferable and exhilarating qualities of a glass of generous wine.

To expect that a draught or a pill in a few hours, or even in a few days, should be able entirely to remove a disease which has been produced by the indolence, the irregularities, and the excesses of half a man's life, is a vain and idle supposition.

The avenues which lead to disease are various and seducing, embellished by the refinements of art and imagination.

The charms of social intercourse, the luxuries of the table, and the gentle but irresistible impulse of love, are daily tempting us to that precipice, from which human resolution is so often dashed down, to the ruin of our health, our fortune, and our peace.

\* *Cujus votis non suffecerat arum  
Quod Tagus et rutila volvit Pactolus arena.*

JUVENAL.

The difficulties which present themselves to the practitioner are increased, and his success rendered precarious, in the same proportion that we are tempted to exceed the simple, the moderate, and the innocent demands of nature.

The rank debauch of a night, the intoxicating pleasures of the bowl, and the dull city feast, distinguished by disgusting profusion, gross appetite, and brutal gratification, are capable of producing complaints, sufficient to perplex the most consummate medical knowledge.

The tedious but necessary regulations of diet and regimen, without which so little can be done in Medicine, are worse than death to the voluptuous glutton, whose life and conversation clearly evince that he lives but to eat.

He pathetically deploras the decay of his appetite, which already obliges him to have recourse to the most exquisite refinements of modern cookery, before he is enabled to make a tolerable repast.

Under such mortifying circumstances, must he, or can he resign, the complicated richness of his soups, the stimulating poignancy of his sauces, and the elegant variety of his dishes?

He views with envy the robust constitution,

the keen appetite, and the refreshing repose of the hardy peasant ; but considers with horror and pity, his daily labour, his homely diet, and his temperate enjoyments.

His delicacy is shocked, when he compares these with his own habits of life, which consist of eating without hunger, drinking without thirst, and seeking in vain for refreshing sleep, on his bed of down, without fatigue : his greatest exertion a morning visit, and his chief exercise the artificial motion of a sedan.

Enervated by inactivity, listless through satiety, yet provoked by licentious spectacles, and stimulating food, to unnatural and excessive debauch, we ought not to be surprized at the debilitated bodies, the uncultivated minds, the vicious inclinations, and the puny race of the infatuated sons of dissipation.

## CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

*Some Considerations on the Propriety of informing the Sick when they are in a dangerous Situation.—A State of Anxiety or Despair unfavourable towards Recovery.—In these Cases the Task of the Clergy not so irksome as that of the Physician.—Modern Credulity.—The Persian's Opinion.*

THE arts of delusion so frequently, so systematically, and after all so ineffectually practised by the serious and the gay, to stifle the voice of conscience and reflection in their passage through life, have been by some thought necessary, and by others condemned as unjustifiable in a state of sickness.

In this case the necessity for plain truth, and for acquainting a man with the degree of danger he is in, has been emphatically insisted on, for reasons of a spiritual as well as a temporal nature.

Whether that repentance which is so naturally produced by the approaches of dissolution, is a rational ground for hope of future mercy; and whether it is expedient, or even necessary, to fill the mind with apprehensions  
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and fears, under a state of disease, where an uneasy mind is incompatible with recovery, and where the efficacy of the point in question is denied by many, and a matter of doubt with all; are subjects which it is neither my business or inclination to discuss.

I can only lament our fatal negligence, in thus postponing so necessary a work, that in the midst of the blessings we enjoy, we should forget from whence they spring, and defer that to old age, and sickness, which ought to be the chief business and pleasure of life in the days of health and vigour.

If we are either inclined or permitted to listen to the voice of nature or reason, we may perhaps, without giving offence, be induced to conclude, that ringing the alarum of everlasting torments, and an angry Deity, in the deaf ear of a miserable wretch, whose mental and corporal faculties, are deranged and distracted by the agonies of pain, has no advantages which can compensate for the real evils of despair and relapse, so frequently and so naturally produced by such a conduct.

Nor can I dismiss this subject, which I may be blamed for having enlarged upon too much, as foreign to my purpose, without suggesting, that we are authorized in drawing a source of comfort from the mercy, as well as of terror  
and



and dismay, from the inexorable justice of a wise but compassionate Creator of the universe.

The moralist and divine, may declaim with studied eloquence on the superior charms of virtue, may call in truth to assert the solid advantages of morality, and may charitably strive to soften the rigour of divine vengeance by the solacing tears of pity and condolence.

After this, his work is done; he retires to enjoy with complacency, the respectful attentions, the domestic pleasures, and the gentle inactivity of an ecclesiastical life.

But when the ruinous career of riot and debauch is finished, it becomes the melancholy task of the physician, to *see* the ghastly devastation, and to *feel* his inability to repair it.

He beholds the ineffectual struggles of nature and art, closes the haggard eyes of wan despair, and at last is obliged to submit with silence, to the reproach, of not being a worker of miracles rather than a rational practitioner.

The pleasing fables of antient allegory, enriched with classical, and adorned with poetical elegance, which describe with such beauty a perpetuity of days, and the renewing old age with youthful vigour, however they may excel in poetry and stile, fall vastly short of  
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the miraculous relations \* and undoubted promises, so confidently held forth, and so devoutly believed, in the days of modern empiricism and irrational credulity.

Nor ought we to contemn the declaration of the honest Persian, that none could possibly suffer themselves to die in England, but the avaricious, the poor, and the senseless, whilst health and length of days were daily exposed to sale.

Such is the severe but just picture of an age, which lays claim to acknowledged improvement and perfection, in the solid comforts, as well as the elegant superfluities of life.

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\* “ Madam, if you were less lavish of your implicit  
 “ faith to the quack, and would reserve a small share of  
 “ it for your poor confessor, it would be an essential step  
 “ towards the salvation of your soul, and I flatter myself  
 “ would be no ways injurious to the health of your  
 “ body.”

Such was the well-meant but ineffectual advice of a venerable father, almost two centuries ago, to a lady, who, though her conscience hesitated at the doctrine of the Wafer, yet she was a dupe to every idle impostor.—Whether it is at all applicable to *Protestant* freethinkers, is not our business to determine.

## CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

*The Causes which injure and degrade Medicine mentioned.—A superfluous Number of Practitioners—Their Dissentions among themselves.—A Penchant for Apprentice Fees.—A supposed Defect in the Mode of Education.—Young Men too much their own Masters—The ill Effects of it.—Poverty.—Disinclination and Inability.—Exorbitant Profits.—Reflections.*

WITHOUT aiming at, or pretending to that perfectly disinterested character, which has been so often assumed, so generally praised, but has so seldom existed, I shall consider it as the business of every one who treats of the medical profession, to enquire into some of the real and supposed causes, which have united in degrading it in the eyes of the world.

The first and principal one, from which many of the rest originate, is the great and superfluous number of members of the Faculty.

The facetious Sir Samuel Garth (whose pen dealt in much pleasanter lines than prescriptions) doubted even in his days, whether in

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London,

London, doctors or patients were most numerous during the summer season.

Nor have modern wits been wanting, who assert, that mankind would suffer no diminution in number, if the former were less numerous than they now are.

From this cause may be deduced, that general, and often that dishonourable avidity for business, which stoops to any meanness to attain it, and defective, through ignorance or indolence, of real merit, disdains not to call in the unmanly aid, of adulation, detraction, and foul-mouthed abuse.

Nor is there in life a pursuit, which more peculiarly exposes a man to the malicious shafts of an inveterate opponent or an invidious world.

The illiberal prejudice of a nurse, the whim of a child, or the caprice of an unreasonable patient, are often able to prevail against the abilities, experience, and integrity of the most established practitioner.

But the candidate for practice should remember, that the same ears which listen so attentively to the tale of calumny against his rival, will with the same readiness, and the same uncharitable spirit, be expanded, to receive any scandalous reports, which may hereafter be propagated against himself.

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Let him be slow to condemn, and let him be deaf to whispers against his adversaries ; he may otherwise expect a similar treatment, whenever a competitor shall occur, as meanly disposed as himself, and endued with superior cunning and versatility. There is no line of life which renders it more necessary to observe Horace's advice ;

“ *Quid de quoque viro et cui dicas sæpe videto.*”

The assassin who gives the deadly blow, concealed in the shades of night, shall in his turn be stabbed in the dark, without a hand to heal, or a heart to sympathize with his sorrows.

To enter into a minute detail of the frequent and frivolous animosities in the several branches of the profession, would be descending to a useless and uninteresting task ; we may however conclude, that their disagreements, and attempts to counteract and undermine each other, will not fail affording the world opportunities to take unfair advantages of them. The interests and (if we may be allowed the expression) the honour of physic have on these occasions been too often sacrificed to selfishness and revenge, the most infernal, but the most seducing of all our crimes.

Nor ought the dishonest conduct of those men to be mentioned without the severest cen-

sure, who, for the fordid consideration of an apprentice-fee, undertake to educate and instruct in the second orders of the profession, an unnecessary number of young men, when they are at the same time conscious that their practice, abilities, and application, are totally inadequate to it.

The conveniency of being frequently supplied with a handsome sum of money, no one will deny; but to convert a friend's son, liberally educated, to a drudge and a menial servant, to leave him without a guide in his hours of business and leisure, to dismiss him ignorant and uninformed in that which is to be the support of his future life, are circumstances which must wring the heart of every parent, and cannot fail extorting from them the bitterest curses on the detestable author of their calamities.

Against such men, and their abandoned traffic, let every parent and every friend provide, by previous caution and enquiry.

A want of liberal establishments for the purpose of education in London, and an abuse of the present unsystematic mode, have been spoken of as injurious to the cause of medicine.

While Scotland, without a third part of the opportunities for improvement which London possesses, is copiously furnished with founda-  
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tions and endowments, for the advancement of professional learning, the metropolis of England is without a college or professorship, adequate to the purpose of improving by theory and phyfiology its superior practical advantages. Gratitude and truth declare that the gentlemen who preside over the several branches they teach there, treat the subjects they discuss, with honour and emolument to themselves, with instruction and pleasure to their hearers.

But as long as we are deprived of the solid and permanent advantages of an academic system of education, and the minds of young men are left undirected in their studies and pursuits, while their time is so much at their own disposal, we must expect every evil, from unprofitable application, time mis-spent, or talents uncultivated.

A young man enjoying with rapture that liberty, which he has long and ardently panted after, stands in need of every motive, and every possible inducement, to attract his industry, fix his attention, and guard him against the bewitching allurements of vice and dissipation, which every where surround and invite him.

A happy taste in the disposition of a side-curl, the important choice of a coat of many colours, and a daily visit to the theatres and other places of resort, may be decent, and perhaps necessary to compleat the gentleman.

But dress and accomplishments, however splendid and striking, only serve to set professional defects in a more glaring point of view.

To make that the employment of life, which, if allowable, should only serve to relax the fatigues of intense application; to neglect to qualify ourselves for the practice of a profession, which enables us to improve our fortunes, and gives a scope to our disposition for blessing mankind (however light we may make of it) is adding fraud and inhumanity to the crimes which already undo us.

When we have, by culpable ignorance, murdered or dismembered an unhappy wretch, it will be adding insult to injury, to tell his weeping friends, that we could criticise with judgment on the drama, that we were allowed to sing a good song, or that we were noted for leaping over five-barred gates.

The time and talents so frequently and so ruinously prostituted on these acquirements, which of themselves, and at proper intervals, are innocent, might have rendered us happy in ourselves, and useful to mankind: but in this case are only instrumental in making us murderers and cheats.

Without meaning in the most distant manner, to insult an honourable state of poverty, which in a million of instances has been found  
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the laudable spur to great and good actions, we may be permitted to wish that parents in general would not be so eager to educate their sons in this pursuit, unless their circumstances enable them, to make some decent provision for their support, in the early years of their establishment, when their want of acquaintance and experience may be presumed to be a probable impediment to an immediate and profitable practice.

Were they conscious of the peculiar set of pains, which a poor practitioner agonizes under, or of the difficulties to which he is exposed by being obliged to support some appearance with a less than scanty income, they would prefer the solid comforts of a mechanic's life, to the genteel embarrassments of a medical one.

The accidental circumstances which (to use a hazardous expression) throw men into this profession, have frequently been owing to the inclination, the pride, and the folly of parents: it is hardly credible, that much attention is ever paid to the capricious starts, of an unsteady puerile mind, which not unfrequently has a foolish fondness for some particular occupation for the very reason that mature judgment would condemn it.

A family connection, a situation to appear-

ance desirable, and an unforeseen event, have often deposited a man, in a line of life, utterly incompatible with his ability, his inclination, and his fortune.

With a mind soured by disappointments, unable to practise either with credit or self-satisfaction, we ought not to be surprized at, however we may regret, his adopting dishonourable practices, which nothing but the iron hand of necessity would ever have compelled him to submit to.

The irreligion and profligacy of practitioners, have also been supposed, to injure the credit of the Faculty.

Without again pointing out the injustice and absurdity, of condemning a whole society, for the faults of some members of it, we may perhaps trace this scandal to its source.

The accidents and calamities to which the frail state of man is exposed, frequently demand attendance on those days \* set apart for  
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\* I have lately seen a hint, published, I believe, in the work of a Divine, for remedying this evil, by charging nothing for attendance on that day; the idea is a good one, but the remedy would increase the disease, as the *day of rest* would probably be the most fatiguing one in the week. It brings to my mind, without meaning to offend this charitable gentleman, what I have seen or  
heard

the necessary purposes of worship and devotion: and the uncharitable part of mankind, will often assert, that the absenting ourselves from the public services of religion, which is sometimes the consequence of necessity, gradually degenerates into habit and matter of choice.

But those who censure with so much severity this supposed enormity, should remember, that it is not more criminal to be employed on a Sunday, in the service of the helpless, though not immediately necessary, than to return, after the most pious ejaculations and devout deportment, to spend the remainder of the day in scandal, insipidity, and cabal. It cannot be denied that a very considerable practice may be carried on without interfering with religious duties; as it becomes every man to postpone his engagements to the next day, except in cases of life or limb, which cannot dispense with immediate or regular attendance. And indeed, however exalted our station, and however valued we may be as professional men, it requires no deep reasoning to prove, that we do

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heard of a philosophic character: "I never knew a man  
 " bear the misfortunes of others with greater calmness  
 " and composure."

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not add any lustre to our character, by openly ridiculing religion, morality, or common decency.

The furious whirlwind of passion may sometimes force us beyond these barriers, but we find that in deserting them we abandon our peace.

We cannot but readily join with those who conceive a shocking idea, of a physician and an anatomist void of a spirit of religion; he who could behold the inimitable structure, the variety of parts, and the complex mechanism of our frame, without humbly adoring the almighty Creator: and he who sees in his daily rounds, the devastation, the agonies, and the worse than deaths, produced by excess and criminal indulgence, without emotion and influence, must have a weak head, and an abandoned heart.

The exorbitant profits in the practice of medicine, have been often exclaimed against, and as often exaggerated. Those who coolly profess that they should be satisfied with the moderate profit of five per cent. in mercantile and other occupations, forget that such a profit, which, in their vast returns, produces affluence and ease, would not afford the practitioner the bare necessaries of life.

But while we pronounce it every man's duty, to procure a decent subsistence, and to  
prepare

prepare a resource for sickness and old age; we would not be understood to defend the iniquitous conduct of those, who drain the purses of the sick, the infirm, and the unfortunate, to indulge an affected taste for inconsistent splendor, profligacy, and dissipation.

Nor can it be expected that patients will tamely submit to fraud and imposition, when a man has impoverished himself by an inglorious taste for painting and virtù, or when his pocket has been emptied by the boundless extravagance of a rapacious whore.

It may not be amiss to observe, that if mankind expect medical attendance in all the pomp of equipage, they should not scruple paying for its support. The vivifying and cordial effects of an elegant chariot, and the specific qualities of a footman in livery, agreeably gild the pill, and happily disguise or relieve the awkward circumstances of illness.

## CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

*Conclusion.—Is real Merit the sure Road to Eminence?—Are any other Qualifications necessary?—An Example or two.—Reflections on them.—A Piece of Advice to fortunate Candidates.*

**A**N humble but impartial enquiry into the most probable methods of attaining superior fame and emolument, seems a necessary but delicate part, of an Essay on the Manners of the Faculty.

To blindly coincide with vulgar and irrational prejudices, might be considered as sacrificing truth to timidity and caution. And a free discussion of subjects, which seem to affect great characters, might appear envious and dishonourable.

We would wish to ask, but with proper submission, the following question. Are great abilities, and unwearied application, the unerring guides to preferment?

If after properly considering the subject, it should be answered, that they most certainly are, it might appear conceited and arrogant in an obscure individual to differ from a general opinion.

It would be rather his duty and interest, to concur with the fashionable doctrine, and to declare, with equal pleasure and truth, that among his acquaintance, gentlemen in the several branches of the profession, had acquired that honour and affluence, which their abilities and virtues were justly entitled to.

But as there always exist some unfashionable mortals, who will not be so ready to take things for granted without examining them; who *dare to doubt*, and to dissent from this or any generally-received opinion; impartiality obliges us to propose a second question.

Are not success, connection, superficial accomplishments, and political deception, the necessary steps to a profitable and extensive practice?

If it be true that real merit is the sure road to *preferment*, and that lucky incidents avail nothing, how can we account for talents, that would have shone with splendor in the meridian of a metropolis, languishing,

“ Alive unnoticed, and when dead forgot ?”

A fortuitous train of circumstances, that in one instance would have buried a Hunter in obscurity, in another might have raised the favourite child of fortune, without genius,  
without

without effort, and perhaps without a wish, to reputation and affluence.

If on the other hand, it should be said, that accidental success, family connection, and political deception, are not necessary for these attainments; how happens it, that the rise and progress of those should be so rapid, who are particularly distinguished for these qualifications, but are notoriously deficient in that knowledge, which is necessary for the skilful practice of their profession?

“ Quo spectanda modo, quo sensu credis et ore ?”

A person, whose name I forget, was disgracefully rejected at a public examination, where he exhibited shameful proofs of ignorance and inability; yet a minister, as much beloved by his sovereign as detested by the people, gave him an appointment, from which a great and good man \* was dismissed, who would have reflected honour on any country and in any age.

The present day would, perhaps, afford us some similar instances, in which a noble alliance, an abject behaviour, private services, and a predilection which could not be resisted, have been able to obliterate the remembrance of the most sacred promises and meritorious actions.

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\* Dr. Francis Nicholls.



From what has been said, and the general fate of practitioners, it seems highly probable, that the greatest and best-cultivated talents, unassisted by connection, success, and political manœuvre, will not be sufficient to gain distinguished fame and emolument.

But if a young man with a decent person and address, is so happy as to unite, genius, application, and prudence, with an extensive acquaintance, and the golden art of rendering himself agreeable and necessary to the great, affluence and dignity are almost his certain lot.

Should some lucky event take place, so as to render him the object of public attention and general conversation, should his eclat be such as

“*Digito monstrari et diciet hic est.*”

his success is beyond a doubt.

He may then look forward with ecstasy on the fruits of his toil; and after a twenty years pursuit of profit, pleasure, and respect, he may honourably retire, with a fortune adequate to his wishes, to enjoy by turns his town and country house, and the sweet society of a select circle of friends.

When arrived at the summit of his hopes, his behaviour will be moderate and unassuming;

ing; he will remember the difficulties he himself encountered when struggling into life.

Without putting on the strange reserve, affected hurry, and insulting haughtiness of some unworthy upstarts, he will prove that he is equal to the situation he enjoys, and treat the pupils and students that surround him with friendship, tenderness, and respect.

F I N I S.

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The SECOND EDITION of

**A**N ENQUIRY into the MERITS  
of SOLVENTS FOR THE STONE  
in the Human Bladder.

By J. W. N E W M A N,  
Member of the Corporation of Surgeons, of London.

Hoc opus, hoc studium, parvi properemus et ampli,  
Si patriæ volumus, si nobis vivere chari.

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OK. Good luck

MSL

