

compleat cure of a Lameness of seven years standing, after electrifying thirteen days. The tenth, is the cure of a Lameness after the Small-pox. The eleventh, an amendment only of a lame arm after dislocation. The twelfth, and last Case, is that of a lad eleven years old, who, from the age of two, had a Lameness in his right arm and hand, so that he could not easily bring his fingers together, or make use of his hand. Having been only three times electrified, he can readily take up a pin from the ground, and has ever since continued to mend and grow stronger.—To conclude, we are to consider this account as given within the space of a very few months, or weeks, after these Patients had been first electrified.

*An Essay on the Diseases of the Head and Neck. To which is added, a Dissertation on the Gout and Rheumatism. By J. N. Stevens, M. D. and Fellow of the Royal Academy of Sciences. 4to. 3s. Sold by Hitch and Hawes.*

THIS Physician and Fellow of the Royal Academy of Sciences tells us, in a very crude puerile Preface, 'That as he has the satisfaction of not being guilty of any wilful error, [in this performance, we suppose] 'he may reasonably conclude, 'he shall not be censured by the generous part of mankind, 'and men of learning.' Now, if an inclination not to err, (which may be supposed a very general inclination) were to be a sufficient apology for errors, this must preclude all men of learning from censuring the most trifling pretensions to science, and leave ignorant and erroneous Writers to be discovered only by Readers of their own capacity and attainments: from whence our Author may observe, what a reasonable conclusion he has made. The end of his Preface is much in the same spirit; as he there 'desires those who criticize on, and ridicule other men's 'works, although ever so well writ, to suspend their indignation, 'till they shall vouchsafe to oblige the world with a more perfect 'work on the same subject.'

This condition would persuade or oblige us to write a better book on the Diseases of the Head and Neck, and a better Dissertation on the Gout and Rheumatism, than Dr. Stevens has done, before we find the least fault with his Essay. At the same time it is quite clear to us, that this Gentleman neither desires us to excel him on these subjects, nor would admit us to have done it, tho' we should. But as we cannot consider this extraordinary Postulatum as really inferring any effectual disqualification in us to judge of his present work, any more than our not having

been afflicted with every disease it treats of would have been, we shall take the liberty to consider it compendiously, which is not the severest manner of considering it.

We cannot justly complain of our Author's multiplying the diseases of the head and neck, which he makes but five, to each of which he has assigned a chapter, viz. the Apoplexy, Palsy, Epilepsy, Madness, and Quinzy; the last of which had been hitherto supposed an affection of the throat or *fauces*: however, as these parts may be said to be involved in the head or neck, we shall not wrangle with him for a trifle; tho' we have experienced a little Head-ach, and a spice of the Lethargy now and then, from perusing this treatise of the Diseases of the Head, which has not treated either of the Head-ach or Lethargy. His Descriptions of Diseases seem generally such as he has read, with very little addition to, or improvement of them: and wherever his treatment of distempers differs from that which is generally pursued, the diversity appears so seldom for the better, that it will excuse us from citing any of his practice, except where it should not be imitated but with great caution. His Chapters on the Palsy, Epilepsy, and Madness, conclude with an extraordinary instance of each, attesting our Author's success; and in the two first cases, after they had baffled the endeavours of other Physicians: but as our Author had acquainted us in his Preface, 'That the good of mankind in general has been his only view in this publication,' perhaps he might have suppressed these failures of his brethren here, with some consistence and modesty. His management of persons in a *Hemiplegia*, during the use of the Bath Waters, which he recommends for it; by purging them the day after each bathing, which he orders from twice to four times a week, for several weeks [suppose seven or eight] seems to require more youth and vigour in the patient, than generally falls to the share of Paralytics; tho' the purge is to consist only of six drachms of Manna, and a scruple of Rhubarb, with as much Salt *Diureticus*, as he often terms it, by a mongrel appellation, half English and half Latin. Thus *Pepper-Mint* is always improved by Dr. Stevens into *Piper-Mint*; he might have exhibited still more of his *Larning*, by writing it *Piper-Mentb.*

In his treatise of the putrid Quinzy, he gives a description of it, as he says it is not frequently met with in physical Authors: this he assumes then, as from his own knowledge and observation, tho' the greatest part of it is transcribed from Dr. Huxham, and other Writers on the disease, of whom he does not mention one here. It would be obvious, however, to a Reader of common discernment, that it was not his own, from the difference of the stile, and greater correctness of the language.

His

His Dissertation on the Gout, to which he has added nine or ten pages on the Sciatica and Rheumatism, sets out with a description of it, contracted and stolen (as it is not acknowledged) from Sydenham, but by no means improved. Hoffman has been ingenuous enough to insert that celebrated Physician's history of it at length, in his treatise on this disease, as despairing, perhaps, of giving a better. We think, however, this Dissertation of Dr. Stevens's on the Gout (including many things from Dr. Musgrave, who is more than once mentioned in it) is, taken altogether, the most pardonable part of the book; notwithstanding it abounds with unnecessary repetitions, and the diction is often so very faulty, as to make Dr. Stevens appear only to blunder about a meaning, where his ideas may probably have been pretty clear to himself. His supposition that the Nerves, and their contents, supposing them to be permeable by any fluid, are considerably affected in the Gout, and relieved and depurated by a regular and compleat fit, seems agreeable to reason, and evidenced by experience. But his medicines and evacuations in the intervals, to delay the approach, and lessen the duration of the future paroxysms, should be considered and applied with much caution, where he enjoins little or none.

Dr. Stevens tells us, page 113, 'The cure of the Sciatica is rendered more difficult, because it is most commonly the consequence of chronical diseases; as by great colds taken, or by exposing those parts [the hips, we suppose] too much to the cold air; by a fall, or sudden blow; by a luxation, immoderate venery, or any thing which weakens the fibres of the parts,' &c.: by which it appears, that the Doctor calls those habits and accidents chronical diseases, which are sometimes, indeed, the preceding or predisposing causes of, and to, certain chronical complaints: tho' the luxation must be rather acknowledged a frequent consequence of his chronical disease, a fall; which is at other times attended with very acute effects.

A Rheumatism, the Doctor informs us, page 116, 'is a beginning vicidity of the juices, where the size and viscosity is uniform, and almost equally disposed over the whole mass, and is constantly fleeting, and not fixed to particular parts.' We leave this new definition to speak for itself. Our Author adds, 'this same viscosity is chiefly caused by an alcalious salt;' which has generally been considered as endued with an attenuating or fusing operation. His cure chiefly consists in evacuations and acids; the last of which, perhaps, it will be necessary to direct with considerable reserve and deliberation; notwithstanding Sir John Colbatch's crying up acids in the Gout, which experience has abundantly discredited. We should not omit, that

our Author deals pretty liberally in Receipts; and his doses, on whatever indication, are not likely to prove ineffectual for want of quantity.

Having given this summary abstract of this Gentleman's medical notions and talents, we must beg leave to exhibit him a little further, as a Writer of not a few particularities, for reasons that will appear below. Tho' he seems, in the main, possessed of an innate and well-founded dread of criticism, he declares, however, in his Preface, 'He shall esteem any person as his friend, who shall convince him of his errors, and publicly acknowledge it; as he is well assured, that it is more honourable to submit to conviction, when drawn from the genuine laws of Nature, than to persist upon a baseless foundation, in opposition thereto.' Now, as his conviction will depend at least as much upon himself as upon us, we can only shew our inclination to merit his acknowledgements, by presenting a sample of such escapes as may deserve his future attention.

We have endeavoured then, in the first place, to catch some idea, if possible, from that sublime, or superlative, negative, his *baseless Foundation*. We can imagine a castle in the air, or even in *vacuo*, foundation and all, however it might get there; and highly relish Shakespear's "baseless fabric of a vision;" but a baseless Foundation, a baseless Basis, corresponding only to an unfabricated or unfabricable Fabric, in a voidless vacuity, has as much of the impenetrable Bathos in it, as an immaterial Non-existence, and beats the Hibernian's great Nothing, [a Sillabub,] quite hollow. We hope the word *Rapture*, which occurs just thrice in the chapter of an Apoplexy, was designed for *Rupture*, tho' entirely unnoticed in the Errata. Our Author constantly insists on *vicid*, *vicidity*, and *vicera*, for *viscid*, *viscidity*, and *viscera*; the first of these words occurring in most pages of his book. *Spina dorsa* for *dorsi*, page 7, is omitted in the Errata, as well as, blisters *is* for *are*, *ibid*. We are told, page 26, 'The Epilepsy often jumps over a whole generation, and fixes on the grandchildren;—but wherever it fixes it sets them a falling. The Mad are said, page 36, 'to have an *incredible* weakness.' This seems alleviated however from their small solicitude about credit. A Patient is ordered, page 64, some stomatic wine, for stomatic wine, the former spelling being constantly preferred. Now as this learned Author, who may be a modern Grecian, must be sensible the Orthography he selects, signifies wine for the mouth, or mouth-wine, which seems a very superfluous addition, we suppose he preferred spelling it according to the vulgar sound, rather than the Etymology.—'If the fibres are very strong, and does not give way,' page 69. 'Those due exercises which is requisite,' page 71. We are told, page 73, of 'a præternatural

'præternatural retention of the guts;' which seems intended there to denote a costive habit of body: tho' some might imagine it said, in contrast to those Bablers, who are affirmed not to be able to keep their guts in. 'More finer,' page 74. 'When the first passages are faulty, from too great restriction, they are naturally amended by the urinary passages;' *ibid*.—'Hence arises the various diseases,' *ibid*. 'Persons of a more weak constitution lets it pass off,' 77, 78. *Accerbatum* [no such word] for *Exacerbation*, is repeatedly insisted on. 'Hence arises Head-achs, Vertigoes,' &c. page 84. 'The aliments with which the rich is nourished,' page 88. It may be said, indeed, that *rich* is singular as well as plural, but it is evident our Author here intended *many*, not *one*. We are advised, p. 93, 'to treat the Authors of Panaceas for the Gout, as Wretches and Robbers, without the reach of our Laws.' This does not teach us how to treat such Outlaws; but the best way, perhaps, is never to treat them, nor treat with them.—*Give off* taking any kind of opiates, for *give over*, or *leave off*, 97. A Fomentation is directed to be used as before *predicted*, 99, which, perhaps, rather stands here for *prescribed* than *prophesied*: however, Words, like Things, are daily fluctuating. 'If the Patient is young in years,' page 102;—perhaps there may be some latent elegance in this redundancy, tho' it is rather above our relish. Well; but suppose him thus young, what follows? why then, 'he may eat potatoes, young seeds and plants, and all much dressed garden things,' *ibid*.—As these young seeds and plants are not particularised here, nor whether they are to be much dressed or raw; it seems possible, at least, they may be hemp, rape, and canary seed, with a little chickweed and groundsel. And as our Author here is ordering a dietetic regimen for young gouty persons, these may be directed to make them as light and active as we generally see the birds who are dieted in this manner. Thus one of Moliere's dramatic Doctors prescribed bread and wine for the cure of a dumb Lady, because they were frequently given to parrots, and the parrots talked. The Lady recovered her speech. *Probatum est*.

But to be serious; we have been very careful that none of this small specimen, from a multitude of the like solecisms and crudities, are mentioned among the *Errata* at the end of the book. Indeed, the great number of them, and the miserable expression throughout the work, have made the mother-tongue of our Author, and any languages he may have meddled with, equal secrets to us: and we are at a loss to discover in what language he can correspond with that Royal Academy of Sciences, of which he stiles himself a Fellow. As the Doctor, however, has certainly read some medical Authors, and has some acquaintance

with Medicines, of which he does not deal in the least significant, we would recommend it to him, to prescribe rather than to publish; as it is not likely his work will increase the number of his Patients in the learned world. It is one of those signs which will not invite such: and we shall conclude this account of it, with his own definition of a compleat Physician, that his abilities may be estimated by his own rule.

‘ The study and practice of the science of Physic, is, without dispute, one of the most extensive studies in the circle of human knowledge; and any person who would shine therein, like a Poet, should be endowed with a natural genius, fortified with the different kinds of school Literature, and a peculiar aptitude to study the art through all its branches; must be a diligent and faithful observer of Nature, and must well observe the different effects of Medicines administered under such or such peculiar circumstances.’ Preface, page 6, 7.

————— Eheu!

Quàm temere in nosmet legem sancimus! —

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*Observations on that Disorder of the Corner of the Eye commonly called Fistula Lachrymalis. By Percivall Pott, Surgeon to St. Bartholemew's Hospital. 8vo. 1s. 6d. Hitch and Hawes,*

**T**HIS useful and well-written performance, on a topical disorder that occurs pretty frequently, is introduced by a sensible Preface, specifying the Author's motives for its publication. The work itself is divided into five sections, which, having no titles, we shall summarily mention their drift and purpose. The first, a very short one, is chiefly employed in considering the different Knowledge of the Antients and Moderns, with regard to the anatomy of the parts affected in this disorder. The second contains a clear and succinct account of the situation, structure, and use of the parts concerned in the Lachrymal Fluid, and its conveyance from the eye into the nose: and as a precise knowledge of these particulars must be necessary to every Surgeon who undertakes this delicate operation, the Author justly considers that circumstance as a sufficient apology for the insertion of this part of Anatomy, to those to whom it may not be necessary. The third section considers the different appearances of this disorder, in different subjects, and under different circumstances, with the principal causes of these diversities, which he ascribes, 1. To the degree of obstruction in the Nasal Duct. 2. To the state of the Cellular Membrane covering the