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MEDICAL SOCIETY
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A N
E N Q U I R Y

Into the GROWTH of

Modern Empiricism:

CONSIDERING,

How far some Persons *Secretly En-*
lightened, have the Advantage of those
who rely meerly on the Helps of
Humane Learning in the *Cure of Diseases.*

W I T H

A DETECTION of some fraudulent
Practices in P H Y S I C K.

PART the FIRST.

Humbly offered to the Consideration of all
Physicians, Surgeons, and Apothecaries.

L O N D O N Printed: And Sold by *J.*
Roberts, near the *Oxford-Arms* in *War-*
wick-Lane, *J. Noon*, and *T. Sharpey*, at
the *White Hart* in *Cheapside*. 1715.



TO THE

College of Physicians,

And Worshipful Companies of

Surgeons and Apothecaries

OF THE

City of LONDON.

Why is Anon.
addressing
this group
specifically?



THE great Regard I have
always had for Your Facul-
ty and Professions, has in-
duced me to submit to You,
with all Humility and De-
ference, the following Consi-
derations.

The Persons whom I here appear in De-
fence of, have drawn me into their Favour,
by the great Good they do amongst their Fel-
low-Creatures, by the Frequency and Multi-
tude of their Cures; for I cannot yet be able
to think that a natural Effect can be brought

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about

about by such means, as are under the Direction of a Person altogether unacquainted with their Natures and Properties, unless that Person be assisted and directed therein by some preternatural Power. And these I call Modern Empiricks, or Gifted Physicians.

If My too charitable Credulity in the Pretensions and Reports of these People has led me into an Error, detrimental to Your learned Societies, as soon as I discover it, it shall be publickly acknowledged. And to this Purpose, I have left what Information I can get herein, upon the strictest Enquiry, for a second Part. I do therefore earnestly beg all Assistances, Opportunity affords any of You, in Detecting any Frauds committed by such People; being resolved by such kind Helps to lay open the Rise, Abilities, and Pretensions of all the Dabblers in Physick about Town; so that those who are found to be Cheats and Impostors may be exposed to that Shame and Contempt they deserve, and thereby be render'd unable to impose any longer upon Mankind. For that Wretch who dare, for the sake of Gain, trifle away the Life of a Man, by meddling in what he understands not, deserves as much to be marked out to Infamy as the Ruffian who openly attacks him upon the Road.

I have already discovered a great deal of

He is apologizing for supporting empirics? What is the context of this groveling?

The target. Seems to be many of them?

of Wickedness and Imposture in some of this kind, and given you in this Part some short Hints thereupon; but in the following, if I find upon Enquiry, that the World has been deceived by these Boasters, as I already begin to fear it has by most of them, I shall be so particular in their Detection, as shall leave them no Refuge for any future Impositions. And in this I hope to deserve so well of Your Learned and very Useful Professions, as to procure me that Regard I have always been ambitious of, that is, to be thought a sincere Well-Wisher to the fair and honest Practice of Physick, in all its several Branches.

What Anon wants.

I am, &c.

ADVERTISEMENT.

AS the Reader will find this to be only Introductory to what may in Time be published, as farther Lights and Information may be given, he is desir'd to collect what Instances have occasionally come under his Notice, of fraudulent Practices, and Impositions upon the Ignorant, and transmit it to the Author hereof, by the Publisher, or Booksellers, whose Names he finds in the Title.



A N

E N Q U I R Y

Into the GROWTH of

Modern Empiricism.

BEFORE I enter into this weighty Debate, it seems necessary to explain thoroughly the Terms of my Title; as it is well known to all who think justly of what Moment it is, in Controversy to affix clear and distinct Idæa's to all the Terms made use of therein.

That Sect of Physicians, which amongst the Antients went under the Name of *Empiricks*, were such as from the Difficulty of the Work, from Want of proper Means of Information, and from the frequent Wranglings of the Schools about different Systems of Philosophy, were deterred from pursuing the Theory of Physick to any Certainty, as believing it to no Purpose; and therefore they took up with what could be deduced from Observation and

Empirics
defined.

and Practice: And he who had longest Experience, and most Opportunities of Observing, upon this Foot, was generally esteemed the ablest Physician. Their Distribution of Diseases into several Classes, or Heads, were not with Regard to their Causes from any Consideration of the Animal OEconomy; but made according to the Affinity of Symptoms, as they collected them in Practice. They likewise troubled not themselves, how such a Medicine, or such Means operated in bringing about its Effects, but only took Notice of the Consequences of its Operation, and accordingly determined in what Purposes to make use of it another Time.

But by *Modern Empiricks*, I mean Persons of a very different Cast; they are such as from some particular Circumstances of Birth, as being a *Seventh Son*, or the *Seventh Son* of a *Seventh Son*, seem from the first to be sent into the World to heal Diseases; and one Instance the present Age has had of a Person who laid Claim to this Talent, by not being born at all; or they are such who at some Time of Life, without any preparatory Pains or Study, are suddenly and secretly informed or inspired with the Knowledge of Physick; insomuch as to be able immediately to undertake, with the utmost Certainty, the Cure of the most obstinate Distemper. So that the Art of Healing amongst these *Modern Empiricks*, seems to be upon the same Foot as heretofore has been the Art of Performing some religious Exercises, when it passed upon the Delusion of those Times for a *Gift*. And as that generally was in Possession of People of the greatest Ignorance, so this is now very seldom found amongst any who have been prepossessed and prejudiced by human Learning. In the Sequel therefore of this Defence, I shall express by the Term, *Gift of Healing*, what in the Title Page is called *Modern Empiricism*.

As the *Adepti* in some other Acquirements, as
just

We would now say "snake oil salesmen."

Polemic continues for 32 pages with considerable moralizing and a notable shortage of specific. Who by name did what when?

just now observed, have generally been Persons of the meanest Educations, so our *Modern Empiricks*, or *Gifted Physicians*, are, to humane Appearance, of the vilest Extraction, and of the lowest Capacities: They often turn up amongst Mechanicks, and grow considerable in the Cure of Diseases, after they had been ruined by not having Skill enough to be good Shoemakers or Taylors. There is not the meanest Employment in the Kingdom but can give Instances of this kind; some we have from maimed Tumblers and Rope-Dancers; and at this very Time shines in his Coach a Doctor who had this *Gift* come upon him just as he grew too old to be any longer a Jack-Pudding.

There are indeed not a few of this Number from Professions of Learning, but they never appear to be under these *Secret Teachings*, 'till after they have given sufficient Proofs that their Heads were impenetrable by humane Literature; as there appears to be a manifest Enmity between these two Talents, insomuch that they are never found together in the same Person. And thus, without any Reproach to the *Inspired*, if another Set of Men will allow me the Use of that Term, we frequently find them amongst the Refuse of the Bar and Pulpit; for by their Incapacity or Unfitness to receive any Impressions from humane Instruction, they manifestly shew a Disposition for Teachings of a higher Nature. And for the same Reason it is that we often find one, who is naturally incapable of making a good *Surgeon* or an *Apothecary*, to excell this Way, and to be enabled to cure the most obstinate Distemper, though he could not be taught to let Blood, or make a Medicine.

But this *Gift of Healing*, from what secret Cause soever it proceeds, is not equally dispensed to all; in some it teaches only the Cure of some particular Disease, or the Diseases of some particular Parr,

while in others it is much more extensive. Thus some take only the Eyes into their Care, others the Parts of Generation; some are taught to clear the Skin, mend Complexions, and dye the Hair; others to extirpate internal Maladies, and kill Worms; some have a Talent in a Feaver only, an Ague, or a Rheumatism, and others in Dropsies and Consumptions, and nothing else. Yet there are a great many of this Rank who are more generally *Gifted*, and undertake to remove all Maladies incident to humane Nature. Some indeed go yet further, pretend to foretell future Events, and help People to stolen or lost Goods, but it is shrudely to be suspected that such either impose upon the Credulous, or are acted by some evil Spittit, and have Correspondence with unwarrantable Intelligences. *Cornelius Agrippa*, *Doctor Faustus*, and some other Authors of that kind, it is to be feared, have turned some Peoples Heads too much that Way. However that lessens not the Authority of what I here undertake to prove; wise People will easily discern Reality and Truth from Imposture and Diabolism.

Thus having explained some unusual Terms, and considered the Qualifications of those who are generally the Subjects of this extraordinary Operation, there comes next in the Way something of Difficulty, that is, to explain to a Person acquainted only in natural Things, what is to be understood by *Secret Teachings*, *Enlightenings*, or the *Gift of Healing*, for it must be owned that the Difficulty of apprehending proves a great Stumbling Block to such who discern with an Eye of Reason. To bring down this Affair therefore, as near as the Nature of the Subject will bear, to an Understanding informed only by common Means of Instruction, I shall first shew that Disposition of Mind a Person ought to mould himself into before he can be a fit Judge

Judge in a matter of this Moment. Secondly, The essential and inseparable Characters of an *Enlightened* or *Gifted Person*. Thirdly, Lay down the only Evidences that can be had of such Things. And Fourthly, prove that our Modern *Empiricks* have no Knowledge in Medicine, and the Cure of Distempers by any other Means.

1. There is a great deal more in suiting the Temper and Frame of Mind, to the Nature of the Thing coming under Consideration, than perhaps most Persons apprise themselves of. A Person knowing only in worldly Affairs, endeavours to give himself a very different Disposition of Thought; and Turn of Mind, between his going to an Entertainment of Mirth, and a Scene of Sorrow, between a Wedding and a Funeral; and such a one does not awaken the same Faculties to arbitrate a Matter in Difference, or assist upon a Jury, and to receive Pleasure at a Consort of Musick. When therefore we come to lay before us Things of a supernatural kind, we should certainly frame our Minds accordingly, and give our Thoughts a Turn most likely to receive Impressions of such high Concern. We ought industriously to shut up all the Avenues of Sense, and cut off all Intercourse with material Objects, and give into those Means of Conviction as can be had only in a Way preternatural. We must learn to distinguish between the Means which with Instruments and Matter can form a Machine, and those which are of an intellectual Nature, and which operate by secret and invisible Ways only upon the Understanding. For it is certain that they who cannot abstract themselves from the World, turn the Eyes of their Understanding inwards, and embrace invisible Truths upon such Evidences as they admit of, can never be competent Judges in an Affair of so great Weight as what now lies before us.

2. By

2. By an *Enlightened* or *Gifted Person*, we understand such who manifestly perform some Things, which it is *impossible* they should by natural Means. I say *impossible*, not that what they do is out of the Power of natural Means to effect, but because those Means which Reason suggests, and Experience confirms proper to such Purposes, are absolutely out of their Acquaintance, and Ability of using. It is here therefore proper to observe the Difference we make between a Performance it self, being preternatural, that is, an Effect in Nature produced not by natural Causes, and the Means by which that Performance is brought about, that is, the Person applying those natural Means being so: For we cannot mean the Performance, because Distempers are frequently cured by meer natural Means proceeding from the Dictates of humane Learning and Reasoning; and therefore it is the Person here only we have Regard to who is capable of producing a natural Effect, by Causes he can know nothing of but by such preternatural Means as we are now insisting upon. Thus in the like Sense we should call a Person *Enlightened*, who should produce a fine Piece of Mechanism of his own doing, who had never studied or been instructed in those Rules and Laws of Motion, by which only those Things can be done in a natural Way, and from the Production of which by a common Artificer we should be in no Surprise. So that when we see an Effect brought about by natural Causes, under the Direction of a Person wholly unacquainted with their Efficacies and manner of Operation, such a one we call *Enlightened*, or *Gifted*; that is, he must come to his Knowledge of those Means by preternatural Assurances.

3. The Evidences and Proofs of these extraordinary *Teachings*, are only to a Person's self, who is the happy Subject thereof, untill they are drawn out

out into Action, and then every one can testify to the Truth of them, from the Effects produced thereby; by the Facts frequently performed by those who are possessed of them. So that this will not admit of that kind of Proof, as the Schools have it *à Priori*, but only *à Posteriori*. And as there are so many notorious Instances of Conviction in the latter Way of Proof there are need of no other. He must be greatly gone into Prejudice, who will not believe what every Day brings him some fresh Testimony of, as in a more proper Place will be enquired into hereafter.

4. In the last Place, we come to shew that these Persons perform their Cures by some secret preternatural Informations, from their Impossibility of doing them by any Assistances from humane Wisdom and Learning. For it is obvious to all the World, that those who make the greatest Pretensions, and do the greatest Wonders, are most remote from any such Thing, and are absolutely Strangers to all that is taught by common Means. Nor is it very difficult to account how it should be thus, for a little Smattering of Learning cannot but in some Measure employ the Faculties, and prejudice the Mind too much in Favour of natural Means, and a Relyance upon second Causes; whereas those who have no Learning at all, give entirely into, and wait for those *Secret Teachings* which Man's Reason is wholly unacquainted with.

And for this Reason, without Doubt, it is that we find those who come off from other Professions, where they were necessarily prepossessed with some small Portion of Learning, never to make any considerable Advances this Way. A *Stomachick Elixir*, or an *Antiscorbutick Tincture*, a perpetual *Drawing Plaster*, or a *Lozenge* of great Virtue, they sometimes arrive to, but seldom further. What is wonderfully to be admired at herein is, that amongst
this

this Sort this Gift seems to be dispensed not only in Proportion to the Absence of all other Knowledge, and the Aptitude of the Faculties upon that Account to receive it, but also so as just to supply those Exigencies which their Failure in other Points often brings them under. This admirable Distribution is very remarkable amongst the Brethren of the *Lancet*, and of the *Pestle*; where Learning and humane Reason has not been before-hand, this Gift generally takes Place, and in Proportion to the Want of Them does This generally abound. One of the latter Fraternity has convey'd his Fame almost through the whole Kingdom by his uncommon Proficiency herein; from a few Clap Medicines and a Worn Powder he has now ran almost over the whole Province of Physick, that there is hardly any Thing therein now out of his Pretensions; all which seems to have been owing to a happy Impenetrability to all humane Instruction, and the total Escape of that Learning he was obliged to bring with him from his Profession, insomuch that he now stands upon as advantageous Terms as one who could never write or read.

That the Knowledge these Persons have of Diseases, or of the Means by which they cure them, does proceed from some preternatural and secret Informations, is also manifest from the stupendious Cures of such who have never made any the least Pretensions to Learning and humane Helps, and whom the World knows to be entirely destitute of them. How can it be imagin'd that a *Blacksmith*, a *Porter*, or a *Tinker*, and such like Persons, can come to such Knowledge by their Acquaintance with *Anatomy*, *Pharmacy*, or *natural Philosophy*, and to my own Knowledge several such at this Time are noted for their uncommon Pretensions in the Art of Healing. One of the last mentioned Occupation, who some Time since mended old
Bellows

Bellows and Sauce-Pans, now sets up for an Occultist of the first Rank, and advertises several Thousand Cures he has already performed upon sore Eyes. His Predecessor Sir *William*, who was so very eminent in the same Way, was known wholly to rely upon this *Gift*, as being upon all other Accounts a Person of matchless Ignorance and Stupidity.

Having thus explained what we mean by *Secret Enlightenings*, or the *Gift of Healing*, consider'd the Qualifications of those upon whom it is generally bestowed, and the Evidences we have of its Reality; I shall next endeavour to point out the chief Advantages which Persons thus informed have, before those who rely meerly upon humane Learning in the Cure of Diseases.

The first Advantage of this Means of Information we shall take Notice of, is the Ease of its Attainment. All Acquirements whatsoever encrease or sink in Value, in Proportion very much to the Labour and Pains that are necessary thereunto: Where two Things therefore of equal Worth come into Competition, that always will be preferred which can most easily be come at.

But this *Gift of Curing Diseases* without any Acquaintance with natural Causes and their Effects, is indeed rather to be called an *unexpected Blessing*, than an *Accomplishment* procured by any seeking for.

For by what we observe amongst those who have it most in Possession, the most likely way to have it is to be so little qualify'd for the usual Methods of Instruction, as to be incapable of any Thing else. So that in Order to be a *Gifted Physician*, that is, to pretend to cure Distempers, whose Natures and Causes they know nothing of, by any Medicines or Means, the Operations of which they are likewise Strangers to; in Order to this, I say, it is necessary to keep the Mind as much disengaged from
all

all other Things as possible, and preserved unful-
 lied by any Traces of humane Impression, whereby
 it will be more in Readiness to receive Impulses of
 a higher Nature.

If any Thing by which Persons acquire this *Gift*
 can be accounted laborious and painful, it is only
 that which all good Men ought in common to seek
 after, and that is a Mind entirely disinterested from
 all worldly Regards. This is a Blessing not to be
 expected upon such as would make Gain of it, and
 prostitute it to avaritious Purposes. And therefore
 those who would be in Possession of it, should not
 only keep themselves clear from all humane Litera-
 ture, as before observed, but likewise earnestly la-
 bour to root out all those natural Corruptions
 which every one cannot but bring into the World
 with him; and to arrive to that Simplicity of
 Mind, and Desire of doing good, as is most likely
 to make such a Gift of the most extensive Benefit
 to Mankind.

That great Adept, *Basil Valentine*, was a famous
 Instance of the Advantage of this preparatory Ex-
 purgation of natural Corruption; whosoever reads
 that invaluable Piece which he left as his Legacy
 to the World, and calls his *Last Will and Testament*,
 will soon be convinced of the Usefulness and Ne-
 cessity of this Disinterestedness and Uprightness of
 Mind, preparatory to an Initiation into such Mys-
 teries. That wonderful Man as he arrived to great
 Proficiency in the *Gifted Way* himself by such
 Means, so when he vouchsafed this his last Legacy
 to Posterity, he did it in such a Manner as shewed
 his firm Relyance upon such Qualifications, as he
 ordered the Manuscript to be hid behind the Altar
 of a Church, that it might lye untill some Person
 thus endued should be thought worthy to find it.
 And since there has arise one qualify'd to be the
 happy Finder, and by that Means it has been transf-
 mitted

mitted down to the present Age, yet it is wrapped up in such a Style, and under such mysterious Allegories, that it is altogether unintelligible; unless to those who have merited and received the same preternatural Helps.

And thus in our own Time and Country, we find all those who make the greatest Advances in the *Gifted* Way, perfectly free from all Considerations of Self-Interest, and such as bend all their Labours towards a publick Good. It is the Ease of Mankind from Pain, and the Procurement of the invaluable Blessing of Health, that are the noble Motives upon which they act, and the sordid Rewards of Riches and Wealth is what they reject with Disdain. Thus these Persons will afford as much of their salutary Assistances for a Trifle scarce worth mentioning, as another who vainly values himself upon humane Learning, and acts upon Worldly Regards, will part with for vastly much greater Sums. As they are not puffed up with worldly Knowledge, so they are not desirous of any of its Rewards; but make Publication of their Talents several Ways, meerly for the Satisfaction of doing good, and to heal the Distempers and Maladies of their Fellow-Creatures.

Thus while they who set themselves off with Learning, and put their Confidence in that Knowledge which is had only from humane Instruction, oppress their Neighbours and Fellow-Creatures with extravagant Expectations and Extortion, to support an outward Grandeur, and indulge an unwarrantable Pride; we find the *Gifted Physicians*, the only *Enlightened* Sons of *Æsculapius*, demeaning themselves on Stages in Places of Resort, and tendering Medicaments of inestimable Value on Horseback at the lowest Rates. They scruple not to acquaint the World with their Abilities in the Cure of Diseases by the meanest Ways of Publication, so

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that

that it can but break thro' the Prejudices of some, and conduce to a common Good. They disdain not to be advertised in common News-Papers, nor to recommend themselves in Fragments, which are by the Ignorant and Profane often put to Uses very different from the Intention of the Disperfer, and extreamly injurious to, and affronting the Goodness and Generosity of the Authors.

This Disposition, this Humility and Benevolence of Mind, is all that is requisite to a Person who would lye in the Way of this *Gift*, and without it all Expectations will be in vain; which as it agrees likewise so well with what is so much conducive to Happiness upon other Accounts, it must be looked upon a very commendable Labour to strive after such a Temper; and if at last it happens to be crowned with this Blessing, it is more than amply rewarded even in this World.

Hence comes very naturally into Consideration, the Assurances which every Person has within himself of his being thus *Enlightened*. To prove it indeed to others, is what cannot be done but by bringing it into Exercise, in the *Cure of Diseases*. But nothing can be of a greater Certainty to a Man's self than what he actually feels wrought within him, and in such a Manner as to change the very Powers and Faculties of the Mind, and bring to Knowledge what before there were no Notices of, and what could not be had by any natural Way.

And what great Advantages has a Person *thus taught*, of those who labour in vain from their Childhood after such Things, as they live in Uncertainty about even to old Age. They who go the common Road of the World, and toil in Schools and Universities, never arrive to Perfection, but after they have done their Utmost, and gone the greatest Lengths in humane Wisdom, are yet in some Matters left in Doubt and Uncertainty. And
it

it cannot be expected otherwise, for such Means and Assistances cannot possibly bring to Light the inward Springs and Secrets of Nature; the most knowing in that way never go beyond Conjecture; and there is always a Diffidence and Wavering in the most exalted natural Knowledge. Thus we find the *Learned*, as they are called, continually Wrangling about their Systems and Theories; and what one Age advances and is fond of, the next discovers to be imperfect and delusory, and rejects it for some new Notion, which also has but its Turn to appear, and then give Place again to some other; whereas the truly *Enlightened* never contradict one another, every one proceeding by an infallible Rule which he has within himself, and which can never either oppose or assist any other; they trouble not the World with Disputes, nor write Volumes to prove another in the Wrong, or themselves in the Right; demonstrating daily, by their Actions and Cures, the Infallibility of their Guides.

And this further brings us to the Advantage of this *Gift* not being communicable to any other; for an *Enlightened Physician*, although he is not in any Distrust about what he undertakes to perform by himself, and is in the utmost Confidence of Success with all his Patients, yet it is not in his Power to communicate to any other the Reasons upon which he proceeds, and how the Means he applies operate in bringing about a Cure.

This will not appear very extraordinary to such who consider the vast Difference there is between the Means of Information in both these Cases. The *Gifted Physician* acts from secret Impulses made upon the Mind by some preternatural Power, without any Regard to the Properties and manner of Operation in natural Agents: Whereas one who relies meerly upon humane Wisdom does nothing

but by the Notices he has obtained from Study and Observation, of the Efficacies of such and such Means. So that the former is as far from being able to give any Information to the latter, as two Persons of different Languages are from Conversing together.

And for this Reason, we find it always to no Purpose to be upon Enquiry with these Persons about what they propose to do in any particular Cases, and how they expect the Means they use should bring about such certain Ends, because they are absolute Strangers to such Things themselves: Upon which Account they are not liable to be found in such Inconsistencies and Contradictions as the *Learned* are sometimes observed to fall into. Indeed to gratify the unreasonable Expectations of some People who are desirous of a Reason in Matters they are incapable of Understanding, some do condescend to comply so far with Custom as to frame some general Answers; but then such are always so artfully contrived, that they will equally fit all Questions alike, without any Danger of being detected, or found in any Impropriety. Thus if it be asked, How such an *Electuary* cures the *Scurvy*? It does it by assisting Nature with its restorative dulcifying Qualities, and by destroying the crude saline Particles of the Blood, whereby it is reduced to its natural Balsamick Nature; and such lax Terms they run on in; but rationally to account for any natural Operation, so as to be understood by an intelligent Person, they make not the least Pretence.

The Impossibility of Communicating this *Gift* from one another, is also attended with one Advantage, the want of which is reckoned very prejudicial amongst the *Learned*; for as one *Gifted Person* cannot make another so, so their Numbers are not liable to that Encrease as they are on the other Side,

Side, where one Physician may bring up a great many more by the same Means he was taught himself. But the Benefits arising from hence are of too mean Consideration to be reckoned such by Persons so publick-spirited as these always are.

There are indeed a Number of Persons who set up for the *Cure of Diseases*, who cannot properly be reckoned of this Sortment, nor are they of the Number of the *Learned*, and these are such as practice by Receipts. As we find some extraordinary Medicine handed down thro' several Generations in the same Family, and the Son sets up for a Doctor from a Manuscript bequeathed him by his Father, under all the Restrictions of a religious Secrecy.

These are sometimes obtained by Purchase, but the Buyer always takes such Care to repay himself, that generally makes it costly to get a Cure of such mercenary People. And here I think it a proper Place to advertise my Country-men wherein they are most grievously imposed upon, by being both cheated of their Money, and couzened out of their Health, if not their Lives.

There are a Set of Sharpers who take so far the Advantage of weak Persons Credulity, who with little Trouble are perswaded to try any Means for their Recovery, which comes recommended to them with any Plausibility and Colour of Reason, that they make it their Study to contrive something in the Form of a Medicine, and after affixing to it some surprizing Name, advertise it in the common Papers with such a Character and Recommendation as draws in Persons to try it, when they are conscious to themselves, the best Effect of it is to do no Harm.

A Person who is impudent and wicked enough to attempt to make his Fortune this Way, has nothing to do but to contrive something of no Efficacy

cacy into the Form of a Medicine, employ some necessitous Scholar to compose an Advertisement, and then follow it so close in the Common Papers, as cannot fail drawing some weak People in to try it. Thus a new Rolle in the Hands of a Medicinal Pedlar, with a little Turmerick, Powder of Ginger, or Liquorish, or some Drug that may give it a Medicinal Smell and Aspect, may be made into small Boxes of Pills, which shall promise to be good for all Distempers of the Head, or Stomach, or Bowels, or to any Purpose which is like to draw in the most Patients; and as it never does Harm, it never produces any publick Resentments, so if from any other Cause, which often happens, the Patient grows better about that Time, this Cheat runs away with the Honour of a Cure, and Certificates are daily advertised of the wonderful Effects of such a Medicine. And in the same manner, a Mixture with a little Cherry Brandy that may alter its Taste and Smell, or a Tincture of *Cochinel*, or *Red Sanders*, may pass for an *Elixir*, or a Tincture of as many Vertues as a crafty Cheat can contrive, and an Infusion of *Gentian Root* and *Orange Peals*, may, from an ordinary Stomachick, enlarge its Vertues to the Curing of Agues, and all Pestilential Infections, according as the Weaknesses and Follies of the People seem fitted by some new Alarms to receive such Impositions.

From these Impositions it is that the Bulk of the Advertisements in Newr-Papers is taken up with Quack-Medicines, (for these may justly be called so) for the Contrivers are very sensible that there is nothing in the Things themselves that can recommend them after Tryal, and therefore they are forc'd to follow them thick with continued Remembrances of their great Efficacies and Vertues, otherwise they would soon be forgot, and discontinue being enquired after. These Cheats may generally be known by their appearing without any
known

known Persons Name who is Living, and their being sold at Coffee-Houses, Toy-Shops, and such like Places, the Venders themselves knowing nothing of the Medicines, or the Authors, but receiving them from unknown Hands, with such Allowances for Sale In a *Second Part* of this Work, I shall make it my Business to detect these Impostures; and in the mean Time let this be a Caution to the two Brothers, *John* and *Ben*, how they continue to bubble Mankind this Way, for I shall be particularly free with Them. And to this good End, I desire the Informations and Lights that any can give, so that such Cheats may be fetched out of their Concealment, and exposed to that Neglect and Contempt which they deserve.

But to return to the latter Sort spoke of, who may not improperly be called *Receipt* or *Nostrum-Mongers*; for they are absolutely circumscribed within what is transmitted to them by Inheritance or Purchase, and trade only with That, not pretending to any other Knowledge, either of *Humane* or a *Preternatural* Origin. Were it nicely to be enquired into, most of the *Receipts* and *Medicines* which are thus handed about, and prostituted to mercenary Purposes, would be found to have originally been the Produce of a *Gifted Talent*. Would it not carry me into too great a Length, I could trace the most celebrated now in Use up to such an Origin, and it would not be very difficult to discover by what Accidents it has happened that they have fallen into such undeserving Hands.

And here I cannot omit observing that those Physicians, reckoned of the *Learned* who have been most in Esteem for doing good, have by some means or other obtained such Secrets, either by Purchase or accidental Acquaintance, and I dare not say never by the same *preternatural* Means as we are here speaking. Thus we have lodged in the Shops of
Apothecaries

Apothecaries Secrets that none know of but the Physician himself who makes them, or orders them to made under all possible Obligations of Secrecy; and such go for that Doctor's *Nostrums*; with which it is generally observed that he does more Good, and that the Cures made by them raise his Credit and Reputation beyond all he ever does by those Means which are under the Direction of ordinary Knowledge.

There is some Difficulty upon what Foot to ground our Expectations from these Physicians; tho' it is very remarkable, and confirming an Observation before made about those Persons who come into the *Gifted Way* from Professions of Learning, that those to whom the World is most beholden to for such Secrets that are from themselves, are always of the meanest Abilities as to *Learning* and *natural Knowledge*; so that this *Gift*, as before remarked, seems to find Persons just where *Learning* and *common Sense* leaves them.

By Those it is, that at such an Apothecary's only can be had such a Doctor's Pills; and at anothers, such a ones *Elixir*; and even the Publick-Houses and Shops are frequently made Places of Vent for these Things, in common with the Cheats just now mentioned. Some of these *Arcana* are recommended to answer almost in all Cases; but such are the soonest to be suspected. There is a black Powder that now goes under a Physician's Name, otherways of very small Note, which levels almost at all Distempers, it happens therefore to be an *Analeptick*, *Antihysterick*, *Antiparalytick*, *Antibedtick*, and what answers most Intentions, and best fits the Case of the Patient in Hand, tho' it primarily appeared only as on *Antispasmodick*. It has been much disputed whether this Powder, tho' pretended good for so many Purposes, ever was of any Service, unless to those concerned in its Sale; however, it is generally

generally agreed, that there are few or no Instances of its doing Harm.

Something appears very unaccountable in the Conduct of one Person, very famous by the frequent Repetition of his Name and Medicines in the News-Papers, as it runs counter to what has been before the constant Practice. He was indeed equipp'd with so much Learning as to carry him to an inferior Branch of Physick, but his great Deficiencies therein laid him open to these *Secret Teachings*, which at last he altogether rely'd upon; and with such Success, that if moderate Acquisitions of Wealth and Credit could content him, he might have been easy, but such, it seems, has been the amazing Pride and Vanity of his Heart, as to throw him upon the Purchase of a *North British Diploma*, and to buy the empty Name of a *Physician*, when he cannot but be conscious to himself, of his not being able to practise any otherwise than as a *Gifted Empirick*; nor has he indeed ever since pretended to go out of his old Circle of *Bitters*, which he was Master of long before,

This latter Instance brings me to take Notice, that tho' it may be commendable and of Service to the World for a *Gifted* Person to come out from Professions of *Learning*, when they are within the proper Qualifications; but it is certainly a very grievous and presumptuous Offence for one who has been thus secretly taught to be so far carried away with Pride and Worldly Vanity, as to aim at that worthless Reputation, which is obtained amongst the common People of the World by *Humane Learning*. It must certainly put a Check upon those *Secret Assurances* and *Means of Information*, as it manifestly appears to be an open Affront thereunto. This strange hankering after Worldly Honours and Titles, by Persons whose Interest it manifestly is to make their Pretensions quite upon

another Foot, is very much to be blamed, and is a Fault at first Sight so monstrous and rash in itself, that one would think it scarce possible to find Persons go into it: But as several have been so weak, I shall take the Liberty here to admonish them of their Errors in such a manner, that if it succeeds not in Reclaiming past Offenders, yet it is hoped to have the good Effect to prevent the like hereafter.

By the foregoing, it appears that the collected Body of such as deal in Medicine, are enabled so to do either from *Education* and *Learning*, or from some private Assistances, which we call *Secret Teaching* or *Illumination*; and whosoever we find meddling in that Province who are not manifestly from one of those two Origins, must be Cheats and Impostors. Such in the *Second Part* of this Enquiry we shall endeavour to detect, and expose to due Shame and Contempt. Of those who practise the latter Way, that is, by *Secret Illumination*, tho' they are much the greater Body, yet such are the Prejudices of the World, that those who are of the former Sort, pass with more Reputation, tho' their Abilities in Healing are not so great, and they cannot perform so many Cures. And this, it is to be feared, has weighed too much with some of the *Gifted*, inso-much that they have frequently declined their own Sortment, disowned their Means of Instruction, and put themselves upon the World for Persons endowed with *Humane Learning*.

As this cannot but appear an Offence of the highest Aggravation, such as I have detected in this Wickedness, I shall make no Scruple to expose. In the first Place then, I shall be free with that Person who has found a double Account in putting himself off for a Person of some *Learning*, and boasting in a printed Book of his uncommon Skill in *Claps* and *Venerical Cases*: As the Book has brought him

him Patients by the great Pretensions made therein, so likewise by its notorious Obscenity, it sells not only as a Treatise of Physick, but, as *Murcius* or *Rochester*, it is in Esteem with lewd Persons, and so by Debauching the Minds of Youth, it gives them an earlier Itch after those unlawful Pleasures, in the Pursuit of which, they meet with these Misfortunes it is his Profession to remedy.

This Apostate, (for so I must call all such who fall off from *preternatural Enlightenings*, and go back again into *Worldly* and *Carnal Means*) after some fruitless Attempts in the usual Way of an *Apothecary* to raise his Fortune and Reputation, was reduced for some Time into those lowly and humble Circumstances in which this *Gift* generally finds Persons; and had he kept within the Compass of such a Practice, he seemed admirably fitted to excell in that Way; but since Pride and Avarice have tempted him into an open Affront of such *Assistances*, it is already pretty easy to guess how such a Defection is like to be rewarded; for it is plain that that Certainty and Infallibility which always attends the *truly Gifted* has left him: So that by then he has gone round with the Town in one Distemper, his Inability to make good his Pretensions is detected, and he is forced to have Recourse to some new Imposition. Thus as soon as his *Clap Patients* reject him, he alarms the Town afresh with his wonderful Skill in the *Gout*; and, as before, proclaims his Pretensions in a printed Book; not pretending to give any rational Account of that Distemper, or of the Reasonableness of his Method of Cure, but just as a Quack Bill to say great Things of the Secret he has discovered, give a List of Persons pretended to have been cured thereby, and to draw ignorant People into a fresh *Bite*. And after this is again found to be only a vain Boast, he is

now attempting another Round with an extraordinary *Specifick* against *Agues*.

We have another Person famous at the latter End of News-Papers, just of the same Cut; and an Out Cast from *Pharmacy*, from his being incapable of *Learning* it. This Man, tho' brought up to his Profession under a Master of known Worth, yet such was the Impenetrability of his Understanding, that he became the Jest and publick Laughter of his Fraternity, being called, by way of Derision, *Philosopher John*; and not a great while after his Beginning in the World for himself, he fell under the Reproach of having his Medicines found not fit for use, the Persons who had a proper Authority so to do, throwing them into the Street, and obliging him to pay a Fine besides for the same Offence.

These Misfortunes soon humbled him into Qualifications for a *Gifted Brother*, and he waited not long before he found the *Enlightening* come upon him, first in one Distemper, then leading him into another: *Agues*, *Feavers*, *Rheumatisms*, *Cholicks*, *Consumptions*, *Faundice*, *Green-Sickness*, all fall before him; but in Worms he does Wonders.

Yet notwithstanding this great Success, and that he has no manner of Pretensions to know any thing but in this *gifted Way*, such of late has been his Impudence and Vanity to put himself off for one of *Learning*; not only by frequenting Auctions, and Buying Books he understands nothing of, but by attempting himself to give *Lucid* and *Succinct* Accounts in Print, of the Reasonableness of his own Practice, and Management of Distempers. And such appears to be his Ambition in the Way of the World, that not long since he offered five Guineas to one to write a Book for him about the *Cholick*, of which he was to pass for the Author. But I shall leave his collusive Dealings in that Affair to be represented,

sent, at a proper Time, by the Person who was very unworthily dealt with therein.

I have sometimes indeed been in Doubt whether this Person ever was under any *true Enlightenings* or not, and whether he ought not rather to be reckon'd with those we commonly call *Cheats* or *Impostors*; the only Reason in his Favour for a *Gifted Man*, is his great Ignorance and Stupidity; and the admirable Qualifications he has to expect such Helps. If he be then what Charity commands us to hope, he certainly has had a very great Portion of *Illumination*, as none undertakes more, or pretends to greater Assurance of Success in all they undertake than he does; as we daily see Certificates of new Cures he makes in several Distempers. But let him then keep within those Bounds, and not wickedly and knowing affront the Means by which he is enabled to do such great Things; and endeavour to raise any Reputation by a Shew of *Learning*, when 'tis notorious to all, that he has none; and that if his *natural Abilities* and *Knowledge* had been sufficient to have made him an *Apothecary*, he ne'er would have been able, as now, to *excell* the most eminent *Physicians*.

There are too many more of this Number who put a Disgrace upon these *Secret Teachings*, by taking hold on all Opportunities to pass for Men of Letters, to take Notice of here singly. This strange and very unjustifiable Desire, has at one Time or other, perhaps, produced the most out of the Way Nonsense and Jargon that was ever met with. How many Divisions has been run upon the Word *Venus* to decorate the Title-Pages of Books writ about the *Pox*, *Venus* has been *unmasked*, *deceived*, *entombed*, and put into abundance of strange Circumstances, by these notable Writers. Some make their Addresses to those who have been Sporting in her Gardens; and a Thousand Conceits the Pretenders this Way
are

are guilty of in their Publications, which amuse Fools, and make wise Men sick.

Every Body has now thrust into their Hands, or may have it for asking, *A Scheme of the Secret Disease*; which, for the publick Good, is given away, but the Intention is to draw foolish Readers into the Purchase and Trial of some poultry Remedies recommended therein. Upon the same Policy is likewise to be had *Gratis* a Piece of as eminent Philosophical Gingle and Nonsense as ever saw the Light, only to recommend to Sale a Sympathetick Necklace. By some peculiar Sublimities in the Follies of the last, I suspect the Author to be more Knave than Blockhead.

But howsoever some may fall away from the Simplicity and Integrity of a *Gifted Practice*, and be drawn aside by worldly Craft and Profit, yet such as keep firm to their secret Guides, conscious to themselves of not being able to pretend any thing upon any other Foot, are the only Persons that I am here professedly in Defence of.

I cannot be insensible how odd the Notion I have here advanced of *Secret Teachings in Physick*, may appear to some Persons. From such I only ask the same Freedom which has always been allowed in Matters of Speculation. If I find, upon further Examination, that I have been led into a Mistake, the World shall find me very ready to own it. As for some Terms made use of herein, I know they have been applied in Matters of a higher Concern, with such a religious Regard, that it may not be very pleasing to some, as looking like Ridicule; but if it be a Fact that Persons can cure Distempers by Means which they are not instructed in by the ordinary Way of Knowledge, they must be directed therein by Helps, which I cannot think of any properer Names for, than what I have here given them.

There

There are a great many Objections to be brought against the Persons whom I have appeared in Vindication of, and Arguments tending to weaken the Credit of their performing those Cures which they industriously advertise the World of; many I have heard talk in this manner; that as they take all Opportunities to enlarge their Reputation, so every Person who comes out of their Hands with his Life, is always marked *Recovered*, so that they run away with the Credit of Curing all who do not dye: And it is well known to those who are but little acquainted with Physick, what some particular Medicines will do in some Distempers, towards obtaining some Remission, which are so far from being able to make a lasting Cure, that the Distemper returns with Aggravation, when the Efficacy of the Medicine is over: Thus in some *Cholicks*, *Rheumatisms*, and Disorders attended with *sharp Pains*, Opiates scarce can fail of Procuring *some Truce*; and if they be continued, may so far disguise it to the Patient, as to flatter him with a Cure, but he will soon be convinced of his Error by his returning Torments. And such Intermissions as these your *Empiricks* take the Advantage of, get leave, for a publick Good, to have such an extraordinary Cure certified under Hand, and then fill the Coffee-Houses with them in Print. If the abused Patient is like to complain to his Dis-Reputation, it is not difficult to lay the Return upon a Cold, or some Irregularity; or if he be poor, to leave him under such Demands as may deter him from Talking to the Doctor's Prejudice.—

These, and what other Difficulties occur, shall be fully considered hereafter: And in the mean Time, to convince the Reader thoroughly of my Impartiality in this Affair, I promise to employ all Opportunities of Enquiring into the Justice and Truth of all Pretensions to *Empiricism*, and detect the Defrauder wheresoever he appears; and to this Purpose,

pose, not an Advertisement shall come out either of the Abode and Pretensions of these Persons, of Medicines to be sold, or of Cures done, but the Rise, Education, and Abilities of the Pretender shall be at large enquired into, and made publick; such Medicines shall be nicely examined, and their Compositions and Vertues truly laid open; and all Certificates of Cures made publick shall be brought to the Test: By which Means, it is to be hoped, that in some Time may be exposed and rooted out that impudent Tribe of *Man-Slayers*, who, to the Disgrace of their Country, are permitted to come into Competition with the *truly Educated Physicians*; and that those who are regularly bred to either of the Branches of *Physick*, may enjoy such Advantages in their Professions, which the Laws of our Country have hitherto been defective in Securing to them.

F I N I S.

