

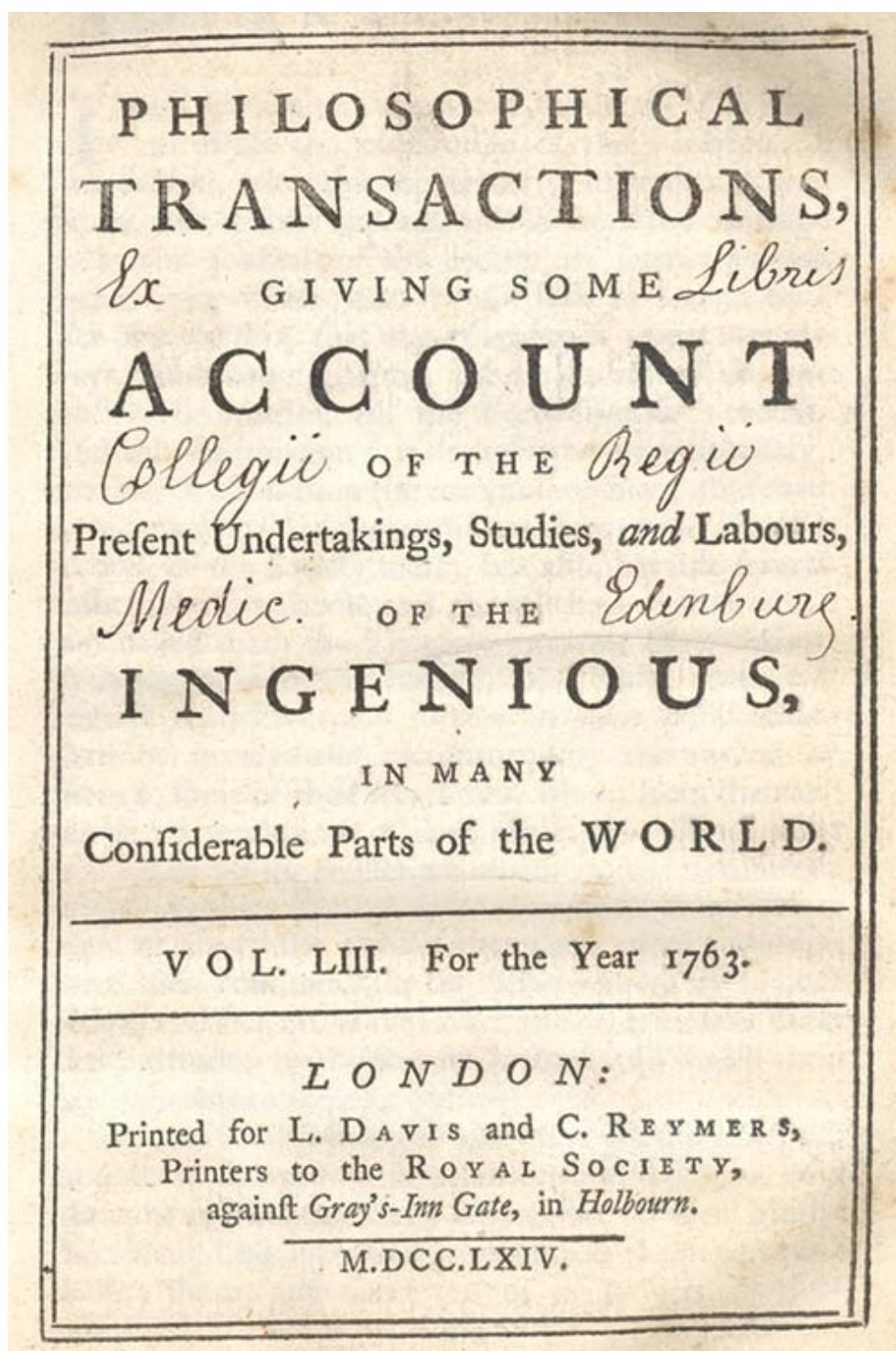
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Title Page(s) Key Passage(s) Context

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Stone E (1764). An account of the success of the bark of the willow in the cure of agues. Philosophical Transactions 53:195-200.

Title pages



XXXII. *An Account of the Success of the Bark of the Willow in the Cure of Agues. In a Letter to the Right Honourable George Earl of Macclesfield, President of R. S. from the Rev. Mr. Edmund Stone, of Chipping-Norton in Oxfordshire.*

My Lord,

Read June 2d,
1763.

AMong the many useful discoveries, which this age hath made, there are very few which, better deserve the attention of the public than what I am going to lay before your Lordship.

There is a bark of an English tree, which I have found by experience to be a powerful astringent, and very efficacious in curing aguish and intermitting disorders.

About six years ago, I accidentally tasted it, and was surpris'd at its extraordinary bitterness; which immediately rais'd me a suspicion of its having the properties of the Peruvian bark. As this tree delights in a moist or wet soil, where agues chiefly abound, the general maxim, that many natural maladies carry their cures along with them, or that their remedies lie not far from their causes, was so very apposite to this particular case, that I could not help applying it; and that this might be the intention of Providence here, I must own had some little weight with me.

The excessive plenty of this bark furnish'd me, in my speculative disquisitions upon it, with an

argument both for and against these imaginary qualities of it; for, on one hand, as intermittents are very common, it was reasonable to suppose, that what was designed for their cure, should be as common and as easy to be procured. But then, on the other hand, it seemed probable, that, if there was any considerable virtue in this bark, it must have been discovered from its plenty. My curiosity prompted me to look into the dispensatories and books of botany, and examine what they said concerning it; but there it existed only by name. I could not find, that it hath, or ever had, any place in pharmacy, or any such qualities, as I suspected ascribed to it by the botanists.

However, I determined to make some experiments with it; and, for this purpose, I gathered that summer near a pound weight of it, which I dried in a bag, upon the outside of a baker's oven, for more than three months, at which time it was to be reduced to a powder, by pounding and sifting after the manner that other barks are pulverized.

It was not long before I had an opportunity of making a trial of it; but, being an entire stranger to its nature, I gave it in very small quantities, I think it was about twenty grains of the powder at a dose, and repeated it every four hours between the fits; but with great caution and the strictest attention to its effects: the fits were considerably abated, but did not entirely cease. Not perceiving the least ill consequences, I grew bolder with it, and in a few days encreased the dose to two scruples, and the ague was soon removed.

It was then given to several others with the same success; but I found it better answered the intention, when a dram of it was taken every four hours in the intervals of the paroxifms.

I have

I have continued to use it as a remedy for agues and intermitting disorders for five years successively and successfully. It hath been given I believe to fifty persons, and never failed in the cure, except in a few autumnal and quartan agues, with which the patients had been long and severely afflicted; these it reduced in a great degree, but did not wholly take them off; the patient, at the usual time for the return of his fit, felt some smattering of his distemper, which the incessant repetition of these powders could not conquer: it seemed as if their power could reach thus far and no farther, and I did suppose that it would not have long continued to reach so far, and that the distemper would have soon returned with its pristine violence; but I did not stay to see the issue: I added one fifth part of the Peruvian bark to it, and with this small auxiliary it totally routed its adversary.

I have no other motives for publishing this valuable specific, than that it may have a fair and full trial in all its variety of circumstances and situations, and that the world may reap the benefits accruing from it. For these purposes I have given this long and minute account of it, and which I would not have troubled your Lordship with, was I not fully persuaded of the wonderful efficacy of this Cortex Salignus in agues and intermitting cases, and did I not think, that this persuasion was sufficiently supported by the manifold experience, which I have had of it.

I am, my Lord,

with the profoundest submission and respect,

Chipping-Norton, your Lordship's most obedient
Oxfordshire,
April 25, 1763. humble Servant

Edward Stone.