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Clifton F (1732). The state of physick, ancient and modern, briefly considered: with a plan for the improvement of it. London printed by W Bowyer, for John Nourse without Temple-Bar.

Title pages

THE
STATE
OF
PHYSICK,
ANCIENT *and* MODERN,
Briefly consider'd :

WITH A
PLAN for the IMPROVEMENT of it.

By FRANCIS CLIFTON, M.D.

Physician to his Royal Highness the PRINCE of
WALES, Fellow of the College of PHYSI-
CIANS, and of the ROYAL SOCIETY.

The authors, who have improv'd this art, are not a few; but they are not to be comprehended within the compass of a few years. A thousand writers, perhaps, for a thousand years, have been improving this Art and Profession: and he that industriously studies those authors, will, in the short period of life, find out as much as if he had liv'd a thousand years himself, or employ'd those thousand years in the study of Physick.

FREIND'S History of Physick, Vol. II. p. 63.

L O N D O N,

Printed by W. BOWYER, for JOHN NOURSE
without Temple-Bar. MDCCLXXXII.

BIBLIOTH
COLL. REG.
MED. EDIN.



S E C T. V.

*A Plan for the Improvement of
Phyſick.*

HAVING thus gone through what I all along intended, and given a ſhort view of the *ſtate of Phyſick* from the earlieſt Ages of the *Greeks* to the times we now live in, (by which the reader is convinc'd, I hope, of the inſignificance of *Hypotheſes*, and the importance of *Obſervation*) I come now to propoſe the *plan for improving Phyſick*, and making it more uſeful in our days, than ever it was before. This, I apprehend, may be brought about “ by Phyſicians rejecting every thing that “ is doubtful or perplex'd, and cultivating “ the buſineſs of *Obſervation* in the beſt “ manner it is capable of.” By this means we ſhall come (if ever we can come) to the true knowledge of diſeaſes, and the readieſt method of curing 'em; eſpecially as the *Materia Medica* is ſo vaſtly improv'd to what it was among the *Ancients*. Whereas, while we are ignorant of the true ſtate of diſeaſes, or at leaſt not ſufficiently acquainted with their *natural appearances, periods, and terminations*, is it to be wonder'd at, that miſtakes ſhou'd often happen, both in the *explanations* that are attempted by ſome, and the *remedies* that are adminiſter'd by others. Some Phyſicians (perhaps) may think, we can't well be in a better condition, as to theſe things, than we are at preſent: but that the diſeaſes of our times are not known ſo well as the diſeaſes of former times were, is moſt certain.

Obſervation the
beſt way to
improvement.

the less we refine and *philosophize* in physick, the better it will be for the Patient, whatever it may be for the Physician.

In order therefore to procure this valuable collection, I humbly propose,

First of all, that three or four persons of proper qualifications shou'd be employ'd in the *Hospitals*, (and that without any ways interfering with the Gentlemen now concern'd) to set down the cases of the Patients there from day to day, *candidly* and *judiciously*, without any regard to private opinions or publick systems, and at the year's end publish these facts just as they are, leaving every one to make the best use of 'em he can for himself. Wou'd not some such method as this let us more

*A proposal
for the
Hospitals.*

into the *Nature* of diseases in a few years, than all the books of *Theories*, or even the books of *Observations*, hitherto publish'd? Certainly it would: and yet if proper encouragement was given, 'tis not at all unlikely, but that persons enow wou'd soon be found, every way qualified for such an undertaking. And if even good salaries were allow'd 'em, and every thing made as easy and agreeable to 'em as they cou'd desire, the benefit the publick wou'd receive from 'em wou'd vastly more than balance the expence.

The tabu-
lar method
recommen-
ded.

The easiest and most effectual way of doing this, is, in my opinion, by the use of the following *Table*, which I have us'd for that purpose several years, and find it answers every thing I intended by it. There was another column at first for the *Weather*; but having since that got a book by itself for those observations, in which I every day set down the *course of the Wind*, and the *dryness and moistness of the Air*, &c. I have long left this article out, and reduc'd the *Table* to the form it now appears in, *viz.*

TABULA MEDICA GENERALIS.

Sexus, Ætas, Species, Tem- peries, Occu- patio, & Vic- tus Ægri.	Dies Morbi.	Morbi Phenomena.	Dies Mensis.	Remedia.	Eventus.
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To shew the application and use of this *General Table*, I think proper to subjoin two cases, not as absolutely perfect, but only by way of example.

*An Ob-
jection an-
swer'd.*

I'm very sensible, that many of my readers will be of opinion, that this method is too tedious to be comply'd with, especially by men of much business. To which I reply, that I know of none shorter to answer all intentions; and to do a thing of this kind by halves, is much the same with not doing it at all. We have imperfect cases enow already. Besides, the trouble is not so great, as at first sight may be apprehended. The *first* column is soon fill'd; tho' under the last article I generally comprehend not only the way of life, as to *eating, drinking, and exercise*, but also so much of the cause of the distemper, I mean as to *cold and heat*, and the like obvious causes, as I can inform my self of. The *second* is the largest; but then 'tis only from day to day, and by the help of *abbreviations* may be considerably shorten'd.

*The method
of using
the Table.*

