



The A U T H O R 's
P R E F A C E
T O
H i s P U P I L S .

AFTER I had taken upon me the Office of Professor in Physic, and endeavour'd to fit myself for the Calling of a Teacher in that Faculty, which was confirm'd to me by Authority from the Heads of the University; I began to think my incumbent Duty wou'd consist chiefly in exhibiting all those Discoveries to you in a clear Light, which have result'd at different times from well grounded Observation and pertinent Experiments; such as must be always acknowledg'd for true and solid Principles in the Science.

With this View I search'd thro' those Writings of the Ancients, which we have at this Day the
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Happiness of possessing, taking notice of the most important Matters which by their Sagacity and Industry they had found out and consider'd. But at the same time that I was busy in compiling, I was no less active and observing in Matters of Practice; by which means I became an Eye-witness of the several Appearances which had been before recorded of Nature: nor could I any where find, or even wish for, a better Course to take than this.

I was in the mean time cautious not to omit any thing of Consequence that had been register'd on ancient Monuments, or advanced by Arabian Writers, during the several Centuries that by a general Neglect of Learning in Europe, the Improvement of Physic lay only in the Hands of that People; so that, by translating 'em into Latin, they might become more diffused and intelligible amongst us. But I have frequently lamented that the Arabians, however wise and abounding with good Advice, shou'd, by their many useles Subtilties, have done so much more harm than good in the Science.

*After the Ancients, I also pursued with equal Attention the pleasing Researches of the Moderns; whose Advances, in Philosophy and the liberal Arts, are the more strongly recommended to our Consultation, as they have a greater Tendency to the Promotion of Physic. You may reasonably suppose, that these afforded a good deal of Pleasure and Entertainment to a Genius particularly turn-
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ed that way; but still, thro' a boundless Liberty of framing Hypotheses, by audaciously asserting false or uncertain Principles, and not taking Time and Thought enough to consider things in a true Light, together with an ambitious Eagerness to compleat the Science all at once; but above all, either thro' a Neglect, Contempt, or Ignorance of former Writers, thro' all these Misconducts, Physic seem'd to stand upon the tottering Basis of Uncertainty and Obscurity, rather than confirm'd and improved by Truth and Evidence. So that tho' we may thank our Predecessors for so freely accumulating Materials, whereby the Science might be set out in a more perfect manner; we may yet regret the Fate of the Science, in that it shou'd, by their voluminous Writings, be rather overwhelmed and buried, than exhibited to Advantage.

*Whilst I was making this Search, nothing seem'd more rational than to sift out and throw together, from all these ancient and modern Writings, whatever appear'd so sound and reasonable, that nobody skill'd in the Science could distrust the Truth of 'em. This Task being first accomplish'd, my next Business was to form this promiscuous Collection in a sort of compendious System, agreeable to the Rules of Method in teaching any Science, and in such a manner as might make it capable of being easily and diligently consulted by myself; that if any thing new or unobserv'd shou'd offer in the Course of my Physical Employ, I might have an Opportunity of referring to its proper
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Head: and lastly, that by this means I might be able to deliver and imprint faithfully such Observations on your Minds, as had been before weighed and digested in my own for your Interests.

You have now seen the Motives from which I became bold enough to increase the too great Number of Medical Writers, by publishing my little Book of Aphorisms concerning the Knowledge and Cure of Diseases. For which Piece of Presumption I blush, as often as I think on the Defects of the Book, with which I am too well acquainted, or whenever I compare it with some of the more excellent Performances of the Ancients. Being hence sensible that its Imperfections will not reasonably support me under, or give any room to look for the Title of a Good Author. I cou'd not however at id the Publication of those Aphorisms, unless I wou'd have slighted the Office which public Authority had assigned me, to which Obedience ought to be paid.

Now when I composed that Work, I endeavour'd cautiously to avoid every thing that might afford Matter of Danger or Error to Beginners; and as the Purpose of the Book was chiefly to deliver rather the Method than Materials for treating Diseases, I took care to insert no Prescriptions of Medicines throughout the whole.

*This no ways prejudiced the Design of that Treatise, but rather prevented much harm from
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the Empirical Practiser; who, having once heard the Names of the Disease and Medicine, boasts himself Master of the Faculty, preaching up his Abilities every-where unpunish'd, to the Destruction of Mankind, till Wisdom comes too late at the Expence of others Lives.

But being under an Obligation of acquainting my Pupils, in Course, with Examples of this Kind, I therefore wrote a few Sheets upon the Materia Medica for their private Information, containing proper Directions for managing that Part of Physick; designed only for the Use of such as gave their close Attention to my other Dictates in the private Schools, to whom alone they cou'd be of Service.

And I can appeal to no body better than your selves, as Witnesses with what Caution I have proceeded in this Point; how frequently I have consider'd every little Particular, till I have become even tiresome and odious to you, before I wou'd venture to lay down the Name, or speak in Praise of any particular Medicine: being sufficiently sensible, that no Medicine can be given of Service in every Disease; but, on the contrary, I have found that what has cured one Disease under particular Circumstances, has in different Constitutions and Stages of the very same Disease proved of pernicious Consequence.

*I thought it therefore improper to publish these Formulæ alone, without the necessary Cautions
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and Admonitions I endeavour to inculcate with 'em, according to the best of my Power, when I am speaking upon these Matters to my diligent Auditors. But, to my Grief, it has happen'd quite otherwise; for, a Person of Learning at London got 'em publish'd without my Will, or even Knowledge, who at the same time seems to think and write in too grand a manner of me, and that vile Performance; nor was this Publication executed without a good many Errors, and some of very bad Consequence.

This obliged me to revise the whole, correct the Errors, and make several Additions; that it might be better fitted for appearing in Print, to save them the trouble of transcribing, for whose Use it is designed. In the mean time I wou'd closely and faithfully admonish you, as a Friend, to be thoroughly versed in the History of Diseases; to be well acquainted with all the pernicious, as well as salutary Effects of the Materia Medica; otherwise you will reap more Damage than Good from what is contained in this little Book: which, that it might be the more perfect and useful to you, has an Index adjoined to it by the Learned Samuel Dury, a Doctor of Physic, and considerable Well-wisher to the Science.

Gentlemen, farewell.

Written at Leyden
in Holland.