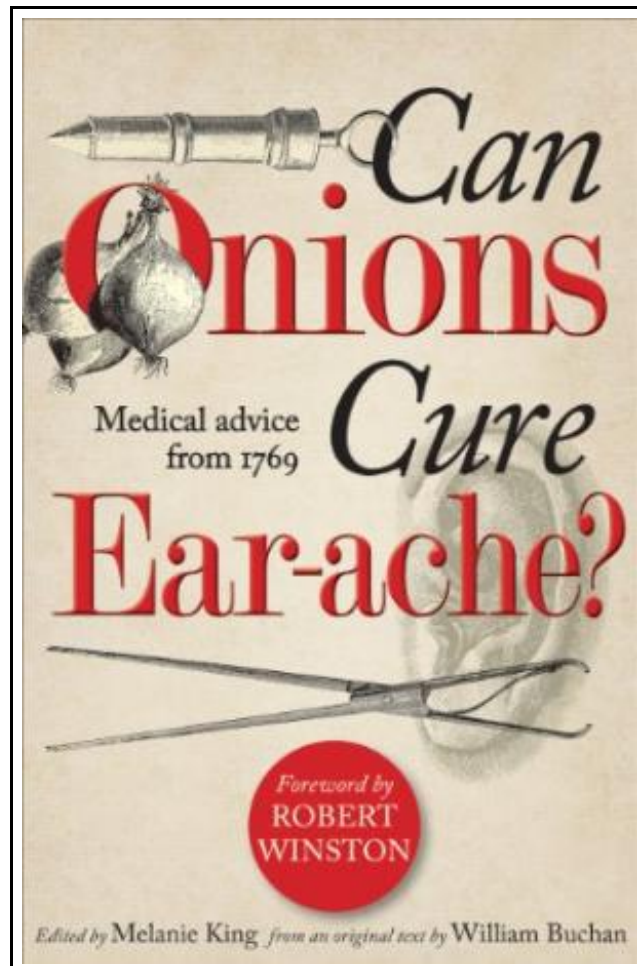


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CAN ONIONS CURE EAR-ACHE?: MEDICAL ADVICE FROM 1769



The Bodleian Library. Hardback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Can Onions Cure Ear-Ache?: Medical Advice from 1769, William Buchan, Melanie King, Robert Winston, What common condition can be treated with cow dung? How do crushed oystershells ease heartburn? Can eels cure deafness? And how do you stop a stubborn case of the hiccups? If someone was struck down by illness or injury in the late eighteenth century, the chances are that they would have referred to William Buchan's Domestic Medicine - with the result that they might have found themselves drinking a broth made from sheep brain or administering drops of urine in their ears. The book's author, a Scottish physician, published his self-help manual in 1769 specifically for the benefit of people who were unable readily to access or afford medical assistance. Copies could be found in coffee-houses, in apothecary shops and private households, and in 1789 Fletcher Christian and his fellow mutineers took the sensible precaution of grabbing the copy from HMS Bounty before they fled to Pitcairn Island. Much of Dr Buchan's advice on how to live a healthy life and avoid disease is still sound and relevant today, such as eating a varied and healthy diet, breathing plenty of fresh air, and taking exercise. Many of his prescriptions are amusing when viewed in retrospect, such as his fondness for powdered Spanish fly and genital trusses. Other recommendations - bleeding a woman experiencing a difficult childbirth or administering mercury to treat numerous ailments - were downright dangerous. This edited selection of entries from one of the first medical self-help manuals gives a fascinating insight into popular treatments of the eighteenth century, derived both from folklore and the emerging medical science of the day.



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