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THE

PHILOSOPHICAL QUIXOTE;

OR,

MEMOIRS

OF

Mr. DAVID WILKINS.

IN A

SERIES of LETTERS.

VOL. I.

LONDON.

Printed for J. JOHNSON, in St. Paul's Church-yard.

MDCCLXXXII.

PREFACE.

THE private correſpondence of ſome of the greateſt geniuſſes of this nation has been made public without their knowledge; and, in ſome caſes, contrary to their inclination. If this be not admitted, as an excuſe, *it muſt be at leaſt as* a precedent, *for the publication of the following epiſtles.*

The ſingularity of Mr. Wilkins's character, as drawn by the correſpondent of Mr. Dennis, occaſioned the laſt mentioned gentleman to be liberal in ſhewing the letters to his friends, in order that they might ſhare with him in the entertainment. I, among many others, was favoured with the peruſal of them; and being perhaps more delighted with them than others, had the curioſity to take copies. The pleaſure which

they

they have afforded me, has prompted me to give them to the public; and I cannot but think that there are many who will thank me for having furnished them with such a repast. If I have guessed wrong, I have only to hope that the public will impute it to a natural, and may I add, benevolent desire of making others as happy as myself. On this ground I hope also for Mr. Dennis, and his ingenious correspondent's pardon. Should this, however, not be obtained, I shall at least escape their personal resentment, as it will not be possible for them to discover, with certainty, who it is that has thus published their letters.

The reader will perceive that what follows is but part of Mr. Harcourt's *correspondence, and as I have given his epistles in the order of* time, *it has so happened*

that

that the present ones are on subjects the most abstruse of any in the whole collection. There is also less bustle *than is exhibited by those which succeed. In the latter the reader will not only be more deeply interested for the fate of the lovers, but* Mr. Wilkins *himself will become a more public man; and his singularities will also be such as to come wholly within the comprehension of readers of ordinary capacities. With these letters, however, I shall not presume to trouble the world, if the present ones are not found acceptable.*

THE EDITOR.

P. S. *The Editor residing at some distance from the press, and having, therefore, been obliged to leave the revisal of the sheets to others, several* errata *have escaped their notice, which the candid reader, for the reason given,*

given, is earneſtly requeſted to pardon. In the running title, for example, there are two t's *in* Quixote, *whereas there ought to be but one. Alſo*

Vol. I. Page 5, Line 10, for *by way of* read *as*

P. 15, l. 15, dele *which was*

P. 34, l. 3, for *effect*, read *ſucceſs*

P. 72, l. 3, read *repeat my requeſt*

P. 81, l. 15, for *effects* read *effect*

Vol. II. Page 85, l. 16, *for diſcoveries* read *performances.*

THE

PHILOSOPHICAL QUIXOTTE;

OR,

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OF

Mr. DAVID WILKINS.

LETTER I.

To Mr. SAMUEL DENNIS.

DEAR SIR,

AFTER a delightful journey of ſixteen hours, I arrived, on Friday laſt, at my new habitation; and have the ſatisfaction to inform you, that only your company is wanting to render my ſituation, in every reſpect,

as agreeable as while at Mr. C——'s. The town in which we live, is ſituated in an hollow between two ridges of hills about five miles apart. We have trees in abundance, which I look upon as the life of a country proſpect; and as the fields in this part of the world are encloſed with lofty hedges, the ſcene around us is perfectly rural. The town itſelf is pretty large. It is well ſupplied with water from the numerous ſprings in the neighbourhood; a rivulet running on each ſide of every ſtreet as clear as chryſtal. The inhabitants are much more civil and polite than I was taught to expect in a country town. An aſſembly is held, once a week, in an elegant room over the Town-hall, for dancing and cards.

A com-

A company of ſtrolling players have fixed their reſidence here for the ſeaſon; and tho' they are not equal to thoſe which you and I have been accuſtomed to ſee in London, they perform tolerably well, conſidering the diſadvantages under which they exhibit, and are highly applauded by the inhabitants, who have never been uſed to better. In London, people live for years in the ſame ſtreet without, perhaps, ever ſpeaking to each other; but here it is very different. A ſocial intercourſe is kept up by the gentry, under which term is included every tradeſman of credit in the place. They regularly viſit twice a week, and the company meet at the houſe of each of the viſitors in rotation. But the gen-

tlemen keep up a good fellowſhip alſo in another way; for there is hardly a night but they aſſemble at ſome reputable drinking-houſe, where they ſmoke, ſing, and get drunk in the moſt convivial and amicable manner. In the neighbourhood there are two packs of hounds belonging to two of our 'ſquires, one or other of which is out almoſt every day; and as that diverſion is new to me, I have been indulged in it by my maſter ſeveral times. In London, dear Dennis, a journeyman apothecary is looked upon as a mere negro; and a gentleman would think his table diſgraced by the preſence of one of them. But the caſe is otherwiſe in S——: I am admitted without ſcruple among the firſt company

pany in the town; and being a Londoner, my acquaintance is even courted by them. You will not suspect me either of vanity or falshood, when I inform you that the ladies in particular pay me the most flattering attention. With grief, however, I add, that my finances oblige me to deny myself those happinesses which my station entitles me to, and by way of a colourable apology for my conduct, I find it very convenient to pretend an attachment to study, which by the way, has a wonderful effect on their opinion of my professional abilities. My father, though straitened in his circumstances, had yet the ambition to bring up his son to a genteel calling. By his late letters I am

given to underſtand, that my apprenticeſhip being expired, farther aſſiſtance is not to be expected from him. That however deſirous he may be to afford it me, the duty which he equally owes to his other children, forbids it: That having been at the expence of educating me in a liberal profeſſion, I muſt now ſhift for myſelf; and that it will be my own fault, if, with theſe advantages, I do not make my fortune. This explanation was by no means in conſequence of any ſolicitation on my part: Whatever were my hopes, I had not as yet aſked him for a farthing; and I now chearfully acquieſce in my doom:—Yet I cannot but reflect on the hard fate of a journeyman apothecary under

ſuch

ſuch circumſtances. For example, I muſt appear like, and in every reſpect ſupport the character of, a gentleman, with the ſmall ſalary of *ſixteen* pounds, which is leſs than that given to the footman in our family; who has beſides, his cloathing, and many other emoluments, to which I have nothing equivalent. This does not appear very reaſonable, when we conſider the difference of the ſums expended on our reſpective educations.—But I will not enter on a ſubject, concerning which you need no information.

I meant to have given you an account of my preſent governor and his manſion in this letter; and perhaps it

would have been more regular to have begun with those subjects first; but we have not usually stood upon ceremonies; and the sheet is already so full, that I must defer these matters to a future opportunity.

I am, dear DENNIS,

Your sincere,

And affectionate Friend,

J. HARCOURT.

LETTER

LETTER II.

DEAR SIR,

IN my laſt I gave you a general idea of the town in which I ſojourn. In this, I ſhall confine myſelf to *affairs domeſtic*, and give you an account of my ſituation within doors. You will perceive it to be very different from, though not leſs agreeable, than at Mr. C——'s.

My maſter, Mr. David Wilkins, is of a middle ſtature, and about fifty years of age; though by his appearance, I ſhould have taken him to be at leaſt ten years older. This, as I ſince learn, is owing to his having of late years, greatly

greatly addicted himſelf to ſtudy, which indeed I conjectured on firſt ſeeing him, from his pale countenance and retired abſent look. In his dreſs, he unites the plainneſs of a Quaker with the negligence of a philoſopher. His temper appears to be good, though from his thoughts being continually abſorbed in ſtudy, he has even more than the uſual ſhare of Engliſh taciturnity. His buſineſs, like that of moſt country practitioners, extends to every branch of the medical profeſſion. He is chemiſt, druggiſt, man-midwife, ſurgeon, and apothecary; which laſt, by the cuſtom of England, includes both pharmacy and the practice of phyſic. He has for ſome years enjoyed the buſineſs of the town and its environs, without a rival;

for

for though ſeveral have attempted to oppoſe him, ſo great was the opinion entertained of Wilkins's abilities, that they met with no encouragement. Of late, however, he has rather ſunk in the opinion of the town's people, for reaſons which I may hereafter explain. As he is by no means extravagant, he muſt by this time have amaſſed a conſiderable fortune. He is now a widower; and his wife, I am told, was ſuch a termagant, that he is determined againſt all thoughts of a ſecond venture. He has but one child, a daughter, now at the boarding-ſchool, of whom he is extremely fond. She is ſaid to be about ſeventeen or eighteen years of age, of a temper the reverſe of her mother, and perfectly accompliſhed and agreeable.

Mr.

Mr. Wilkins appears to have had a good general education, at leaſt of the modern kind. He ſpeaks French fluently, and is pretty well acquainted with Latin and Greek; he has alſo made conſiderable proficiency in the mathematics. But his principal *forte*, and which he moſt values himſelf upon, is his knowledge in natural philoſophy, particularly the chemical and medical branches of it, of which he is an enthuſiaſtic admirer. He conſtantly riſes at ſix in the morning, and never goes out, unleſs in caſes of emergency, till twelve. His time, between theſe hours, is wholly employed in his philoſophical purſuits. Behind his dwelling-houſe, which contains nothing remarkable, is an out-houſe, of one ſtory,

which

which he has built for the purpoſe of his philoſophical and chemical experiments. The principal room in this building is the elaboratory, where we alſo prepare our medicines, chemical and galenical; many of the former in a manner ſufficiently ſingular. Beſides the uſual apparatus of retorts, receivers, ſand heats, alembics, &c. there is not, I believe, a chemical contrivance that has of late years been invented, with which it is not furniſhed; for example, the various apparatus for procuring the different kinds of air; for the diſtilling of acid, alcaline, and ætherial ſpirits, &c. together with tubes of all kinds, eudiometers, thermometers, barometers, air pumps, and a catalogue of others, which would require Homer's

mer's *lungs of brafs* to enumerate. For as he reads all the new publications in this way, and makes a point of repeating the experiments, you will eafily imagine that he muft have no inconfiderable variety. Thefe, when not in ufe, are hung up around the walls, or placed on proper fhelves, by way of ornament, like the armory at St. James's or the tower. We have a variety of proceffes continually going on, either for ufe or curiofity; and fome of the fires, for particular operations, have not been out for thefe twelve months paft. The room on the right is deftined to anatomical, phyfiological, electrical, and other fimilar purfuits, and is accordingly decorated with a great variety of preparations, fkeletons, and

the

the numerous ſets of inſtruments neceſſary to thoſe enquiries. The left room is his ſtudy, in which is a conſiderable library, conſiſting chiefly of medical and philoſophical books, almoſt wholly modern; for the antients are held by him in the utmoſt contempt. It is here that he purſues his lucubrations for the good of the human race, which will one day be benefitted by the publication of his numerous performances, ſufficient of themſelves to form a tolerable library. While employed in this way he wears a large old ruſty black cap, a morning gown (which was formerly ſtriped with red and white, but the traces of which colours are now hardly diſcernible) bound round his waiſt with an old red garter; in which,

and

and his worn out ſlippers, he makes a very groteſque appearance. Behind the building is a garden; part of which he has allotted to the purpoſes of botany, and experiments on vegetation.

The other inhabitants of our manſion are, an old maid, and a footman. The former has lived in the houſe upwards of fourteen years; and that circumſtance, together with her being ſomewhat advanced in life, and the only female domeſtic, gives her, as ſhe imagines, a kind of right to that degree of authority which is uſually exerciſed by the *miſtreſs of a family*. As ſhe takes ſufficient care to maintain the *dignity* of the latter office, ſo does ſhe likewiſe the *privilege* of her *ſex*; her tongue being

being by no means the leaſt noiſy or loquacious that I have heard. She is now on the wrong ſide of forty, and ſeems to be heartily tired of her virginity. But through want of even an ordinary portion of beauty (for I think ſhe is one of the moſt forbidding mortals I ever beheld) ſhe ſeems to be quite deſperate; and therefore makes the utmoſt uſe of the privilege ſaid to be allowed to her ſex every fourth year; for it cannot ſo properly be ſaid that Solomon courts Deborah, as that Deborah courts Solomon; and that in ſuch a way, as, to a perſon of the leaſt delicacy, would be perfectly nauſeous and diſguſting. With the wrinkles of ſixty ſhe aukwardly apes the coquetry of eighteen; and in her fondneſs, is (like a cat) even outrage-

ous. Solomon, however, does not ſeem to be one of the niceſt, and as ſhe is reported to have ſaved money, he probably ſees ſome more weighty charm in her than mere beauty. Solomon has lived the greateſt part of his life in the medical way. He was originally errand boy to a druggiſt; afterwards for many years footman to a phyſician; and ſince then has been in the joint capacity of porter and footman to Mr. Wilkins. He is greatly addicted to ſtudy; and with perſons of his own rank paſſes for a very *deep man*; his beſt qualification is as an aſſiſtant in the laboratory, of which employment he is very fond; and wherein indeed he is extremely handy and uſeful.

In

In the partnerſhip for life which is likely to commence between this ſingular couple, Deborah, I imagine, is to find the money, and Solomon the judgment. For as the former will hardly be able to think of lowering her preſent dignity, it ſeems to be her intention to ſet him up in an apothecary's ſhop; where, I ſuppoſe, he is to drudge on for the remainder of life, to ſupport the intolerable vanity of his amiable fair one. By her diſcourſe ſhe ſeems to entertain hopes of his ſucceeding, or even coming into partnerſhip with our Major Domo; and it would be pleaſant enough to ſee how Wilkins would reliſh ſuch a propoſal.

I cannot but obſerve that, was I of a leſs eaſy diſpoſition than I am uſu-

ally reckoned to be, it would be rather disagreeable to live in an house where there are a couple of servants thus circumstanced; and who, by virtue of long servitude, seem to think themselves authorized to treat a journeyman, a new comer, and much younger than themselves, as an *inferior*. But I am happy enough to divert myself at the expence of their follies: and as, on account of my having a little knowledge of philosophy, I am already rooted in Wilkins's good graces, he allows me every indulgence that a journeyman can wish for; which more than compensates for any little uneasiness that might arise from the other quarter.

I am, dear DENNIS,

Your's, sincerely, &c.

LETTER III.

DEAR SIR,

MR. WILKINS being gone out, curiosity led me, yesterday, into the laboratory to examine the nature of the processes which were going forward, as I learned that some of them were not a little extraordinary; and as I should have been rather at a loss in understanding them myself, I prevailed on Solomon to give me such information as he was capable of affording. I have selected the following by way of specimen.

He first conducted me to an athanor furnace, in which was kept up a conti-

nual fire; and where a number of proceſſes, in little, ſeemed to be going on.

Among theſe, he ſhewed me ſeveral which were deſigned for the tranſmutation of acids; "an inveſtigation to "which his maſter had long applied "himſelf, but which he had not as yet "in any one inſtance been able to bring "to perfection"; adding, "that he "ſeemed to lament his want of ſucceſs "in what he ſtill conſidered as practi-"cable."

In the ſame furnace he ſhewed me ſeveral phials, &c. containing pure water; which, he informed me, were placed there with a view to its converſion into *earth*. I could not but remark, that, like the bag of money in Eſop, and the philo-

philoſopher's ſtone, this experiment was probably propoſed by ſome ingenious lover of chemiſtry, rather with a view to the general improvement of the ſcience, than to the realizing of that particular idea.

In different furnaces were a variety of proceſſes for the purpoſe of tranſmuting the metallic calces into one another, with a view to the converting of all, or ſome of them, into thoſe of ſilver or gold. A project not deſpaired of by others beſides Mr. Wilkins, even in our days.

Experiments with quickſilver, in order to the rendering it ſolid in the uſual temperature of the atmoſphere.

A diſcovery which Solomon obſerved, would be attended with infinite advantages in the uſeful arts.

At the farther part of the laboratory I obſerved a tremendous triple pile of large caſks, oil jars, glaſs receivers, and other veſſels, which attracted my curioſity, but which, when I came to examine them, were empty; though ſeemingly very carefully ſecured. On aſking Solomon concerning them, he informed me that they were ſtore veſſels, or reſervoirs of the various kinds of air, which his maſter kept ready extricated for chemical and medical purpoſes.

For example; if he wanted to make ſpirit of ſalt, he had only to impregnate

nate water with marine acid air, which at once furnifhed him with this liquid, of a fuperior kind to that ufually employed.

If he had occafion for the cauftic fpirit of fal ammoniac, he could immediately produce it in a very elegant way, by the mixture of water with alcaline air. If the mild fort was wanted, the addition of a proper quantity of fixed air, produced the effect. By a fimilar procefs, without water, he made his dry volatile alcali, and common fal ammoniac.

For making the nitrous acid he had two methods. The firft was, by impregnating water with the nitrous acid air, or red vapour: but that his ufual

way

way, and which he on ſeveral accounts preferred, was to make it by means of nitrous and common air, by decompoſiting the former over water.—He was going on; but Mr. Wilkins happening to knock at the door, he was obliged to hurry away, and defer the remainder of his lecture to a future opportunity. I could not, however, but divert myſelf with theſe curious and round-about methods of making officinal preparations; which, if generally adopted, will certainly be of infinite *uſe* to the public: an uſe which the illuſtrious diſcoverer of the ſeveral kinds of air, I imagine, never once dreamed of. I had now, however, a ſufficient idea of the *man*, and determined in future to make him an object

of

of more particular attention. Discoveries in philosophy, *in proper hands*, may certainly be applied to the most advantageous purposes in medicine and the useful arts. But it is not a task for every one to attempt; and it requires, I believe, very different talents from those of Mr. Wilkins, to do it with any reasonable prospect of success.

I am, &c.

J. HARCOURT.

LETTER

LETTER IV:

DEAR DENNIS,

FROM what I had ſeen in the elaboratory, I had concluded too haſtily relative to the utility of Mr. Wilkins's philoſophical purſuits, as will more fully be ſeen in the courſe of this letter.

One morning he ſent for me into the elaboratory. He appeared by his countenance to be exceedingly grave and thoughtful, not without an evident mixture of ſorrow. After muſing a while, he addreſſed me to the following effect:

"That having in the courſe of converſation had ſeveral occaſions to obſerve,

ſerve, that I had a tolerable knowledge of natural philoſophy, he had ſent for me in order to have my opinion relative to a buſineſs of the utmoſt importance to mankind. The inveſtigation of it had been attended with infinite difficulties, which had perplexed him exceedingly; and ſo confuſed his ideas, that he might be compared to a traveller who had loſt his way, and was wandering in a labyrinth. But that the eye of a diſengaged and diſcerning ſpectator might poſſibly enable him to extricate himſelf from the maze, by diſcovering the clue which might in future guide him in the right path."

He prefaced his explanation by obſerving, "that the ſole end of philo-

ſophical

ſophical enquiries ought to be the *good of mankind*; and that he who engaged in them from mere motives of intereſt or fame, was unworthy the name of a philoſopher. He preferred the moſt trifling diſcovery, if it could be applied to *real uſe*, to the theory of a NEWTON; and would rather have been the diſcoverer of the load-ſtone, than of the ſyſtem of gravitation. His own enquiries were conducted wholly on that liberal principle; and nothing could make him ſo happy, as to be able to ſtrike out ſomething that might prove of general utility. He flattered himſelf, he had ſucceeded in this way in more inſtances than one, as would, perhaps, hereafter appear to the world. That with

reſpect

respect to the processes he was now carrying on, they were, in general, very important in their nature; and from which he entertained the most sanguine expectations. He was convinced there were an infinite number of secrets, yet remaining in the womb of nature, which, when discovered, would be found in the highest degree beneficial to the world; and he by no means despaired of being able to bring some of them to light. That let the event be what it would, no application should be wanting on his part: he was too sensible of the numerous evils and distresses under which mankind continued to labour, and was determined to exert his utmost abilities in order to alleviate or wholly remove

move them." He ſaid a good deal more to the ſame purpoſe; and indeed his general and obvious character is that of benevolence and humanity; though, perhaps, there is one motive which will be found to take the lead of theſe, and I think, I can diſcern that it is the hope of the *glory of having made an uſeful diſcovery*, rather than the *diſcovery itſelf*, that actuates him to this kind of purſuit.

He then informed me, "that he had frequently had occaſion to obſerve, with anguiſh of heart, the diſtreſſes of the poorer ſort of people, and the great difficulty which a man with a large family had in providing them the neceſſary means of ſubſiſtence. That the prices

of

of proviſions were of late years ſo much advanced, that the truly indigent could hardly procure ſuch as were fit to eat.

He had therefore frequently revolved in his mind, whether ſome method might not be diſcovered to obviate their diſtreſſes; and in particular, whether it might not be poſſible, by means of the chemical art, to procure wholeſome aliment, at once, from thoſe cheap, or rather, coſtleſs materials, from which it was daily formed by nature? *Common mould*, *mud*, or *earth*, for example, is, by vegetables, converted into a ſubſtance proper for animal nutriment, even as vegetable matters are, by animalization, brought ſtill nearer to perfection. He had therefore tried

a variety of methods, in order to effect ſo deſirable a purpoſe, though hitherto, unfortunately without effect.

His former experiments, he obſerved, were founded on the idea, that there is in nature a *ferment* or *leven*, capable of converting mineral ſubſtances into vegetable or animal, as yeaſt converts flour into dough, or muſt into wine; and that his reſearches had been directed to the attainment of ſuch a menſtruum. That there is ſuch a ferment he obſerved, was too obvious to be diſputed by him who conſiders the facts alluded to. He had endeavoured to extract it from almoſt every mineral ſubſtance in which he could imagine it to reſide, and by every

every chemical proceſs which his invention could ſuggeſt, but had not been ſo happy as to meet with ſucceſs. That after ſo infinite a variety of trials he deſpaired of finding it, except in vegetables and animals themſelves; his next view, therefore, was to obtain it pure from the other parts of thoſe ſubſtances; and then, by inveſtigating its chemical principles by a careful analyſis, to learn to compound ſuch a ferment from thoſe principles directly. He had gone through a very great variety of proceſſes, on an infinite number of vegetable and animal ſubſtances, with this view, but without meeting with any thing like the matter he was in queſt of. Laying aſide there-

therefore all hopes of procuring the ferment itſelf in a ſeparate ſtate, he has ſince had recourſe to vegetable and animal ſubſtances as *containing* the deſired menſtruum; by which means he imagined, that though he could not bring the diſcovery to the degree of perfection and cheapneſs which he firſt intended, he ſhould yet *approximate* to it, and that in a very great degree. With this view, he had made a number of experiments with different vegetables, and different parts of thoſe vegetables, and alſo with all the various kinds of ſoil or earth; varying their proportions and ſtates, in every mode that his invention could deviſe: in heat, and cold, for example; in moi-

ſture

ſture and dryneſs, in open and cloſe veſſels, in all the different kinds of factitious air, and in other circumſtances too tedious to relate. That as it is known, that the influence of the ſun's light is neceſſary to the perfection of vegetables, he had placed his materials in that expoſure, in which caſe too he had varied the circumſtances of the proceſſes in every ſhape that he could invent; but hitherto in vain. Not finding vegetables alone to anſwer his purpoſe, he had mixed them with animal ſubſtances, in a ſufficient variety of ways; and had ſince even tried what could be done with animal ſubſtance uſed without vegetables. With the ſtomach, for example; the gall, bladder,

the liver, the pancreas; the various juices of these; the nervous medulla, the blood, the saliva, the flesh, the whole animal; in short, the experiments had been almost infinitely, but unsuccessfully varied, insomuch, that he was now wholly at a loss for further expedients; but that nevertheless he was still as confident as ever, that the thing was practicable, from its being performed before our eyes by nature every day; and earnestly requested me to assist him in the investigation of a fact so very interesting and important.

I listened to this curious harangue with attention and astonishment, and could hardly persuade myself he was

in

in earneſt; though he ſpoke with ſuch evident marks of real concern and diſtreſs as might have demonſtrated that his heart was ſincerely in the buſineſs. But on repeating his requeſt, in ſtill more ardent and impaſſioned terms, and the hints which had been given me of his odd turn of mind occurring, I was ſufficiently convinced of his Quixotiſm; and after ſuffering my ſurprize to ſubſide a little, anſwered him to the following purport.

" That his philanthropy, and goodneſs of heart, appeared tranſcendantly indeed! That the world was under infinite obligations to gentlemen, who like him, ſpent their lives for the common good; and that the higheſt ho-

nours in its power to beſtow, were an inadequate reward for ſuch benevolent endeavours, even though they ſhould not be fortunate enough to be crowned with ſucceſs. The ſubject which he had choſen for inveſtigation, was, in the higheſt degree, intereſting; and if the diſcovery, which he was in queſt of, could be perfected, it would be, without exception, the moſt uſeful that had yet been offered to mankind; but that in the preſent caſe, I humbly apprehended he was miſtaken rather in the *object* than the *means*. That mineral matters were daily converted into vegetable, and afterwards into animal ſubſtances, was a fact too obvious to be diſputed; but we had no rea-

ſon

ſon to ſuppoſe, from what we could obſerve in nature, that this was practicable by any other means than by vegetation, and animalization; that is, by the action of living vegetables, and animals. That different kinds of animals and vegetables were neceſſary to the aſſimilation of different vegetable, and mineral ſubſtances; but that theſe differences were ſuch as did not by any means fall under the cognizance of our ſenſes. That therefore, unleſs he could form theſe particular organized bodies, or others which would perform their effects, I conceived the ſubject of his enquiry would ſtill remain a problem. For that dead animals and vegetables, inſtead of having power of aſſimilating other ſub-

ſtances

ſtances to their nature, were on the contrary, by fermentation and putrefaction, continually returning to the ſtate of thoſe mineral ſubſtances, from which they were firſt extracted." I took ſome pains to explain to him my ideas, and indeed found his prejudice ſo ſtrong that the utmoſt force of my rhetoric was abſolutely neceſſary. In ſo delicate a matter too, I was obliged to act with caution to prevent giving offence. However, I at length ſucceeded, and he has ſince deſiſted from a proſecution of his viſionary enquiry, though even yet he retains viſible reliques of the keeneſt diſappointment and mortification.

The reflections which may be drawn from this curious relation with regard

to

to the direction of philosophical enquiries, are too obvious to need pointing out, at least to you. As this affair has not a little raised my curiosity, I shall be more attentive to this gentleman's pursuits than hitherto; and shall not fail to entertain you with whatever I may discover in this way concerning him, in future.

I am, dear DENNIS,

Your's, &c.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

DEAR SIR,

AS I had acquired ſome knowledge of Mr. Wilkins's diſpoſition, I could not reſiſt a violent inclination which ſeized me, of putting a HUM upon him, and in conſequence thereof, to have a little entertainment at his expence. In the ſequel you have the reſult of my attempt in this way.

I had obſerved that he reads every thing that appears on philoſophical and medical ſubjects, and makes it a rule to repeat the experiments, not ſo much for the ſake of proving them, as to gratify a ridiculous curioſity. His prejudice

prejudice in favour of novelty ſeemed to be ſo great that perhaps there was no doctrine, however abſurd, which he would not readily ſwallow, provided it came with that recommendation: and it always had the greater weight (a proof of his philanthropy) if it promiſed to be *uſeful to mankind.*

To one of our country news-papers, which he conſtantly reads, I ſent the under-written pretended philoſophical diſcovery. It was written indeed, and ſent off in the heat of frolic, and I had no ſooner diſpatched it, than I reflected on the glaringneſs of the abſurdity, and heartily repented of my precipitancy; for I could not imagine, that even in ſuch a publication as that, a relation ſo evidently

evedently void of probability could be inſerted; I expected indeed to be handſomely *trimmed off* in their *anſwers to correſpondents*. I had therefore began to draw up another paper; not leſs abſurd indeed; but wherein the abſurdity was ſo artfully covered that perſons, not ſuppoſed to be adepts in philoſophy, in the hurry of newspaper buſineſs, might not readily perceive it. Before I had finiſhed this however, the former, to my utter aſtoniſhment, appeared; and not only had the deſired effect on Mr. Wilkins, but (what you will think incredible) even impoſed on ſome *whoſe names are foremoſt in the Republic of Science*. The account ran as follows; and as you are a philoſopher, you

will

will be able to enter into the ſpirit of the jeſt.

A cheap and eaſy method of procuring DEPHLOGISTICATED AIR; *calculated for the benefit of thoſe afflicted with putrid and inflammatory diſeaſes, &c. demonſtrating that for ſo ſmall a price as one ſhilling, any perſon may breath that ſalutary medium during a whole day; a diſcovery, which will therefore be of infinite benefit to mankind.*

Take one pound of nitre, and expell from it by heat, its dephlogiſticated air. Let the patient breath a ſufficient quantity of this through a bent tube, introduced into it through ſome lime water, in which the veſſel containing

containing the air floats, and then expire it back again. The air returning from the lungs, is *infected by fixed air which is generated in the body, and thrown out by this organ as excrementitious*; but which is immediately absorbed by the lime water, and of course the air is restored very nearly to its former purity. The author of this account AFFIRMS, that the air thus breathed through lime water, will remain good THIRTY TIMES as long as it could when breathed in the ordinary way. Now we consume by each inspiration, about thirty inches of air, which is 450 inches in a minute, allowing fifteen inspirations for that time. And consequently the air usually employed in one minute, will now serve for breathing

half

half an hour. But one pound of nitre yields 12,000 inches of pure air, which therefore is more than a patient will consume in *a whole day*, as twelve hours at least must be allowed for sleeping, and other necessary avocations; so that the whole expence will not amount *even to so trifling a sum as that mentioned in the title, &c. &c.*

This is the substance of the advertisement itself, to which I have added *et cæteræ*, as I am really ashamed to give the extravagant *puffing* and fulsome panegyric on the *author*, annexed to it in the original, in order that it might make the greater impression on Wilkins's imagination.—For the benefits which I led the public

to expect from *so glorious a discovery* were even infinite.

I was out on business when the news-paper came in. As soon as I returned, Mr. Wilkins (who, as appeared by his looks, as well as declarations, had waited with the utmost impatience for my return) flew into the shop, caught me eagerly by the hands, and with rapture in his eyes, told me "that he had just met with a most wonderful discovery in the news-paper, which promised to be of infinite service to mankind. But that he wondered still more, if possible, at the modesty of the author, in publishing, without his name, a discovery that would immortalize him, and stand in competi-

competition with the moſt celebrated that have yet been revealed to the world!" He then informed me of the whole of the advertiſement in general terms, and propoſed immediately to ſet about repeating the experiment.

The *manner* in which he ſpoke this, would not permit me to doubt of his being in earneſt, and it was with the utmoſt difficulty that I kept my countenance; though had I betrayed riſibility, he would not have obſerved it. So eager was he on the experiment that he did not even wait for my opinion on the ſubject.

To work, therefore, he immediately went. The air was expelled

from the nitre; a barrel filled with it, was properly placed in lime-water, and now for the teſt of the truth of the important *fact*, which he determined to try on his own reſpiratory organs. The quantity of air in the veſſel would laſt, by my calculation, about fourteen or fifteen minutes.

When Mr. Wilkins is engaged in an experiment, he is ſo intent on it that he will not ſuffer himſelf to be interrupted by any concern either of buſineſs or intereſt; which not unfrequently expoſes him to inconveniencies; and this unluckily happened to be the caſe in the preſent inſtance. For he had hardly began to breath the pure medium, when a ſervant in livery

arrived

arrived in haſte with a note, requiring his immediate attendance on Lady S—, who lives about two miles from the town, and who, in conſequence of a fright, was ſuddenly taken in labour. I delivered to him the note, which he ſnatched from me, opened, and read, without intermitting his proceſs, when ſuddenly reddening with ire, he tore it in a thouſand pieces, and furiouſly threw it on the ground, uttering an oath (which I had never heard him do before) that "ſhe might deliver herſelf and be d——d, for he would not be diſturbed for any one." Taking it for granted that the fit was only momentary, and that, conſidering the importance of the family as patients, he would preſently alter his

reſolution, I returned to the ſervant, and with a reſpectful meſſage, as from W. deſired him to inform Sir John that he would attend his lady immediately. The ſervant went away. But to my great ſurprize, I did not find that Mr. Wilkins was making any preparation for his journey. After about ten minutes I took the liberty to remind him of the meſſage, with the urgency of the caſe; but he flew in as great a paſſion as before, and ſeemed reſolute not to be interrupted in his experiment. Dreading the conſequence, I began to repent ſorely of my frolick; and in order to undeceive him, and haſten his departure, was half inclined to confeſs to him the whole matter. But ſhame or fear reſtraining me, and ſtill hoping

that

that he would alter his determination, I waited a little longer for the event, especially as the time now drew near, when by my computation the dephlogisticated air would be rendered unfit for further respiration. At this instant however Sir John himself arrived, thundering at the door, his horse in a foam, and splashed with dirt; and vociferated in a most violent passion at Wilkins's delay; threatening not only to discard him from employment in his family, but to prosecute him for neglect as an accoucheur. As soon as his fury would permit me to interpose, I took the courage to assure him, that Mr. Wilkins was already on his journey to P——, and by this time certainly must be there. That

he was in ſo great haſte to relieve her ladyſhip, that he did not even take time to dreſs himſelf, but rode off in his ſtudying diſhabille, without waiting to ſaddle his horſe, and had gone the neareſt, though the worſt and dirtieſt way, in order that he might arrive there the ſooner, which was the reaſon that his Worſhip had not met him on the road. Satisfied with this anſwer, he rode off. I flew inſtantly to the 'laboratory, and throwing myſelf on my knees, earneſtly entreated him to go to the lady, as he valued his intereſt or reputation, and told him the meſſage I had delivered to Sir John. But in as violent a rage as before, he expreſſed his reſolution of not ſtirring for any one till the end of his proceſs, ſo

that

that I was now at my wit's end, and was about either to acknowledge the whole trick, or to requeſt that I might go; and with a feigned excuſe of his having met with an accident on the road, offer to officiate in his ſtead; when recollecting that the fifteen minutes were now nearly expired, and perceiving that Wilkins's inſpirations were much leſs free and eaſy than when he began, it occurred to me, that as he was well enough acquainted with the doctrine of *the teſt of the purity of air*, and that he muſt, according to his uſual cuſtom, have fallen into the preſent error merely through want of due reflection, I ſuggeſted to him (as indeed I might have done when the meſſenger firſt came, but that I was too much confuſed

fufed to think of it) that the whole experiment, which I had fince carefully confidered, was founded on a wrong principle. That it fuppofed the only noxious ingredient communicated to the air by infpiration to be *fixed air*, which, as appeared by the turbidnefs, was, I acknowledged, abforbed by the lime-water. But notwithftanding its being deprived of that principle, it muft, according to my idea, be at this time highly impure; for that it was *phlogifton* which rendered it noxious with refpect to refpiration; from which lime-water, in the prefent procefs, was by no means calculated to free it. I earneftly requefted he would make trial of it with the *eudiometer*, though I doubted not, but

on

on his recollecting the circumſtances mentioned, that teſt would be unneceſſary. I had ſcarce ended my requeſt, when (after a laborious reſpiration, which cauſed him to be black in the face) he tumbled from his ſeat, and fell down ſenſeleſs on the floor. Alarmed at the event, I halloo'd aloud for Solomon; who running inſtantly to my aſſiſtance, we breathed into his lungs, rubbed his body, rolled him on the ground, and applied volatiles to his mouth and noſtrils, till at length, with the utmoſt difficulty, he was revived, and recovered. Convinced by this accident, and my reaſoning, of the fallacy of the *fact*, and nettled at having thus expoſed himſelf, and endangered the loſs of

a very

a very profitable family, he broke the whole apparatus in a violent fit of paſſion; beſtowed very hearty cenſures on the lying author of the account, begged pardon for the haſtineſs of his late expreſſions to me, and kindly and feelingly thanked me for the attention which I had manifeſted to his intereſt and life. He immediately ordered Solomon to bring out his horſe, and was preparing to dreſs himſelf; but I prevented the latter by mentioning what I had told Sir John relative to his feigned departure. At the ſame time I propoſed to him, (and humbly hoped he would not conſider it but as meant for his good) that in order to preſerve the favour and confidence of the family, and furniſh

a ſuf-

a ſufficient excuſe for not attending ſooner, he ſhould take the road I had deſcribed to the Baronet; roll himſelf in the mud, of which he would there find plenty; affect lameneſs; and arriving in that condition, excuſe his delay, by telling them that "his horſe, through his haſte to arrive, had ſtumbled and thrown him; and that the hurt which he had received from the violence of the fall, had for more than half an hour rendered him incapable of purſuing his journey; the truth of all which was, he preſumed, ſufficiently evident from the plight in which they beheld him." This I obſerved, could not fail to be a ſufficient apology. He ſmiled heartily at the propoſal, which he immediately determined

termined to adopt, and accordingly actually put it in execution. He arrived in the plight propoſed juſt in time to deliver the lady, and ſave his fee, which, had he been five minutes later, he would have loſt; and the delivery was probably haſtened by the lady's riſibility (notwithſtanding her painful ſituation) at the ludicrous figure he made with his limping walk, bedaubed condition, and odd undreſs; all which, not only procured him pardon, but furniſhed ample ſubject of mirth to the lady and her goſſips, who were highly entertained with the adventure. The affair even endeared him to the family, but particularly to the lady, who conſidered him as a martyr, at leaſt a ſufferer in

her

her cauſe. And you will believe me, when I tell you that the iſſue was matter of no leſs joy, than the occaſion of it had been of merriment to,

Your ſincere Friend, &c.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

EVER ſince you knew me, (which was ſome years before I arrived at the age of fourteen) though I have been a general admirer of the ſex, and have had no little commerce with them, you do not remember me to have ever been ſo far attached to any particular object as to feel that ſentiment which is uſually called *love*. You are conſcious that I have always treated the very idea of that paſſion with ridicule; at you in particular I have laughed, and believed it impoſſible that I ever could become ſo weak as to fall into the ſame ſituation. You recollect, no doubt, the

bravado

bravado expreſſions which I have almoſt conſtantly uſed on thoſe occaſions, as if I defied the utmoſt power of the ideal deity. But, alas! I find myſelf a mere mortal, like the reſt of my ſex; and the god whom I had ſo repeatedly and wantonly provoked, by my preſumptuous ſarcaſms, has now taken his full revenge on me.

Since I wrote laſt, the Eaſter holidays have intervened, and Mr. Wilkins's amiable daughter has been home from the boarding ſchool. She is now in her eighteenth year, rather taller than the uſual ſtature: her ſhape is elegant, and not too ſlender; her features regularly beautiful, with a mixture of the lovely and majeſtic; her

complexion is fair, her hair flaxen, her deportment graceful and eafy, her temper fweetly mild, yet blended with becoming dignity and vivacity. Her countenance, though fufficiently open, has an unaffected but bewitching air of modefty, her converfation is fenfible and elegant, and her voice fo foftly enchanting, that it is rather felt by the heart, than heard by the ear. All thefe charms, however, and many more, I obferved without other emotion, than that ufually felt on feeing a beautiful and accomplifhed woman. But as a finer object than ordinary, of any kind, natural attracts our attention, as I conftantly dined with her, and was befides often in her company by accident, or otherwife, and

as

as I never had an opportunity of being ſo frequently in the company of a modeſt beauty before, it would not, I ſuppoſe, be wondered at by others, that ſhe inſenſibly caught hold of my affections. Without reflecting on the conſequences, however, I ſuffered my eyes to dwell with rapture on the charms of her perſon and mien; and my ears to be delighted with her enchanting tongue. When preſent ſhe engaged my whole attention, and when abſent ſhe employed my thoughts. I dreamed of her when I happened to ſleep, and was never happy awake, but when in her company. The night before ſhe left us, we had a route, conſiſting of the moſt reſpectable of Mr. Wilkin's patients, but chiefly of

the young ladies their daughters; and at the requeſt of ſeveral who knew her muſical abilities, ſhe ſung ſeveral ſongs, which ſhe accompanied on the guitar. Perhaps you will deem me partial or romantic. I have heard the moſt celebrated performers on the theatres and public places in London; but in my judgment, her performance ſo far tranſcended theirs, that compariſon was loſt. I was not charmed, but tranſported; ſhe could not be ſaid, like them, to delight the ear, ſhe raviſhed the heart; and I imagined myſelf in heaven, hearing an angel. After ſupper. dancing was propoſed; and, heavens! ſhall I relate that Miſs Wilkins fell to be my partner! Language, dear Dennis, cannot

deſcribe

deſcribe the extacy I felt during that bliſsful period: I fancied myſelf, like St. Paul, caught up into the third heaven!—My tranſport was too viſible not to be obſerved by the amiable fair one, and might eaſily have been perceived by the whole company, had they deigned an attention to the meaneſt object in it; and I could not refrain from taking the firſt favourable opportunity to reveal to her the ſituation of my heart, and ardently to requeſt the happineſs of her countenancing my paſſion. She earneſtly begged that I would be ſilent on the ſubject then, and alſo to be careful of my behaviour, leſt the company ſhould obſerve; but aſſured me, that ſhe would ſpeak with me, on that

particular, the firſt favourable opportunity of our being alone. As I could not now doubt but my wiſhes were crowned with ſucceſs, I leave you to gueſs at the unſpeakable tranſports I felt, which yet, in compliance with her requeſt, I ſuppreſſed as much as poſſible during the evening. At twelve the company departed. I ſought eagerly for an opportunity of ſpeaking to my dear charmer alone that night; but my utmoſt vigilance was eluded, and I was obliged to retire, in this diſtracted ſituation, to my chamber. Sleep, you may well imagine, was baniſhed from my eyes. Anxious to hear the confirmation of my happineſs from her dear lips, I came down early, and waited in the moſt impatient ſuſpence till ſhe aroſe.

Mr.

Mr. Wilkins was buſily engaged in his ſtudy — I flew to the parlour where ſhe was alone, threw myſelf at her feet, and in the moſt ardent though reſpectſul terms, requeſted that ſhe would releaſe me from my agony of doubt, by pronouncing the happy ſentence. She anſwered me as follows:

"I muſt acknowledge myſelf, Sir, greatly obliged for the good opinion which you expreſs concerning me; but were it even my inclination, which however is by no means the caſe, yet the duty I owe to the beſt and moſt indulgent of parents, would render it impoſſible for me to comply with your requeſt. And if you have that regard for me which you profeſs, you will

ſhew it by never mentioning the ſubject again."——I attempted to remonſtrate, and to repeat in ſtill more ardent terms. But perceiving my intention, ſhe feigned an excuſe for retiring to her chamber, and notwithſtanding my earneſt endeavours to detain her, broke gently from me, and reſpectfully withdrew. Though ſhe continued at dinner time to treat me with reſpect, I never after had an opportunity of being alone in her company; and ſhe returned next morning to the boarding ſchool.

As yourſelf, dear Dennis, have lately been in a ſimilar ſituation, you will eaſily conceive the anguiſh which rends my heart at the thought of my

diſappoint-

diſappointment; and the forlorn, and diſtracted condition of my mind at the idea of her being *another's*, which her anſwer evidently implies. I ſhall only add, that I heartily implore forgiveneſs for the ridicule which I threw on you on that occaſion, as your diſtreſs is now, I believe, more than equalled by that of,

Your's, &c. &c.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

My Dear Friend,

MY laſt letter concluded with informing you that I had felt, for the firſt time, the pangs of diſappointed love, heightened by the exquiſite torments of jealouſy. For the expreſſion of the dear enchantreſs, relative to the *duty ſhe owed to a parent*, left me no doubt that ſhe was already engaged to the happy object of his choice. I doubt not that it has afforded you ample matter of triumph and revenge for my treatment of you when in a ſimilar ſituation; and you have, I imagine, by this time, made yourſelf ſufficiently merry at my expence, as indeed

deed your truly facetious letter ſufficiently indicates. However, as I am not preſent with you, I can the better ſtand the brunt of your ridicule; and muſt give you the farther ſatisfaction of declaring, that I either want your reſolution, or that my diſorder is of a more violent kind. In ſix weeks you was pretty well recovered. But a month has now nearly elapſed, and I feel myſelf in a more deplorable condition than even when I laſt wrote to you. To paſs over the gloom of my mind, the anguiſh of my breaſt, at the thought of the object of my dearest affections being deſtined to the arms of another; my ſleepleſs nights, my withered viſage, my meager carcaſe, and a long doleful catalogue of diſtreſſes,

which

which may be met with in every tale of love, the moſt convincing proof that I can give you of the reality of my flame, is, that I have hardly ate a pound of ſolid food ſince ſentence was pronounced on me. In writing to you indeed, whom I have formerly ſo ſeverely rallied for the ſame weakneſs, I endeavour to aſſume a jocoſe air; in company too, I affect a gaiety which I am a ſtranger to in my private moments; and vainly ſtrive to eat againſt my appetite, in order to prevent ſuſpicion of the cauſe of my complaint, and the ridicule (which I dread) attending it. But thoſe attempts ſerve only to expoſe me the more. My acquaintance already conclude that love is the cauſe of my

diſorder

diſorder, and (very happily for me) imagine that I have *left the fair object of it behind me*, and even that I had fled from London in conſequence of the diſappointment. My malady has not eſcaped the attention of Mr. Wilkins himſelf, who ſo litttle troubles his head with matters foreign to his purſuits; though he does not ſeem to have any ſuſpicion that even love is the cauſe; a paſſion which he has long ſince forgot, and therefore is leſs likely to ſuſpect that it ſhould rage to ſuch exceſs in the breaſt of another. As he ſeems to have conceived a ſincere affection for me, he has from time to time obſerved with concern the apparent decline of my health, and very kindly adviſed

viſed me to ſuch methods, as in his opinion were moſt likely to reſtore it. He has occaſionally lent me his horſe for the purpoſe of air and exerciſe; directed the maid ſervant to provide me proper reſtorative diet; and recommended the uſe of ſtomachic and corroborating medicines; though the two latter of theſe I have not paid much attention to. Still, however, he perceived that my health viſibly declined, and that I was already in a conſumption, or in the moſt imminent danger of it; and very kindly, and with all the ſolicitude of real friendſhip and concern, took more pains than you will readily believe in conſidering my caſe. He ſeemed indeed, even to have laidaſide his

philoſo-

philoſophical ſtudies, and to have had my recovery alone at heart; when one day, after having, as he fondly imagined, hit on ſomething that would effectually relieve me, he ran into the ſhop, the joy of friendſhip ſparkling in his eyes; evidently proceeding from the rapture which his heart felt at the thought of being at length able to do me ſervice; and after joyfully congratulating me on his diſcovery, and the aſſurances of the ſpeedy return of my health, he thus communicated both his preſcription and its *rationale*.

"After the moſt attentive conſideration of your caſe, my dear *Harcourt*, I diſcover the origin of it in loſs of appetite, or to ſpeak more properly

perly, *want of digeſtion*. Your own account confirms the idea; for you acknowledge that loſs of appetite preceded the conſumptive ſymptoms, and therefore was the cauſe of them; for indeed, what is more likely to produce conſumption, than want of nouriſhment? The intention therefore ſhould be to reſtore the digeſtive power. To this end you have taken the moſt celebrated remedies uſually adminiſtered on thoſe occaſions, but unfortunately to no effect. This, however, I flatter myſelf will not be the caſe with the remedy I am now going to propoſe. It is the reſult of much ſtudy and attention to the ſubject; is founded on the very principles of digeſtion, and when mentioned you will inſtantly be ſtruck

with

with a conviction of its efficacy, and wonder that it could so long have been overlooked by the faculty. I am exceedingly happy also on your account, as having been the *occasion of the discovery*, and of being the first person on whom was tried a remedy which will prove of such infinite service to mankind, because it will be the means of rendering your name equally immortal with that of the discoverer.

I need not inform you that digestion is now demonstrated to be the effects, not of muscular compression, of attrition, of coction, or of fermention, but merely of *solution*; that the gastric juice is a proper menstruum

for that purpoſe; and that animals whoſe aliments are different, have different kinds of this juice, anſwerable to the nature of the food to be digeſted. This fact is ſo certain, that we now know that the ſtomach is not neceſſary to the digeſtion of food. For if the gaſtric juice be taken from a dead animal, and put into a vial, with proper aliment, in a due degree of heat, that proceſs will be performed as effectually as in the ſtomach itſelf. Thus alſo eggs may be hatched by the heat of an oven, as compleatly as by incubation of the hen.—The ſtomach therefore may be conſidered as a mere *veſſel*. And it ſeems a matter of indifference, whether the ſolvent of the food be furniſhed to it by the glandules

glandules of that viſcus, or from without. From the *human* ſtomach opportunities of obtaining this menſtruum do not often occur;—though I think it may be contrived by means of a proper flexible ſyphon, or rather by cauſing a faſting perſon to ſwallow pieces of ſpunge, which when ſufficiently wetted, may, by means of ſtrings faſtened to them, be withdrawn — But ſuppoſe we content ourſelves at preſent with having recourſe to the gaſtric juices of thoſe animals whoſe food is of a ſimilar nature to our own. The digeſtive faculties of dogs, and of ſwine, come the neareſt to ours; from them therefore it is moſt adviſeable to procure the liquid we are in queſt of.

I counſel then, that you take a certain quantity of gaſtric juice three or four times every day, and, immediately after, a proper proportion of food: I infer from analogy, that the juice thus taken will even create that very ſenſation which we call *hunger*; (and from hence alſo, and what has been ſaid, it is evident that your diſorder proceeds originally from want of the ſecretion of a proper quantity of the irritating ſolvent) and thus ſhould we have an ARTIFICIAL digeſtive proceſs exactly ſimilar to the NATURAL one. You may even vary the nature of your ſolvent according to that of the food you wiſh to eat. Thus, if animal food be deſired, the gaſtric juice of the animals before mentioned,

ed, or even of the carnivorous ones will be proper; but if vegetable, that of a ſheep, a bullock, or an horſe. By this means, we ſhall even *improve* upon nature. If the mode propoſed be, on any account, inconvenient, the proceſs may be carried on out of the ſtomach; and when the ſolution is compleated, the chyle may be transferred, by an eaſy act of deglutition, into that viſcus. If you have any ſuſpicion of a deficiency of bile, or of pancreatic juice, a little of theſe may occaſionally be added, according as the food be vegetable, or animal; agreeable to the diſcovery of an ingenious modern philoſopher: to which I would wiſh to add, that the *ſaliva* alſo ſhould not be neglected. This

advice is ſo perfectly conſonant to the nature and principles of chylification, that I am perſuaded it muſt ſtrike you too forcibly to render perſuaſives neceſſary to your adopting it; and the importance and general utility of the diſcovery, I preſume, needs no illuſtration. I will therefore immediately make it my buſineſs to procure a ſufficient number of proper animals, in order that you may be daily ſupplied with a due quantity of the required ſolvent; ſo that in a very ſhort time, I aſſure myſelf of the happineſs of ſeeing you, my dear Harcourt, recovered to your former fleſhineſs and vigour."

Gloomy

Gloomy as was the ſtate of my mind, I could not but ſmile heartily at my kind maſter's odd propoſal, and thanked him in the moſt cordial terms for his friendly anxiety and attention, relative to my health. Whatever was my own opinion of his ſingular preſcription, it would have been ungrateful to have affronted him by a *refuſal* to make trial of it; nor indeed did he wait to know my ſentiments; but taking it for granted that they coincided with his own, left me immediately, in raptures at his diſcovery, in order to provide the animals he had mentioned.

Dogs therefore, after having been kept long faſting, were regularly kill-

ed four times a day; or in lieu of theſe the gaſtric juice was taken from the ſtomachs of ſheep, hogs, or bullocks, killed by a neighbouring butcher, according to the nature of the food he imagined I ſhould eat; and great indeed were his expectations of the event. But however I might endeavour to ſave appearances with him, to you I frankly acknowledge, that I have not yet had ſtomach to give his remedy a trial. 'Tis now near three weeks that he imagines I have perſevered in it; and as I have conſtantly made an unfavourable report of its ſucceſs, and am now even worſe than before, he has at length conſented to my diſcontinuing the remedy, and given up (with what reluctancy and grief of heart

I leave

I leave you to guefs) all the dazzling hopes which he had fo fondly entertained concerning it.

I am, SIR,

Your's, &c.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

DEAR SIR,

IN the variety of wild experiments which Mr. Wilkins makes himſelf, or his random application of thoſe publiſhed by others, to the purpoſes of medicine, &c. it will not be wondered at if, once in his life, he ſhould prove ſucceſsful. The following may ſerve as an inſtance:

Our neighbourhood has of late been much infeſted with the ſmall pox; and as people are naturally alarmed at the ravages of that diſorder, and are now pretty well convinced of the advantages of *inoculation*, they have at laſt very generally adopted the latter

latter method. As Mr. Wilkins is continually employing his thoughts for the good of mankind, he has given no little attention to this deſtructive malady. His improvements on the *cold regimen* (as plunging the patient in *cold well water*, rolling him in *ſnow*, &c.) did not indeed appear to be attended with thoſe capital advantages which he expected would reſult from them; but this can by no means be ſaid of his new, and moſt *elegant method of communicating the* INFECTION. As he very freely mentions his idea to me, I am enabled to acquaint you with his motives, and the analogical *reaſoning* which he employed on that memorable occaſion.

" The

"The principal reaſon (he obſerved) that the ſmall pox proves ſo much more fatal in the natural way, than in inoculation is, that in the former caſe the infection is received by the *lungs*, one of the principal vital organs of the body; whereas, in the latter, 'tis communicated to the *arm*, a part of infinitely leſs importance. The diſorder makes its moſt formidable appearance in the part firſt infected. Thus, in inoculation, the arm violently inflames; and the like muſt be the caſe with the lungs in the natural way. But this inflammation even in the arm, ſo diſagreeable at beſt, generally painful, and ſometimes even *dangerous*, I would wiſh to prevent, as well as the *terror* and *pain* ariſing from the uſual manner of perform-

performing the *operation*; which frequently deter the timid from deriving the benefit of this salutary invention; and for which therefore it behoves the medical practitioner to find a remedy. I am much mistaken if the method I am going to propose, will not only remove these inconveniences, but even render the disorder itself more mild and innocent than is at present believed possible.

It is well known, that if *fixed air* be breathed by the lungs, it becomes instantly fatal to animal life; whereas the same fluid may be taken into the stomach without the least inconvenience.

The

The poiſon of a *viper* infuſed into a wound will preſently inflame the part, and in a ſhort time put a period to the animal's exiſtence; but the ſame poiſon received into the ſtomach is perfectly inoffenſive.

From a conſideration of theſe facts therefore, it ſeems to me, that if the variolous infection be communicated to the blood by the uſual way of our food, the like ſalutary effects, with reſpect to this dreadful diſeaſe, will follow. For the matter being rendered leſs virulent by the proceſs of digeſtion, and being beſides, preſently and equally diſtributed, by the circulation, throughout the body, not only no local inflammation can take place, but the

the diſorder itſelf will be ſo mild, that ——— by heavens! I am reſolved to make trial of it this very evening."

Raviſhed with the idea, and eager to put it in execution, he immediately took horſe and galloped away to the houſe of a poor labourer, in a neighbouring village, whoſe child he engaged to inoculate *gratis*. For this favour the parents, as you may imagine, were not a little thankful. After giving a cathartic or two, he made a puncture in the arm with an uninfected lancet, in order to preſerve appearances, and the ſame day brought home ſome variolous matter, which he had juſt taken. This being mixed with a little milk, and corked up in a vial,

he

he ordered me to direct, "The "draught to be taken at night go- "ing to bed," and it was actually ſent off, and adminiſtered accordingly. I confeſs I was curious to know the event of ſo ſingular an experiment, which a few days determined: for the patient took the infection, and went regularly through the diſeaſe; and that in a more favourable manner than we uſually obſerve even in inoculation. The ſucceſs of the experiment has induced Mr. Wilkins to adopt it as his general method; though, for obvious reaſons, he has as yet divulged it to no one but me: He only waits, however, for a ſufficient number of caſes in order to make it public; and you will acknowledge that ſo extraordinary a *diſ-*

covery

covery will make no little figure in the hiſtory of inoculation.

Having mentioned this, I cannot but relate another ſingular experiment of a ſimilar kind. A gentleman in a neighbouring town had been troubled with an ague, for which he had had the advice of his apothecary without ſucceſs. He afterwards applied to various other practitioners, phyſicians as well as apothecaries; and though they preſcribed all thoſe remedies which are uſually found efficacious in that diſorder, his paroxyſms continued to return with as much violence as ever. He had now been ill near ten months; at this period, he

was recommended to Mr. Wilkins, whoſe fame is by no means confined to his own pariſh. He likewiſe preſcribed a variety of medicines, and thoſe of the moſt powerful kind, the *blue vitriol* not excepted. Still however the diſorder continued. Wilkins, chagrined at being thus baffled, and ambitious to ſucceed in a caſe wherein all his neighbours of the faculty had failed, applied himſelf very attentively to the conſideration of the caſe, and the following was the reſult of his meditation.

He obſerved that the *Bark* was conſidered as the moſt capital remedy in intermittents; and believing it to be

be an abſolute ſpecific himſelf, concluded that its failure could only be owing to its being adminiſtred in an inſufficient quantity. That it was this circumſtance which at firſt occaſioned it to be in diſrepute. But that its character was afterwards reſtored by the illuſtrious Sydenham, who judiciouſly exhibited it in larger and more frequent doſes. That the ſame had been ſaid to be the caſe in our days, with reſpect to the guaiacum in rheumatiſms. For theſe reaſons he was determined to try what a large quantity of the bark would do in the preſent caſe. He did not ſee reaſon to conclude that it was hurtful in any quantity, more than many other vegetable

ſubſtances which compoſe our *daily food*; into which he did not doubt but it might be introduced, in proper caſes, with good effect; and that he ſhould, as ſoon as the preſent fit was over, give the patient in queſtion a much larger doſe of this celebrated drug than has hitherto been ventured on.

He therefore ordered me to weigh up two ounces of the powder; and, without informing me of his intention, rode off with it to the patient. When he arrived, the fit had been over for ſome time. He put the whole two ounces into a bowl, and pouring on it a ſufficient quantity of red wine, mixed them together, and made the

the patient drink it off at a draught. When he returned, I liſtened to his relation of the above circumſtance with aſtoniſhment; but you will believe me when I inform you, that my aſtoniſhment was ſtill greater when I learnt that the patient had taken that enormous doſe without the leaſt inconvenience following, and that from that hour he had no return of his diſorder.

With reſpect to myſelf, I am almoſt aſhamed to inform you that I continue in the ſame declining way as when I laſt wrote, and have not at preſent any hope of amendment. Of this at leaſt I am certain, that there is but *one* remedy——could *that* be

applied, it would have a greater and more inſtant effect than even the very extraordinary one which I have been deſcribing.—But that remedy muſt for ever be deſpaired of by

Your unfortunate Friend, &c.

LETTER

LETTER X.

DEAR SIR,

I Have the ſatisfaction (if indeed it may be called one) to inform you that I am not only beloved and reſpected by Mr. Wilkins, but that I alſo enjoy the good opinion of ſuch of his patients as I have hitherto had occaſion to viſit. My ſucceſs in this reſpect would be the more flattering in that I find, by occaſional hints, that W. is not at preſent ſo much eſteemed in his medical character as he uſed to be ſome years ago. The reaſon privately aſſigned for it is, that his intenſe application to the ſtudy

of philoſophy has by no means been favourable to his intellects; and that he begins to make his practice too much ſubſervient to his philoſophical vagaries. As it is known that I had my medical education in London, and as I am not without a ſhare of that gravity which is ſo becoming in a medical practitioner, (at leaſt ſince *Eaſter* laſt) my opinion has, in more than one inſtance, been preferred even to that of Mr. W. and ſome are even partial enough to ſend for me by choice; taking care however ſo to word the meſſage, as to avoid giving Wilkins offence. Were I inclined to ſettle here, I ſhould undoubtedly uſe my endeavours to cheriſh this prejudice in my favour, and ſhould indeed have a fine opening. But as it is, I am not in the leaſt deſirous

of

of embracing this advantage; becauſe, for a reaſon which will eaſily occur, it would now be inconſiſtent with the peace of my mind, not only to ſettle for life in S——, but even to continue long in this part of the country. Beſides, my ſituation in Mr. Wilkins's ſervice is, on another account, very far from being ſo agreeable as I at firſt imagined.

Whether the unhappy ſituation of my mind, and the relaxed ſtate of my body in conſequence thereof, render my temper more irritable and impatient than uſual, I ſhall not determine; I confeſs I ſhould be aſhamed to mention what you will meet with in the ſequel to any other perſon; but as

I do

I do not ſcruple to divulge the little ſecrets, and even *weakneſſes* of my heart to you, I ſhall make no apology for the ſubject matter of the remainder of this epiſtle.

I have already mentioned that our two culinary domeſtics are upon the moſt amicable, or rather amorous terms, and that the female is even the active perſon in the amour. Much of my time is neceſſarily ſpent in their apartment. I generally ſup with them, frequently breakfaſt, and ſometimes dine, when Mr. Wilkins happens to be out, or otherwiſe engaged. And there are beſides a thouſand little occaſions which bring me into the kitchen (ſuch as dreſs, thirſt, the fire, &c.) which

you

you need not be informed of. On theſe occaſions I always endeavour to put myſelf on ſuch a level with them as to keep clear of their ill natured reflections, and you know me to be perfectly affable and free, deſpiſing thoſe airs of ſuperiority, which many in our ſtation are apt to aſſume. Mr. C—— always took care that his apprentices and journeymen ſhould be treated with a proper degree of reſpect. But Mr. Wilkins is too much abſorbed in ſpeculation to attend to affairs of ſo trivial a nature; though I am convinced that had he the leaſt idea of my diſagreeable ſituation, he would take effectual methods to redreſs it.

I have

I have reaſon to think that they are jealous of Mr. Wilkins's kindneſs to me. Being old ſervants in the family, and my ſeniors alſo with reſpect to *age*, they ſeem to think they have a right to a ſuperiority over me, which Wilkins's partiality renders it particularly neceſſary for them to aſſert. At Mr. C—'s the porter was duly ſubordinate to the journeyman. But if I want Solomon to carry out a medicine, or do any thing in the ſhop, he comes not but at his own convenience, unleſs W. happens to be in the way; and if Deborah has occaſion for his aſſiſtance, ſhe muſt always be ſerved firſt. If the urgency of the patient's caſe obliges me to be importunate, "They have no notion of "being commanded by *ſervants*; one "maſter

" maſter is enough; ſome folks are " very fond of taking the *gentleman* " upon them, though they want the " *means*," with a number of ſimilar ſarcaſms; which though I do not think it worth while to make any reply to, yet as I am conſcious that my behaviour does not merit ſuch treatment, I confeſs it gives me ſome uneaſineſs, and makes me more careful than I otherwiſe ſhould be of my conduct towards them. I even frequently do thoſe little offices myſelf to avoid the diſagreeable conſequences of ſetting him about them. Perhaps if I aſſumed a proper degree of firmneſs, and treated theſe ungenerous people in a more ſpirited manner, their behaviour to me would be more obliging. But ſeeing the

eaſineſs

eaſineſs of my temper they impoſe on me. The man ſeems of himſelf to be civil enough, and would, I believe, go on very well, was he not tutored and ſet on by his virago. This is not the moſt diſagreeable part of my ſituation. I may ſafely venture to hint my ſuſpicion to you, that Deborah in the fury of her deſpair, has, if I may gueſs by her waiſt, ſuffered Solomon to take a ſample of her *cupidity*; and that in conſequence of diſliking the *goods*, he is grown cooler than ſhe could wiſh; for ſhe takes unuſual pains to demonſtrate to him on every occaſion, that he has the greateſt ſhare of her attention and reſpect, and ſeems to endeavour to ſhew her fondneſs for *him*, by her contempt of *me*. If I ſit with them at

night

night after buſineſs is over, or at other intervals of leiſure, her whole diſcourſe is directed to Solomon, as if there was not a third perſon in company. If I venture to join in the converſation, (for you know me to be a lover of ſociety) the anſwer, if I get any, is as much diſtinguiſhed by the croſsneſs of its *tone* as that of her language to her paramour is by its affected fondneſs, ſhe evidently intending that he ſhould *notice* the contraſt. *(N. B. Dont imagine that I am jealous.)* Perhaps alſo a certain *conſciouſneſs* ſuggeſts to her, that if ſhe be ſeen to treat me with common civility, Solomon might, for good reaſons, ſuſpect her *virtue*. You, I believe, are pretty well convinced that I by no means, make a God of my

belly

belly, and that I never had a wiſh to fare better than the meaneſt ſervant at Mr. C——'s table. But how would you, and your fellow labourers feel yourſelves, ſhould your cook, immediately on ſetting down to ſupper, help your porters to the niceſt and beſt parts of the entertainment, leaving the coarſe refuſe for you? Yet if the wing of a fowl, or the fragment of a nice pudding, pye, or cuſtard, happens to be left at dinner, I have the mortification to ſee an inferior ſervant helped to it, while myſelf am left to feed on bread and cheeſe, or other homely fare; and a bottle of wine, cribbed out of the cellar, is lovingly emptied by my two aſſociates, while I, at the ſame table, am ſuffered to regale myſelf with ſmall

beer.

beer. To treat her favourite with *tid bits*, is a privilege enjoyed by the cook time out of mind; but when it is done in the company of a third perſon, to aſk him to *taſte*, would be no more than a mark of common civility. As the party in queſtion (for Solomon I conſider only as a cypher) is ſenſible that the *ſtate of my appetite*, if not mere *compliment*, would have induced me to refuſe, the ſlight muſt be conſidered as the greater; and was evidently intended with that view, for reaſons aſſigned. I impute this behaviour, however, to want of breeding, and paſs it off as well as I can. And in order to ſubject myſelf to as little uneaſineſs in this way as poſſible, I have of late, eſpecially as the weather is now warm, either

kept myſelf more in the ſhop, or gone out. Perhaps alſo, my *mere preſence* was one cauſe of their odd behaviour towards me, as it proved an impediment to their pleaſures.

On theſe accounts, however, and another which I need not mention, I ſhall by no means think of continuing here. I would even have left S—— before now, but that it is no recommendation to have quitted a firſt place ſo ſoon, and that Mr. Wilkins's kind treatment is an antidote to that which I meet with from his domeſtics. The moment that I can do it with reputation, I certainly ſhall get another maſter—if indeed the ill ſtate of my health will

will permit me to engage in his ſervice.

On a review of this letter, I cannot but aſk pardon for its contents, which after all I ſhould not have troubled you with, but that it may ſerve to prepare you for the difficulties which you muſt expect to meet with when you leave Mr. C——. The fate of a journeyman apothecary, without fortune, or friends, (though that is not your caſe) is truly deplorable; and though my ſituation is by no means agreeable, yet I have ſufficient reaſon to conſole myſelf on comparing it with that of ſeveral of my old ſchool-fellows, now in the ſame undeſirable capacity.

I am, my dear Friend, yours, &c.

LETTER XI.

DEAR SIR,

I Muſt acknowledge myſelf greatly obliged by your kind attention to my health, and ſhould be ill-deſerving of your friendſhip, if I did not endeavour to put your judicious advice in practice. I am as much convinced as you can be, that nothing but *reſolution* is wanting; but at the ſame time it muſt be remembered, that all men are not bleſt with an equal portion of that virtue; and that they vary hardly in any thing ſo much as their degrees of ſenſibility. At the ſame time that I am making my acknowledgments to you, it would be ungrateful not to mention the

the obligations of a ſimilar kind, which I am under to another, and which therefore ſhall be the ſubject of this letter. I lately gave you one inſtance of Mr. Wilkins's kind attention to my health; but he has ſince been ſtill more aſſiduous in his friendly endeavours to reſtore it; and a few days ago, after having been locked up in his ſtudy the whole forenoon, ſolely intent on contemplating my caſe, he ran in haſte into the ſhop, and with a mixture of real joy, and affectionate concern in his countenance, took me by the hand, and thus addreſſed me.

"I need not, my dear Harcourt, mention the concern with which I have obſerved the unhappy ſtate of your

health; and it is with grief I perceive, that notwithſtanding my utmoſt endeavours to remove your complaint, it, on the contrary, viſibly increaſes. I lately flattered myſelf that I had not only diſcovered an eaſy method of recovering *you*, but that the ſame plan would have been of the moſt eſſential ſervice to the world in general. The grief which the failure thereof has occaſioned me on your account, I need not mention; though I can hardly yet perſuade myſelf but that it may be uſeful, and even effectual in many caſes; and I mean in future to give it another trial. That it has not ſucceeded with you, may be owing to contingent circumſtances, which I cannot at preſent explain. But waving that point, I have

ever

ever ſince, at times, moſt ardently applied my thoughts to your caſe, and flatter myſelf that I have now hit on a method which will not fail to produce the effect I have long ſo earneſtly deſired." I cordially thanked him for his affectionate concern and attention; and he thus proceeded.

"I at firſt meant to have propoſed the injecting of proper nutriment, already animalized—our artificial chyle, for example—at once into the vaſcular ſyſtem; but as the operation muſt be attended with pain, I have laid aſide that idea, eſpecially as I flatter myſelf that the method which I am now about to mention will better anſwer the end.

At all events we can but have recourſe to the other, if this fails.

"It is the duty of the medical practitioner, to avail himſelf of every diſcovery in philoſophy, and to turn it to uſe in the healing art for the general good. I preſume it would be ſuperfluous to attempt explaining to you the doctrine of *animal abſorption*, ſince it has of late been ſo clearly illuſtrated by a deſervedly eminent anatomiſt of our own country, whoſe performance you doubtleſs have read; but it ſeems to me that a very capital uſe may be made of that doctrine, which has eſcaped the attention of its juſtly celebrated diſcoverer. We are to reflect, however, that *Rome was not built in a day.* Improvements

provements in philoſophy advance by ſlow degrees. The age in which the *loadſtone* was diſcovered, remained ignorant of the moſt important uſes of it.

"The *lymphatics* are proved to be a ſyſtem of *abſorbent veſſels*; and facts have ſufficiently demonſtrated, that beſides the fluids which they abſorb from the cavities of the body, they have alſo the power of inhaling ſubſtances, *ab extra*, when theſe ſubſtances are duly applied to the ſkin. Thus, mercury is imbibed by them in conſequence of mercurial frictions, as is proved beyond controverſy by the ſalivation which ſucceeds. There are other known proofs of *extraneous abſorption*, if

if I may uſe the term; as in communicating the ſmall pox by inoculation; and ſimilar inſtances which I need not relate. But phyſicians have confined their ideas in practice, to *medical* abſorption; and it is matter of aſtoniſhment to me that they ſhould ſo ſtrangely have overlooked another, a daily obvious, and far more important effect of this power.

"It is well known that butchers are uſually fatter than other men, though they perhaps eat leſs; for *as fat as a butcher* is a proverbial expreſſion. It is ſtill more generally known that cooks are in like thriving condition, though it is alſo certain that cooks eat leaſt of all other people; the heat to which they

are

are expoſed, and the ſmell of the victuals, taking away their appetites. Notwithſtanding, however, that the cook eats *little*, and yet grows *big*, ſhe uſes a very conſiderable degree of exerciſe, which, together with the evaporation from the ſurface, in conſequence of the heat of the kitchen, muſt neceſſarily occaſion a great expence of fluids. The butcher too labours hard, and perſpires ſcarcely leſs than the cook. As nevertheleſs ſo great a quantity of nutriment is derived into the bodies of theſe people as to produce the effect mentioned; my quere is, *whence this nutriment proceeds?* That it does not get into the ſyſtem by the *primæ viæ*, appears from what has already been obſerved, and as there is but one alterna-

tive

tive, abſorption is the only method by which it can be derived. Now, the hands of the butcher are continually greaſy with the fat of his meat; but the fat is the moſt nutritive part of animal aliment; it is therefore abſorbed by the lymphatics, and carried into the ſyſtem, where it produces the effect noticed. The cook is not only in a ſimilar predicament with reſpect to her hands, but the air which ſurrounds her on every ſide is loaded with nutritive effluvia, exhaled from the various aliments expoſed to the fire, which therefore are in like manner inhaled, and that as well by the lymphatics in the lungs, as by thoſe throughout the whole ſurface of the body; whence, by the way, we have alſo the reaſon why cooks

even

even exceed butchers in fatneſs. We have, therefore, a very natural and obvious method of nutrition in caſes where the uſual one fails; and I cannot but repeat my aſtoniſhment at its having been hitherto ſo unaccountably overlooked by the learned in theſe matters.

"The fact being indiſputable, that nutrition may be performed by means of the abſorbent ſyſtem, my advice is, that the idea be adopted with reſpect to yourſelf. I therefore earneſtly recommend to you, to expoſe the ſurface of your body and lungs occaſionally, to the effluvia of proper aliments, and alſo to rub, four or five times a day, a ſufficient quantity of theſe aliments into the

the moſt convenient parts of the ſurface of your body. I have the higheſt expectations from this admirable method, my dear Harcourt, and adviſe you to it in the full aſſurance of its ſucceſs. From a conſideration of the premiſes, a mind enlightened like yours muſt be too fully convinced of its efficacy to render arguments needful; I will, therefore, immediately give orders to the maid to furniſh you with every thing that may be requiſite to ſo important a purpoſe, as I am determined that you ſhall begin this very evening."

He was ſo much in a hurry that he did not wait for my approbation; and to night I am to commence the proceſs with mutton ſuet and vinegar. Whether

ther or no he ſuſpects that I deceived him in the *digeſtion* affair, I cannot tell; but himſelf means to be my operator in the preſent inſtance. I find it impoſſible to evade; and as he ſeems determined, I will not appear ſo ungrateful as to affront his kindneſs by a refuſal. Making a *merit* of *neceſſity* therefore, I ſhall ſuffer myſelf (a providential return, perhaps, for my late jeſt upon him) to be put to bed to night in as greaſy a condition as the cook or the butcher, from whom he took the hint of the operation. And it is not unlikely that I ſhall dream of being turned Roman Catholic, and *near my end*, having already received *extreme unction*. When I write again, I will let you know the event; but, believe

lieve me, I am heartily ſick at thought of the courſe. And perhaps you will rather be inclined to be malicioufly pleaſed with, than to pity, my perſecution.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

DEAR SIR,

I Ventured to foretel the effect which my ſituation, as alluded to in my laſt, would have on you; and your anſwer has by no means undeceived me. I could, however, better have borne your good humoured rallery, had it been free from the malicious pity with which you have occaſionally ſeaſoned it; and which only ſerves to make your ridicule the more keen and ſevere. This kind of writing is your *forte*, and I ſhould be careful, in future, of giving you occaſion to exerciſe it. I confeſs, however, that my weakneſs, and former treatment of you, deſerves

even more than the pleaſantry with which you handled me; and I begin to flatter myſelf that you will not again have occaſion to diſplay your ſatyrical talent on the *former* topic, though it will, at all times, give me pleaſure to be the occaſion of your exerting it, either on *that*, or *any other*.

My laſt letter gave you reaſon to conclude, that the preſent would treat wholly of alimentary frictions, and their effect on my health. You will find, however, that I have ſince had occaſion to employ my pen on a very different ſubject.

In compliance with the friendly and importunate advice of my affectionate

maſter,

maſter, I ſuffered my legs to be daily greaſed with mutton ſuet, my thighs to be rubbed with vinegar, my hands and feet to be immerſed for an hour or two at a time in milk, mutton porridge, or vegetable decoctions, and my lungs, together with the whole ſurface of my body, to be expoſed to a variety of vegetable and animal effluvia, properly corrected with acids and fixed air. It would have forced a ſmile in the countenance of Diogenes to have beheld me under the operation, or to have viewed the earneſt attention, and anxious expectancy, ſo ſtrongly expreſſed in the features of my kind operator. I had not, however, undergone this courſe above three days (to little effect as you will eaſily ima-

gine) before I received the following letter, inclofed in a cover, and apparently directed in a *male hand.*

SIR,

"The holidays for Michaelmas being at hand, I cannot but write to you, after what has paft, to defire, and humbly to infift on your not again mentioning the fubject which occafioned my referved behaviour to you previous to my leaving home. As fuch a conduct is quite unnatural to me, it will by no means be pleafing to re-affume it; and I have judged proper to advife you of this, previous to my return, becaufe it will otherwife be impoffible for me to behave to you with that becoming freedom, and unreferve which your ftation in my father's houfe intitles you

to.

to. If that behaviour be not preſerved, it may give him ſuſpicions, which it will be neceſſary for me to clear up, though gratitude, in return for your good opinion of me, would rather incline me to be ſilent on that point. If however, you have reaſon to think you cannot obſerve this injunction, you will oblige me infinitely by taking proper meaſures, in order to prevent our meeting again. Was my real ſituation known to you, you would not deem this conduct the effect of pride, or of any other unworthy motive in

MARIA WILKINS."

P. S. I need not, I hope, requeſt of you to deſtroy this letter as ſoon as you have read it; but do not, *by any means*, anſwer it."

When I opened the letter, and ſaw it was written in a *female* hand, my curioſity led me to look at the ſignature previous to the peruſal; and judge you, who have been in a ſimilar ſituation, what was my ſurpriſe, my rapture! at ſeeing the dear name of my beloved MARIA, the fair cauſe of my ſufferings, and the only ſource from whence I could ſoon hope for a releaſe from them! Tranſported, I preſſed it ardently to my lips, and not doubting that its contents were propitious, already flattered myſelf with the fond aſſurance that heaven, in pity to my diſtreſs, and moved by my earneſt prayers, had altered her ſentiments in my favour; and in the extacy of gratitude and joy, fell involuntarily on my knees,

pouring

pouring out the warm overflowings of my heart to the author of ſo great a bleſſing!—But figure to yourſelf alſo, dear friend, my feelings on reading its contents; the death-cold damp which ſtruck upon my heart, in a moment quenching all my fond dazzling hopes; and the torture that I felt at the idea of parting never to ſee her more! For a few moments I remained in a ſtate of total inſenſibility; but recollection ſoon returning, and painting my diſtreſs in the moſt lively colours to my imagination, the agony of my breaſt was unutterable; rouſed by which I became for a while frantic, gave full looſe to the whirlwind of paſſion; and lucky it was that no one happened to be near, as from the unguarded manner in which I raved

out my disappointment, the whole secret must have been discovered.—But I will not trouble you with the remainder of a scene, which however serious it was to me, to you perhaps may appear unimportant, or even ridiculous. Suffice it that I am at this moment in the greatest imaginable distress of soul; and that on pretence of a family misfortune, I have given Mr. Wilkin's notice of the necessity I am under of quitting his service, previous to the approaching holidays, at which he seems to be no less sincerely grieved than myself. But to be daily in the company of all that my heart holds dear, and yet be obliged to behave to, and be treated by her with indifference, I cannot bear; and I would perish sooner

than

than give her offence. To ſee her again, however ardently it may be deſired by me, can now only tend to diſtreſs her, and add to my own uneaſineſs. I will therefore devote myſelf a voluntary ſacrifice to her repoſe, and for that purpoſe have written to requeſt that you will endeavour to procure me either a lodging, or a place, as ſpeedily as poſſible; and if you hear of any deſerving perſon, whom you think I may ſafely recommend to Mr. Wilkins as my ſucceſſor, you will add greatly to the obligation by ſending him.—The pangs which I ſhall feel on my dear Maria's account, when I leave S——, added to my grief at parting with Mr. Wilkins, (for whom

though

though I laugh at his oddities, I have a real affection, as he certainly has for me) will be better conceived by you, than described by

Your afflicted

And unfortunate Friend, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

To Mr. John Harcourt.

Dear Jack,

HAD my Dulcinea given me as much reaſon to hope as yours, I ſhould not have diſgraced myſelf, nor inſulted a friend, with ſo deſponding an epiſtle as that which I laſt received from you. You are, I perceive, a perfect novice in matters of love. When a lady to whom I had freely declared a paſſion, and who had given me a denial, after ſo long an interval voluntarily writes me a letter, what am I to conclude but that ſhe is either deſirous of a renewal of my addreſſes, (which perhaps

perhaps ſhe wondered I ſhould have been ſo cold as not to have done in an epiſtolary way before; or at leaſt that ſhe has a regard for me; and in conſequence thereof, knowing her ſituation, and obligation elſewhere, is afraid to ſee me leſt it ſhould weaken her attachment where rigid duty commands? But it does not appear that you have ever aſked her but once; and what kind of a lover muſt you be to be ſatisfied with the firſt refuſal! The punctilio, the decorum of the ſex, requires that they ſhould have opportunities given them of denying a man ſeveral times, and even at laſt to be as it were even forced into compliance, leſt they ſhould be thought too forward. They expect it; and I appeal to yourſelf, whether

whether if ſhe had yielded when you firſt put the queſtion, you would ever have felt your preſent degree of paſſion? There is even a kind of *inſtinct* which teaches this doctrine to every woman of diſcernment. But let us argue the caſe a little. The reaſon which ſhe gave for refuſing your requeſt was, that duty forbad it. I do not recollect, however, that you make any mention of a rival. Had you made ſuch a diſcovery, you would have conſidered it of too important a nature to be paſſed over in ſilence. Was there one in the caſe, you would certainly have heard of it from ſome quarter or other, as I doubt not you have been ſufficiently *indirectly* inquiſitive in that reſpect. She ſeems indeed too young, and to have been

too

too little in the company of our ſex to have thought much about wedlock; and Wilkins, by your account, is ſo much abſorbed in his ſtudies, that the very idea has probably never yet occurred to him. As to the mere word *duty*, it may only imply, that being under age, and having a laudable idea of parental authority, ſhe might not think herſelf at liberty to engage in an affair of ſuch importance to her future happineſs, without her father's conſent; or perhaps, as Wilkins himſelf is ſuch an oddity, there may be ſome whimſical circumſtance in the caſe, which would never occur to a man of the world, but which may not only be diſcovered, but even overcome by ſpirit and perſeverance. It does not appear to me but that

that you have every thing to hope for in this buſineſs, and nothing to fear. Did not the lady's letter favour the opinion, yet the ſole circumſtance of your being a likely and accompliſhed fellow (you know I am no flatterer) would be ſufficient to convince me of the probability of an unexperienced girl, juſt entered the age when the little god begins to be buſy about the heart, falling in love with you; eſpecially as you had already made the advance, in ſo warm a manner as you have repreſented. Your meagre appearance, loſs of appetite, and the accounts which ſhe will in courſe hear of your illneſs, will convince her of the reality of your flame; for vanity will not be wanting to ſuggeſt to her the cauſe. If ſhe has not

an

an unkind heart indeed, (and the contrary, together with a moſt generous and noble diſpoſition, appears by her letter) mere gratitude will incline her to pity, and even relieve you; and if it be true that ſhe is already ſmitten, as I think I can venture to affirm, it will increaſe and compleatly rivet her affection. But even your cowardice may be turned to account; for the idea of your quitting her father's ſervice, merely to prevent giving her offence, however painful it muſt be to yourſelf, will probably have greater influence with her than any other circumſtance. It will be a tacit acknowledgment, that you love her too well to be able to bear her indifference; and that you find it impoſſible to obſerve the like

conduct

conduct towards her. In every light, therefore, in which I can view your case, you appear to be in a fair way with respect to the *lady*; and your own account sufficiently proves, that with the father there can be no danger of difficulty. He has conceived a friendship, or rather *affection* for you. You have him even *under your thumb*, by being in possession of his absurdities. His passion for study, and approaching age, will incline him soon to take a partner, or retire. In either case, who will be so proper as one already in the good graces of his patients, and with whom he has so fine an opportunity of happily settling his only child? You may even treat him *en cavalier*, should he refuse his consent, and threaten to op-

pose him in his business. The predilection of his patients for you, (which *by all means* endeavour to improve) and their declining opinion of him, (which it will also be to your interest to further) as he cannot but be sensible of, so they will scarce fail to have their due effect. Should this, however, not be the case, I advise you to put your threat immediately in execution, which you may do, in my opinion, with every prospect of success; when, if you are still determined on your matrimonial point, it is but waiting till the fair one is of age, (or what think you of a *trip to Scotland?*) and it is much indeed if time does not reconcile a father to a once dearly loved, and deserving daughter; so that if you marry her at first

without

without a farthing, the fortune will come in time. If you want money in the interim, my purſe, you know, is open to you.

I have, therefore, written by the return of the poſt, and in haſte, as you will perceive by the ſtile of my letter, to adviſe and requeſt of you, by all means, as you value your own repoſe, not to leave Wilkins. Your future fortune and happineſs, if I am capable of judging, depends on your continuing with him. As however, you have given him notice to leave him, do not at preſent inform him of your intention to ſtay; for I would have you appear to be leaving him when your fair inamorata returns. And that he might

not engage another, tell him that you have written to a friend, who has engaged to furniſh him with an aſſiſtant of indiſputable character before you leave him, ſo that he need not enquire elſewhere. If others apply in the mean time by chance, either take meaſures to prevent his agreeing with them, or if theſe fail, inform him that you ſhall now be able to ſtay; though if poſſible, avoid the latter; which with proper addreſs, may eaſily be done. When ſhe comes home, affect an unhappineſs that you were not gone ſooner, and take ſome method to make her ſenſible of it. But this and your conduct in general in this important concern, I leave to be regulated by your own good ſenſe and diſcretion. I have,

dear

my dear Harcourt, your intereſt in this buſineſs near at heart, and muſt be free to tell you, that in my opinion, it will be your own fault, if you do not fulfil the ardent wiſhes of

Your ſincere friend, &c.

SAMUEL DENNIS.

P. S. Let me know the event as ſoon as poſſible, as I am not a little anxious about it. And when convenient, do not forget to favour me with further anecdotes of Wilkins's quixotiſm; I am much delighted with it.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

To Mr. Samuel Dennis.

My Dear Friend,

THOUGH your truly affectionate letter did not inſpire me with any conſiderable degtee of hope, yet in deference to your opinion, and that I might not have to accuſe myſelf, I reſolved to follow your friendly advice. Under the daily operation of alimentary frictions and fumigations, therefore, I paſt, in the moſt painful ſuſpence and anxiety, an interval of near three weeks; and was ſo far from receiving benefit, that even Wilkins was at length convinced, by the increaſe of my complaint,

plaint, of the inefficacy of his remedy, and dropt it, though with visible marks of the most cutting disappointment. His concern and assiduity, were, however, unabated, and I had stronger proofs of his friendship, than I had ever before experienced, in the real grief which he manifested at the idea of parting with me; but which I shall not now trouble you with an account of. I managed matters agreeable to your direction, till the fair cause of my uneasiness returned. She arrived in the forenoon, but I cautiously avoided seeing her till dinner time. You will guess at the distressed state of my mind in the interval, when I tell you that I was frequently obliged to have recourse to the volatile salts, and that I more

than once fainted. The tears which I ſhed, I am aſhamed to mention. At length I was called to dinner, and if you picture to yourſelf a thief brought into open court before his accuſers, or going to be hanged, you will have a pretty exact idea of the figure I made at firſt entering the room. My eyes were caſt toward the ground; my heart became ſwollen, my knees knocked together, and from the manner in which I felt myſelf (more dead than alive) I cannot tell how it happened that I eſcaped fainting. You will pardon me when I tell you, that I inwardly curſed myſelf for having followed your advice, which had brought me into ſo aukward and painful a ſituation. I ſummoned, however, as a laſt effort,

all

all the resolution I could muster, and advanced to my seat, but without daring to look in the face, the fair cause of my distress. The topic of discourse was, by Mr. Wilkins, immediately turned on me. He acquainted my charmer, (and in that, unwittingly becoming my advocate) "that I had been in a visibly declining state almost ever since she was last at home; and that every method had been ineffectually tried for my relief. That the cause of it was apparently uneasiness of mind, in consequence, as he imagined, of some family misfortune; on which account I was now, to his unspeakable regret, about to leave him."—It would, by no means, become me to repeat the eulogiums which he was so kind as to

pass

paſs on me. I was pleaſed, however, to hear him take occaſion to obſerve, that "he ſhould have loſt me before now, but that he had not yet been able to procure another aſſiſtant." I longed, I confeſs, to know whether this harangue had any viſible effect on the countenance of the fair object to whom it was addreſſed; but dared not look up to ſatisfy myſelf. At length, to my unſpeakable tranſport, I heard Mr. Wilkins ſay to her, "my dear Polly, why dont you eat?"—She excuſed herſelf in a faultering and heſitating tone of voice, adding, that "her journey had quite taken away her appetite." There was, however, ſomething ſo ſtrongly expreſſive of a diſtreſſed ſituation of heart, in the manner

in

in which this was ſpoken, that I ventured to look up. I met her eyes fixed upon me with the moſt lively affection and anxious ſolicitude; but ſhe inſtantly turned them aſide with a bluſh, which was ſucceeded by a death-like paleneſs, and preſently after ſhe fainted away. I flew to her aſſiſtance, and heavens! what did I feel at having in my arms, all that my ſoul held dear!—But theſe thoughts were inſtantly loſt in my anxiety for her diſtreſſed ſituation. Reſigning her therefore, to the care of her parent, I flew with a lover's haſte for proper volatiles; with which as quickly returning, I again ſupported her to my aching breaſt, and with all the aſſiduity of fond affection, applied my remedies. She recovered, opened her eyes, and

finding

finding in whoſe arms ſhe was, gave an involuntary ſhriek, and again fainted. Heavens! what were my feelings at that moment! Increaſed as they were by the apprehenſion that in her inſenſible ſtate ſhe might utter ſomething that might betray her! To prevent this latter, I begged Mr. Wilkins to ſtep into the ſhop for ſome æther, in order to rub her temples; and in the mean time as ſhe was recovering, and not yet reſtored to ſenſe, I had the inexpreſſible happineſs to hear from her heavenly lips, "My dear Harcourt, I have been the unkind cauſe of this." She opened her eyes, and fixed them on me with ineffable expreſſion of affection and concern. I bathed her with kiſſes, preſſed her to my melting bo-

ſom,

ſom, and was proceeding to pour out the overflowings of an heart repletewith gratitude and love; but recollecting her ſituation, and hearing her father's ſteps, ſhe conjured me to be ſilent and careful of my behaviour; then gently put me from her, and aſſumed a dignity and ſweet ſerenity of behaviour. Mr. Wilkins being now arrived, ſhe thanked him affectionately for his kind ſolicitude, but begged him not to be alarmed, for that her fainting was only a conſequence of the fatigue of her journey; and that ſhe ſhould ſoon recover her ſpirits, eſpecially if he would permit her to retire awhile to her chamber, and lay down; a ſtep which Mr. Wilkins much approved of.

Judge

Judge now, my dear friend, what were my feelings on this ſudden, and to me wholly unexpected reverſe of fortune. I was a few moments before compleatly miſerable, but now one of the happieſt of mortals, as I had the ſtrongeſt reaſons to conclude that I was poſſeſſed of the affections of her on whom my felicity wholly depended. You will eaſily imagine how anxiouſly I waited for an interview to clear up my remaining doubts. I ſat down, however, with Mr. Wilkins, during the remainder of his dinner, with more chearfulneſs than uſual, taking care to talk as little on the ſubject of his amiable daughter as poſſible, and introducing ſome philoſophical or medical topic, whenever he mentioned her.

her. By this means, and the ſerenity, or rather melancholy, which I aſſumed, I eſcaped ſuſpicion. Dinner was now ended, and Mr. Wilkins, after ſeeing his beloved MARIA, and finding her ſo well recovered as to come down, went to viſit his patients. Taking care then to ſend out Solomon on buſineſs, and to engage the maid in cookery for myſelf, with a view to prevent detection, I flew to the parlour, and threw myſelf reſpectfully at the feet of my adorable angel. I congratulated her on her recovery, thanked her for the unmerited honour of her letter, and apologized for not having yet quitted her father's ſervice, agreeable to her injunction. I took the freedom to mention my own ſufferings,

the

the account of which, I obſerved, ſhe had heard from Mr. Wilkins; the *effects*, her eyes muſt convince her of, and the *cauſe*, though it could not but be obvious to herſelf, remained as yet a myſtery to all others; adding, that as I had once more the happineſs, or perhaps miſery, of living in her preſence, I earneſtly begged ſhe would not be offended, if for the laſt time, as a few days would part us for ever— I preſumed to aſk whether I might yet flatter myſelf with the hope that time and my ſufferings had wrought any change in her ſentiments?

Her bluſhes evidently declared an inward painful ſtruggle between duty and

and affection, and recovering her composure, she answered me as follows:

"Whatever doubt, Sir, I might at first have entertained of the sincerity of your professions, it is now sufficiently apparent that they were unfeigned; and I have neither the ingratitude to refuse you my pity, nor the prudery to affect an insensibility which I do not feel. Nevertheless, Sir, I must repeat, perhaps with regret, that my situation is such that I can by no means be instrumental to your happiness. I am the only child of the most affectionate of parents, whose *wishes*, much less *injunctions*, I would suffer any-thing sooner than transgress. And I have it in express command, as

I value either his fortune, or what is infinitely more dear to me, his affection and bleſſing, never to think of entering into the marriage ſtate. You may object, perhaps, that it is a ſingular humour. But it is not for me to queſtion the propriety of his mandates, or the nature of his motives. He has had greater experience in life than me; is convinced that a ſtate of celibacy is infinitely preferable to that of wedlock; his circumſtances are ſuch that he can have no other view than my happineſs, and I am determined to abide by his command. I will yet, Sir, be frank enough to confeſs, that I feel for your ſituation. But abſence, and new objects, may in time enable you to get the better of your weak-

nefs; and it will be a particular fatisfaction to me, to hear of your future felicity and welfare."

Thus, my dear Dennis, a damp was a fecond time thrown on my glowing hopes, and even yourfelf muft have approved, had I given up the contefl. The latter part of this fpeech, however, was accompanied with fuch evident emotions of diftrefs, notwithftanding her obvious ftruggles to fuppefs them, that I was tempted once more to interpofe. Like a defperate gamefter, therefore, I determined to put the whole iffue upon a laft caft; and collecting my fpirits, ventured the following reply:

"Forgive me, dear lady, if in an affair of ſuch conſequence to my repoſe, I for once violate my engagement. I feared that the obſtacle to my happineſs was of a very different nature from what you have mentioned, and from the tenor of your former anſwer and letter, concluded that you were already engaged to another. But if this be the only one, I imagine it by no means difficult to be ſurmounted. It needs no proof, I preſume, that it is not only unjuſt, but *impious*, in a parent to preſume to lay ſuch a reſtraint. It is contrary to nature, and the expreſs *command*, as well as evident *deſign* of the creator, which ought to be obeyed before any human authority. It is even *cruel*, and that *in the higheſt degree.*

for

For, from the nature of the human frame, it muſt be ſo far from producing the effect intended, that it muſt neceſſarily involve in it your unhappineſs, unleſs with his interdiction he could alſo reverſe the eſtabliſhed laws of nature. But it appears to me, Madam, that it is a mere whim of Mr. Wilkins, which time, and circumſtances, may overcome. He loves you, you ſay, with the moſt ardent affection; of courſe he muſt naturally deſire your felicity; which, when he finds that his unjuſt command impedes, the ſame affection will induce him to reverſe. But, Madam, I have other hopes than theſe. I believe I may flatter myſelf that I enjoy his confidence and affection; and ſituated as I am with reſpect to his

buſineſs, and the good opinion of his patients, it muſt appear to him to be not only for his intereſt, but even happineſs, to make me bleſt. From theſe motives, properly conſidered, he may poſſibly be prompted to ſuch a meaſure; by mere *voluntary inclination*; ſo that every obſtacle, with reſpect to him, ſeems to be removed. In reſpect to yourſelf, Madam, if I may preſume to judge from circumſtances—if your late want of appetite and fainting, were as little the effect of your journey, as my preſent unhappy condition is of family misfortune—if a moſt tender, and I will add paſſionate expreſſion, joined with my name during your late inſenſibility, (and which being involuntary, was natural) may be con-

ſidered

ſidered as arguments of affection, I am not wholly indifferent to you. Do not, loveliest of your ſex, affect an apathy which you do not feel; make us both happy by the endearing acknowledgment, and it ſhall be my fault if the objection you urge be not removed."—I was proceeding; but obſerving the bluſhes to gather in her lovely countenance, her boſom to ſwell, the big tear to ſteal from her eye, and her whole ſoul to be overwhelmed with melting diſtreſs and ſweet confuſion, I ſeized the happy moment, and ſpringing from the ground, ventured to claſp her to my beating boſom, urging her by the moſt tender and endearing ſolicitations, and had at length the inexpreſſible happineſs to hear from her

lovely lips an indirect acknowledgment of a mutual paſſion. Reſuming preſently, however, her wonted dignity, with an innate modeſty which exceeds the power of deſcription, and a thouſand times more endeared her to my heart, ſhe gently but reſpectfully put me from her. We entered into a diſcuſſion of the particulars of our ſituation, and it was at length agreed that the affair ſhould as yet be kept ſecret from the family; that our behaviour in company ſhould correſpond; that I ſhould feign to Mr. Wilkins, though not immediately, for fear of ſuſpicion, that my family affairs were ſettled; that therefore it would now be convenient for me to remain in his ſervice; and that the misfortune alluded to, had been the cauſe of

my

my uneaſineſs of mind, and conſequent ill ſtate of health, both which would now in courſe be happily terminated.—That as ſhe was to return to ſchool till Chriſtmas, when ſhe was to come home for good, we were to content ourſelves with mutual aſſurances of affection and fidelity; and that in the mean time I ſhould uſe my endeavours to ingratiate myſelf with Mr. Wilkins and his patients, ſo as to render it even neceſſary for him to conſent to our happineſs; for that notwithſtanding what had paſt, ſhe was ſtill determined to abide by her duty, and reſolution not to enter into any nuptial engagement without his approbation. As I had not the leaſt doubt of overcoming Mr. Wilkins's ſcruples, I joyfully acceded to the

terms,

terms. The remainder of the time that ſhe continued at home, was to me one continued ſcene of extacy and bliſs. Our opportunities of being together were frequent. I had repeatedly the happineſs of hearing her ſing, while, like the divine Cecilia, ſhe accompanied her raviſhing voice with a muſical inſtrument. I danced with her more than once, (and ſhe dances even more divinely, if poſſible, than ſhe ſings;) and in reſpect to cards, and other occaſional amuſements, ſcarce a day paſt but I was engaged in parties with herſelf, and her former companions. Among the latter were the fineſt and moſt accompliſhed young ladies in S—— and its environs. And not only my bliſs was encreaſed, but my vanity flattered in the

the moſt exalted degree, by the comparison of theſe with my beloved angel, all whom ſhe as much ſurpaſſed, as themſelves did the common run of their ſex. And I cannot but add, that of all the women I ever beheld, ſhe, in my opinion, comes neareſt to angelic perfection, whether I conſider the graces of her mien, the charms of her perſon, the perfection of her intellects, the elegance of her converſation, the enchanting ſweetneſs of her temper, or the exalted virtues of her mind. My weak pen I am conſcious, can give you no idea of her excellence; but were you like me, to have the happineſs of being in her company, you would confeſs that all that I have ſaid falls infinitely ſhort of her perfections.

fections. To be united with her in wedlock, is the whole wish of my heart, and would constitute my greatest possible happiness; the consummation of which is the sole object of my prayers!—You will probably smile at the warmth of my language, and term it rhapsody; but I am carried beyond myself, in the endearing recollection of the uninterrupted and ravishing scenes of bliss, which I have so lately enjoyed; and which therefore, (if any is necessary) must be my apology. I have now only to inform you, that after a most affectionate and tender parting scene, she left S—— on Tuesday last, and that all my thoughts and wishes are now turned towards that blissful period

when

when ſhe will return to my arms never to depart!

I have acquainted Mr. Wilkins with my fictitious change of circumſtances, &c. and have the happineſs to inform you that he ſeemed ſcarce leſs rejoiced at it than myſelf was at the late ecclairciſſement with my lovely MARIA; and in my next I ſhall, agreeable to your requeſt, entertain you with freſh inſtances of his ſingularities.

I have now, my dearest friend, to thank you for all the happineſs which I have been deſcribing, as well as for the much greater portion which I hope to enjoy in future. To your friendly advice I owe my being again admitted

admitted to the regions of felicity, from which I had conſidered myſelf as for ever baniſhed. My moſt cordial acknowledgments are all that I can at preſent return; but truſt that ſome future occaſion will offer, to demonſtrate by facts, the gratitude of

Your ever obliged Friend,

And devoted humble Servant,

J. HARCOURT.

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THE

PHILOSOPHICAL QUIXOTE;

OR,

MEMOIRS

OF

Mr. DAVID WILKINS.

IN A

SERIES of LETTERS

VOL. II.

LONDON.

Printed for J. JOHNSON, in St. Paul's Church-yard.

MDCCLXXXII.

THE

PHILOSOPHICAL QUIXOTTE;

OR,

MEMOIRS

OF

Mr. DAVID WILKINS.

LETTER XV.

DEAR SIR,

I MENTIONED in a former letter that I was greatly mistaken if our amorous Deborah was not with child. You, however, are the only person to whom I had ever communicated my suspicion. But I have since met with

a variety of circumſtances to confirm me in that opinion. She has frequently been ſqueamiſh and ſick at ſtomach. Has artfully pretended to have been troubled with certain *obſtructions*, for which Mr. Wilkins preſcribed the moſt powerful emmenagogues without effect. Is grown ſo large about the waiſt, that Mr. Wilkins, miſtaking it for fat, produced her among others of her profeſſion, as a proof of his doctrine of abſorption. And I had obſerved that ſhe had lately accuſtomed herſelf to lace ſo tight that ſhe could hardly breathe. An incident, however, has ſince occurred, which has effectually demonſtrated the truth of my ſuſpicion, as you will find by the ſequel.

Solomon,

Solomon, among other of his ſtudies, catching his maſter's enthuſiaſm, entered on that of *chemiſtry*; and purſued it with the greater avidity, as he found that ſome of the books which he read on that art, treated, in high ſtrains, of the *tranſmutation of metals into gold*. From the ridicule thrown on this ſubject, by later writers, he remained for ſome time in ſuſpence about the practicability of ſuch a ſcheme. But when he found that the opinion of the great Boerhaave, and ſome others, was in its favour, it at once determined his belief; and in the hope of making a rapid and princely fortune, applied himſelf intenſely to the great enquiry. His inveſtigation, however, was carried on with that profound ſe-

crecy, which the nature of the ſubject required; inſomuch that no one but himſelf and Deborah, knew of his being engaged in the purſuit. The experiments, as it appears ſince, were uſually made in Deborah's room, after the family was gone to bed; and it ſeems that he had made no little number of them without the leaſt ſhadow of ſucceſs. He had frequently mentioned the ſubject in a curſory way to me; and as I now conclude, by way of *pump*, for ſuch information as I was able to afford him. One morning in particular, after ſeeming to laugh at the folly of thoſe who proſecuted ſuch ridiculous reſearches, he aſked me, with a degree of ſerioufneſs, which I could not but remark, whether I

really

really thought that any one had ever been in poſſeſſion of the ſecret, and whether I was of opinion that the fact was poſſible? As I am not yet turned of fifty, I was ſeized with an itch of having a little diverſion at his expence; and replied, in a more ſerious ſtile than I had uſually obſerved on the occaſion, "that it was certain that ſome writers of credit had aſſerted the poſſibility of the thing; that from the teſtimony of the ſame authors, it was probable that the ſecret had formerly actually been known, and that I had read in an author of ſome eminence, that the famous powder of projection, or *philoſopher's ſtone*, was compoſed of lac ſulphuris, ſalt petre, and ſalt of broom aſhes," all which we had in the

ſhop. I made uſe of theſe names that he might have no ſuſpicion of my deſign; as in the courſe of his reading I did not know but he might have met with the recipe for the *pulvis fulminans*. He was particular in enquiring the proportions, and manner of preparation. I gave him the former; and with reſpect to the latter, told him that the ingredients reduced into powder, muſt be melted together in a crucible, kept in fuſion for a certain time, and then the maſs to be taken out for uſe; but that the particular manner of its application, in order to the tranſmutation of metals, was the part of the ſecret which I could not inform him of, and which therefore he muſt endeavour to find out by proper experiments. I was

in

in hopes that he would have taken the hint and ſat about it immediately, and meant to have *egged him on.* But buſineſs happened to call me off at the inſtant, and (together with other matters of greater importance to myſelf) drove it out of my memory for the remainder of the day. It ſeems, however, that he immediately prepared for the experiment, by powdering and mixing the ſeveral ingredients. And that at night, when all others were gone to reſt, our alchymiſt repaired, *as uſual,* to the chamber of his Dulcinea; and having lighted a fire, entered on the important project, his charmer in bed waiting anxiouſly for the ſucceſs. The mixture, however, had not long been on the fire before an event hap-

pened that he little expected, which diſſipated all his mighty hopes *in fumo.* For preſently after the fuſion, a moſt violent exploſion took place, equal to the report of an ordinary cannon. The houſe, as with an earthquake, ſhook to the foundation. The operator fell inſtantly backward as a dead man. The fair one, frightened with the noiſe, uttered an horrid ſhriek, which was followed by another and ſtill more dreadful one, on viewing her beloved's exit, and inſtantly fell into fits. I heard the noiſe; even Wilkins heard it! We ran up ſtairs, and as ſoon as we diſcovered the room which was the ſcene of diſtreſs, forced open the door, and how did both Mr. Wilkins and myſelf ſtare at the ſight we be-

held!

held! Deborah (in fits) was undreſt, and in bed; the door had been faſtened inſide, and part of Solomon's cloaths were apparently put off as in courſe. My ſuſpicion, and perhaps pique, led me to view this part of the affair in its proper light, though as yet I ſaid nothing. But Mr. Wilkins it ſeemed judged otherwiſe. He concluded that Solomon had forcibly entered the room, with intent to commit premature matrimony upon, and violate the chaſtity of the affrighted fair! I, however, was at a loſs to account for the ſulphurous ſtench, and other appearances around. But Mr. Wilkins, it ſeems, concluded that the chaſte Lucretia had piſtoled the villain in his libidinous attempt, of which, he imagined,

gined, ſhe was aware in conſequence of ſome previous offer; whence he accounted for the exploſion and ſmell. But on approaching and examining him, we could neither of us diſcern the leaſt appearance of a wound. He felt warm, and on applying our fingers to his wriſt, a pulſation was plainly to be perceived. Mr. Wilkins called him by name; and I, leſs tender, ſevere-ly pinched him. He preſently came to himſelf; and looking around, and perceiving his ſituation, took the opportunity, while we were engaged with Deborah, (who now began violently to ſcream and ſtruggle in her fit) to give us the ſlip; and notwithſtanding my purſuit of him, by the favour of a dark night, eſcaped. I re-

turned

turned to the room, where I found Mr. Wilkins attentively engaged in endeavouring to recover the ſtruggling fair; and he ſeemed much vexed when I informed him of the culprit's eſcape. But our attention was now wholly demanded by the object before us, whoſe paroxyſms continued with increaſing violence, and threatened the moſt alarming conſequences. We opened a vein, applied volatiles to her noſtrils, bathed her temples with hartſhorn, threw open the windows for air, and plied her both inwardly and outwardly with cold water, impregnated with volatiles and aſſafœtida. From ſome incoherent expreſſions which ſhe uttered in her delirious ſtate, I was further convinced of the juſtneſs of my

conjectures,

conjectures relative to her pregnancy; and appearances in the courſe of her fits put it beyond a doubt. I remained ſilent, however, on that point, and Mr. Wilkins, whoſe ideas on the occaſion were got into another track, did not appear likely to conceive the hint. At length ſhe, in ſome meaſure, recovered her ſenſes; and her confuſion, on perceiving her ſituation, may be more eaſily imagined than deſcribed. She immediately, however, began to caſt about for an excuſe; and though Mr. Wilkins furniſhed her with an eaſy one, by officiouſly and condolingly aſking, if his conjectures (which he ſtated) were not true, yet, perhaps, on feeling the approach of labour, hearing of the flight of her paramour,

and

and judging that he would not ſpeedily return, ſhe, to our great ſurpriſe, informed us that ſhe was married, and about eight months gone with child; but that, for particular reaſons, their nuptials had hitherto been kept ſecret; after which ſhe explained the circumſtances which had occaſioned the preſent confuſion, as above related; adding, that ſhe already foreſaw the effects of her fright, for that ſhe felt every ſymptom of approaching travail. The latter indeed, proved to be the caſe, and a labour ſo painful, it would, perhaps, be difficult to parallel. Notwithſtanding the no very good will that I bore her on account of her treatment of me, the groans, extorted by the agony of her

pains,

pains, added to the circumſtance of her being a married, and therefore virtuous woman, diſſipated every idea of reſentment, and melted my heart to the moſt tender pity; and certainly there is hardly a ſituation of human nature, which demands that ſympathy ſo much as this. Her ſituation was the more dreadful, as beſides the diſturbances occaſioned in her ſyſtem by the fright, ſucceſſive fits, and anxiety of mind, the rigidneſs, and † * * * * * * * were ſuch, (as is too frequently the caſe, when the firſt labour does not happen on this ſide forty) that Mr. Wilkins deemed it abſolutely impoſſible that ſhe could be properly delivered. She remained

† The ſeven or eight words following this were ſo blotted in the original, that they could not be made out.

in

in this terrible ſtate two whole days. Inſtruments, and all other methods uſually employed on theſe occaſions were tried in vain; and ſeeing no other reſource, I propoſed to Mr. Wilkins, to ſave the life of the unhappy mother, by deſtroying the child. Wilkins looked at me with a kind of horror: "What, ſaid he, would you be guilty of murder? Such advice, in the days of Harry the Eighth, would have been extremely proper; but now that the obſtetric art has been ſo variouſly and capitally improved, it betrays either want of humanity, or of information. Have you not heard of the famous invention of thoſe foreign heroes in ſcience, who, by dividing the ſymphyſis pubis, not only ſave the life of the child, but render the

delivery

delivery easy to the mother? I replied that I had indeed informed myself of the particulars of that operation; though it, unaccountably, did not occur to me. In giving him my sentiments on the measure, I observed that "it was the opinion of the first authority in this country, that it was not to be adopted but with great caution, and in cases of extreme necessity; that however, the present instance justified the having recourse to it, as it was evident that the life either of the child or mother must else be sacrificed; and the agonizing and truly pitiable situation of the latter demanded the most immediate assistance." It was therefore determined by Mr. Wilkins to perform the operation. But the terror of the unhappy patient at the idea of it

(for

(for ſhe conceived it to be dreadful indeed!) was paſt deſcription; and as ſome time elapſed before we ſat about it, (for as neither Mr. Wilkins nor myſelf had ever ſeen it performed, it was neceſſary to conſult the original papers) it will not, perhaps, appear miraculous, that the force, or rather fright of imagination, effected what art had deemed impoſſible; for the delivery actually commenced; but the ſcreams of the mother, in conſequence therefore, were enough to frighten one. She became quite raving, and we were obliged to have proper aſſiſtants to hold her down. In this dreadful agony ſhe continued ſeveral hours, and it was with the utmoſt difficulty, even at laſt, with every expedient that art could

ſuggeſt, that the delivery could be effected. The infant was to appearance dead; and the mother was ſeized with a fainting fit, from which we had reaſon to fear ſhe would never recover. By inflating the lungs of the former, and adminiſtring volatiles and cordials to the latter, both however, were, in ſome meaſure, at length recalled, though it was a long time before either appeared any thing like living; and the mother continued ſo ill, in conſequence of the tortures ſhe had undergone, notwithſtanding Mr. Wilkins's ſkilful treatment and aſſiduity, that her life for ſome weeks after was deſpaired of.

As Mr. Wilkins is naturally of a humane and tender diſpoſition, you will

will not be ſurpriſed that this affair made a very deep impreſſion on him; eſpecially as the patient was an old and favourite domeſtic, for whom he had a real regard, as you will judge when I inform you that he had bequeathed her an annuity in his will, ſufficient to maintain her comfortably for life. I obſerved him to be exceedingly penſive and thoughtful for ſome days after this melancholy affair happened. He was wholly abſorbed in deep meditation, and his mind ſeemed big with ſome great, but as yet unknown event.

I happened one morning to be in the ſtudy, poſting the book; Mr. Wilkins entered in the thoughtful mood

deſcribed, and in his uſual morning dreſs. He walked about for ſome time with his arms folded, and his hands locked in each other, alternately. He frequently pauſed; ſtood penſive, with his eyes fixed on the ground; and ſometimes lifted them up as towards the cieling. At length he came up to me; and after remaining a while deeply intent, and heaving a profound ſigh, not without an evident pleaſure in his countenance, he at length broke ſilence in the manner following:

"The late dreadful ſituation of my unhappy ſervant, to which you was witneſs, and the ſufferings of the tender ſex, in general, in the bearing of children, (which yet is neceſſary to the continuance of the ſpecies) have excited

cited in my breaſt the deepeſt commiſ-ſeration; and prompted me to explore, if poſſible, ſome mode, either of freeing them entirely from their ſubjection to ſo painful and perilous a ſituation, or at leaſt, in ſome meaſure, to alleviate it. I wiſh, however, to remove it entirely; and my intenſe application to this important ſubject in the courſe of ſeveral days paſt, has, I truſt, been productive of ſomething that will anſwer to that idea." † Hiatus in M.SS.

* * * * * *

† Mr. Wilkins, in his zeal for the good of his fellow creatures, then went on to propoſe,

——— "*Some other way,*
"*To propagate mankind.*"

MILTON.

This method (with a very ſingular experiment ſet on foot to prove it) appeared ſo curious to ſeveral who ſaw the original letters, that it took wind,

This is the ſcheme which I have formed, and to which I can at pre-

ſent

and numbers of gentlemen acquainted with Mr. Dennis, became deſirous of a peruſal. But one of the firſt of theſe gentlemen to whom they were lent, has, it ſeems, been ungenerous enough to monopolize the whole of this pleaſure, by ſecuring to himſelf that part of the preſent letter, in which this extraordinary propoſal was contained. In this mutilated ſtate the original was ſeen by the Editor; and (unfortunately for the public) he has not at preſent any means of ſupplying the deficiency. He can only therefore, inform the reader of what he has heard of this matter from others, viz. that Mr. Wilkins, by proceeding on the theory of a celebrated Britiſh phyſiologiſt now living, and attending to the various modes of generation in different animals, had been happy enough to reduce that proceſs in the human ſpecies to ſuch a ſtate, that as we can hatch eggs without the incubation of the hen, ſo we could, by means of Mr. Wilkins's wonderful diſcovery, hatch human beings *without the travail of the mother!*

But,

ſent ſee no reaſonable objection. And I cannot but conſider it as the greateſt and happieſt diſcovery for man, or rather woman-kind, that has yet been revealed to the world. The proceſs is more advantageous than even in the claſs of animals from whom it was derived. For the happineſs expected from the wedded ſtate, will remain in its fulleſt extent, and yet every veſtage of the numerous train of ills which have hitherto been the diſmal conſequences of conception, be wholly removed. The mother will no longer be ſubject to the evils attendant on

But, alas! this important ſecret is now loſt to the world; at leaſt till Mr. Wilkins himſelf, or ſome gentleman to whom it is known, ſhall be pleaſed to reveal it.

geſtation, the dangers of abortion, or the excruciating tortures of labour; all which, together with their too frequent bad conſequences, the tender and indulgent huſband muſt feel, by ſympathy, to an equal degree. Their mutual happineſs will no more be damped by a dread of the conſequences, ſince they may now, according to the old proverb, *dance without paying the piper.* Gratitude to their benefactor will prompt them to erect eternal trophies to my memory; pæans will daily be ſung in my honour; and my name will be tranſmitted as firſt in the liſts of fame, to the lateſt poſterity." * * * (Hiatus in M.SS.)

I ſcarce need mention, dear Dennis, that my appetite is reſtored, and that

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I am now ſome pounds heavier than when I wrote to you laſt. My amiable MARIA is well, as I had the happineſs of hearing but yeſterday; an happineſs greater than even that which would be enjoyed by Mr. Wilkins, ſhould his experiment of hatching human beings, without the geſtation of the mother, turn out to be a demonſtration of his theory. For this, as well as every other bleſſing that I may enjoy in future, I ſhall ever conſider myſelf as indebted ſolely to your goodneſs and friendſhip, of which the moſt lively ſenſe of gratitude will ever be retained, by

Yours, &c.

P. S. Since this epiſtle was finiſhed, we have received a letter from Solomon

mon, who it ſeems, is returned to his own country; is about ſettling there, and for that reaſon has wrote to Mr. Wilkins to ſend him his moveables. He has (to uſe a vulgar expreſſion) *let the cat out of the bag*; painted Deborah in her proper colours; made it appear that ſhe abſolutely debauched him; and that they were not married, nor did he ever intend it. The diſcovery has quite diſconcerted poor Deborah; and as for Wilkins, he is ſo incenſed againſt her, on account of her *fornication* and *hypocriſy*, that he has paid her wages and turned her adrift, notwithſtanding ſhe was ſcarce capable of walking out of the houſe. She is in a lodging in the neighbourhood till ſhe is a little recovered, when ſhe means,

through

through ſhame, to quit this part of the country; though I think Mr. Wilkins ought to have treated her otherwiſe, were it only for the ſake of the *diſcovery*, of which ſhe was the *occaſion*. Happily, however, for me, we have now both man and maid in the houſe who do not ſeem calculated to give me any of thoſe little uneaſineſſes which I formerly complained of, ſo that I am now in every reſpect perfectly happy in my ſituation.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

DEAR SIR,

YOU have had occaſion to obſerve that Mr. Wilkins's philoſophical enquiries are not confined to the narrow limits of his profeſſion, but that they extend to every other ſubject in which the good of the community is concerned. This will ſufficiently appear by the following relation.

Among the many capital diſcoveries made by modern philoſophers, thoſe which tend to ſecure us againſt external accidents and injuries, eſpecially from the elements, are particularly deſerving of applauſe; and enough

cannot

cannot be ſaid of Dr. Franklin, for his invention of preſerving us againſt the effects of lightning; of Dr. Prieſtley for enabling us to detect the noxious qualities of the air we breathe; or of the ſtupendous diſcovery, which has of late years been ſo ſucceſsfully practiſed, for reſtoring drowned people to *life!* The evil of which I am about to ſpeak, is not, indeed, ſo dreadful, or ſo fatal as theſe, yet is, in my opinion, one of the moſt diſagreeable accidents to which we are ſubject; and when I have occaſionally been expoſed to it, I have imagined that no improvement in philoſophy could be more valuable than one which would ſecure us againſt its effects. How often have I, when

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caught in an heavy ſhower of rain, at a diſtance from any ſhelter, and unprovided with a great coat, wiſhed, alas! vainly wiſhed, for ſuch a diſcovery! It ſeems that this idea had alſo occurred to Mr. Wilkins, and determined him to turn his talents to the enquiry. The following was the reſult of his deliberation.

It is well known (he obſerved) that when it thunders and lightens, it moſt commonly rains. That clouds are electrified, ſometimes negatively, at others poſitively; that rain diſcharges that electricity, and conducts it to the earth, and that experiments had actually demonſtrated that falling drops of rain were electrified, and ſome-

times

times pretty ſtrongly. Now he argued thus:

"Bodies poſſeſſed of contrary electricities, ruſh together, or attract each other. But bodies mutually electrified, either *plus* or *minus*, are, on the contrary, repulſive. If therefore, a drop of rain be in *plus*, and the human body be alſo in *plus*, they will mutually repel each other; and if the electricity be ſufficiently ſtrong, the repulſion will be ſo great that the drop will be diverted from its perpendicular courſe, and *turned away obliquely from the body*. The ſame thing will happen if the electricity be ſtrongly *negative*. Conſequently a man thus charged, may walk through

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the heavieſt ſhower of rain that ever fell, without being in the leaſt wetted by it."

He was ſo rapt with his diſcovery, that he immediately communicated it to me, together with his deſign in conſequence thereof. The abſurdity of the concluſion was ſufficiently obvious; but it was not now, for ſeveral reaſons, my intereſt to contradict him. I therefore highly applauded his invention, as well as the propoſal which he made, of at once verifying his theory by experiment, and blazoning it, with his fame, to the world. The nature of the diſcovery, therefore, was announced to the inhabitants of the country around, who were invited to aſſemble at Mr. Wilkins's houſe on the firſt appearance

pearance of a thunder ſtorm, to be witneſſes of the truth of the fact, and, if they choſe it, to be the ſubjects of the experiment.

The curioſity of the public was excited in courſe, and nothing was talked of but Mr. Wilkins, and his great diſcovery. His foes, (for all men have enemies) repreſented it as a mad attempt, and of a piece with the known character of the man. They therefore ridiculed it accordingly, and prognoſticated that it would end in *ſmoke*. His more numerous friends as zealouſly propagated a contrary language; arguing, from the opinion of their opponents concerning the *impoſſibility* of the thing, *the greatneſs of the diſcovery*;

and juſtifying its likelihood by a late ſimilar one of the illuſtrious Dr. Franklin. But every one was eager for the arrival of the day.

At length, the important period arrived. The forked lightning flaſhed—the big thunder rolled; "the ſky was overcaſt, the evening lowered, and heavily with clouds, brought on the hour, the great, the important hour, big with the fate of Wilkins, and his project." The people eagerly aſſembled, and Mr. Wilkins, after having ordered out (in a booth erected for the purpoſe) the *electrical apparatus*, proceeded to demonſtrate his important theory.

His

His firſt ſtep was to diſcover the nature of the cloud's electricity; and he found it to be highly *poſitive*. Two dozen pair of *ſhoes*, with ſoals of *baked wood*, of a proper thickneſs, were preſently put on by ſome of thoſe who were eager of the honour of being concerned in this great buſineſs; not a fourth part of whom, for want of a ſufficient quantity of electrical ſhodding, could be admitted to ſhare in the honour of the experiment. They were ſcarcely prepared, but the rain began to deſcend; and in a ſhort time it even threatened a deluge. The happy twenty-four, mounted on their magic ſandals, were ſtrongly electrified *plus*; and proper directions being given them not to touch any non

electric ſubſtance, they were turned adrift into the dreadful ſtorm. The expectation of Wilkins was immenſe! But, alas! the imperfection of human inventions! The inſulated heroes no ſooner trod on the ground, than (the wet, forming a connection between their bodies and the earth) their electricity was ſuddenly diſcharged. And as they had been ſtrongly electrified indeed, in order to make the experiment ſurer, the ſhock which they felt in conſequence thereof was terrible! They ſprung aloft, with a loud ſcream, into the air; many of them, reft of ſenſe; and looſing their ſelf balance, fell forward on their faces, lying like breathleſs corpſe' on mother earth, which was ſtained red with the fluid

iſſuing

iſſuing from their bloody noſes. They who retained their ſenſes, ſmarting from the violence of the ſhock, wet through, and concluding from the loud laughter, and cutting jeſts of Wilkins's foes, that they had been decoyed into that ſituation, only to be made fools of, flew upon poor Wilkins in their rage, and would probably have demoliſhed him, had he not happily been reſcued by the better part of the company, and conveyed away in ſafety. On his electrical apparatus, however, they had no mercy, but conſidering it as *infernal*, inſtantly broke it piece-meal, "burning the diabolical fragments."—The poor fellows are the ſtanding jeſts of the town to this hour, and will be ſo I imagine during their lives. When-

ever it rains, they are drily aſked, *Why don't you put on your electrical ſhoes?*— Thoſe people who are more knowing, ſee this affair, in courſe, to Wilkins's diſadvantage. Others look upon it as a piece of philoſophical *fun*, and imagine that he had deſignedly *taken in* the ignorant town's people. Wilkins, though the diſappointment has moſt terribly galled him, has ſenſe enough to take the hint, and propagate the latter opinion; though even that has not a little injured his long eſtabliſhed character, with reſpect to *gravity*.

I am, dear DENNIS,

Yours, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

DEAR SIR,

OUR neighbourhood has lately been infested with a very uncommon kind of fever, which, notwithstanding the utmost attention of Mr. Wilkins to the subject, made at first very considerable ravages, and carried off numbers. The usual methods of treatment in fevers seemed ineffectual; and such as happened to recover, evidently owed their lives, not to any skill of the Doctor, but to the partiality of nature. Mr. Wilkins's pride was touched at being thus baffled; and he determined to set all his

faculties to work, in order to diſcover a method of repelling this formidable invader.

If a phyſician would do any thing capital in practice, it is well known that he muſt be very ſedulous in *obſerving nature.* It is from that ſource only that we can hope for real improvements in the medical art; and all theories that are not built on that foundation, ought to be conſidered as the mere reveries of a diſtempered imagination. Mr. Wilkins was ſufficiently ſenſible of this important truth.

The lady of an eminent attorney in the town, and one of Mr. Wilkins's moſt intimate friends, was ſeized with the

the reigning complaint; and notwithſtanding that Mr. W.'s utmoſt ſkill was exerted in her favour, ſhe daily grew worſe, inſomuch that himſelf, at length, deſpaired of her recovery. It was now the thirteenth day of her illneſs. Putrid ſymptoms had for ſome days appeared, and ſhe had been delirious almoſt from the beginning of the diſorder. The lady, it muſt be obſerved, was pregnant. She had a brother in the Weſt of England, whom herſelf and ſpouſe, a few weeks before, had taken a journey to viſit. As this gentleman treated them with country fare, one of the liquors which they occaſionally drank was *ſtrong beer and brandy*; which, in thoſe parts, is a favourite potation; and, it ſeems, particularly

ticularly hit our lady's palate; ſo that her fancy had ran on it, at times, ever ſince. In the afternoon of the day mentioned, ſhe appeared to be more ſenſible than ſhe had lately been, though the fever raged almoſt as high as ever, and (to the old woman's no little ſurpriſe) whiſperingly aſked the nurſe, "if ſhe could not help her to a tankard of *beer and brandy?* for that ſhe violently longed for it, was beſides, parching with thirſt, and was certain that *that* alone would cure her diſorder." The nurſe remonſtrated with her on the impropriety of her requeſt, and gave her to underſtand, that it could by no means be complied with. This, however, ſerved only to encreaſe her deſire. Her importunity redoubled;

led; and ſhe, at length, became ſo outrageous, that her ſpouſe thought proper to conſult Mr. Wilkins on the occaſion. He was immediately ſent for, and after examining the patient, and her requeſt, gave it as his opinion, "that ſo inflammatory a liquid, in the lady's preſent ſituation, would infallibly be fatal to her." At the ſame time he ſhook his head, and appeared greatly dejected. On being aſked the reaſon by the lawyer, he replied, that "from the ſymptoms that appeared, he thought it his duty, as a friend, to warn him of the approaching melancholy event, for that the lady would certainly die before the morning." Mr. Wilkins's interdiction, by no means ſilenced the lady's longing. Her

deſire

desire after the favourite potation increased; and she, at length, raved for it so violently, that her indulgent husband, unable to behold her longer in such agony, and considering that even Wilkins had given her over, ordered a tankard of it to be immediately prepared; adding, "that as she was past recovery, it was at least charity to make her as easy as possible during the little time she had to live." The liquor, therefore, was brought; I need not inform you how ravished she was at the sight of it; with what greedy relish she swigged it down, or what an immoderate quantity she drank before she was satisfied. Her longing was thus scarcely appeased before she appeared more tranquil and easy; and notwith-

notwithſtanding the quantity of inflamable ſpirit which had juſt entered her blood, her fever evidently abated; ſhe fell into a ſweet ſleep; a kindly perſpiration ſucceeded; and next morning the diſorder appeared to have in a manner left her, little beſides the weakneſs in conſequence of it remaining. When Mr. Wilkins called, he was ſurpriſed to find that ſhe was ſtill living; but when he ſaw the alteration in her health, he could hardly perſuade himſelf but that it was a viſion. Convinced, however, of the reality, he was very eager indeed, in queſtioning by what wonderful means ſo great a revolution in the ſtate of the lady's health had been effected? And being informed that it appeared to be

owing

owing entirely to her having been indulged in the liquid which himſelf had forbad, an hint immediately ſtruck him, and he remained for ſome moments in one of thoſe profound paroxyſms of meditation uſual to philoſophers, who have got ſcent of a capital diſcovery. But he was ſoon awakened from thence by the diſcourſe addreſſed to him by the overjoyed huſband. After heartily congratulating him on the unexpected recovery, and ſettling the meaſures to be adopted in future by the patient, he hurried home. When he entered the ſhop, I obſerved him to appear, as it were, loſt in a pleaſing reverie, and without taking notice of any one, he haſtened to his ſtudy.

Mr.

Mr. Wilkins has a book in which he daily writes down the hiſtory of his practice. It happened to be left out a few days after through neglect, and I found, among others, the following curious remarks.

"*Aphoriſm.* Obſerve nature, watch all her motions. In doubtful caſes, and new diſeaſes, this is the phyſician's only guide. Even when ſhe cannot relieve herſelf, ſhe yet (like a drowning man) in very intelligible language, points out the means to be adopted by art for aſſiſting her.

"*Mem.* In the caſe of the new fever, the divine oracle has, at length, ſpoke. Her dictates have been obeyed, and the diſorder in conſequence thereof has been

been cured. Art was at a loſs for a proper remedy. Nature cried out *beer and brandy.*

" *Corr.* Beer and brandy therefore is a ſpecific for the new fever."

After he had remained in his ſtudy a conſiderable time, he went out and viſited the remainder of his patients; and when he came home, to my very great ſurprize, (for he did not at that time think proper to mention his reaſons) directed for each of the patients labouring under the new diſeaſe, a draught compoſed of brandy and ſtrong beer, every four hours. The remedy was continued daily. But the patients, to a man, evidently grew worſe,

the

the inflamable ingredients in the medicine, (as might have been foreſeen) augmenting the ſymptoms. Convinced, however, that the patient in the caſe related, owed her recovery entirely to this remedy, and the period at which ſhe had taken that grand ſpecific occurring, he, at length, conceived that the ſucceſs was owing to its having been given *at the criſis of the diſeaſe.* He tried it in a variety of caſes in this way, in the young and old, in males and in females; and in different conſtitutions. He alſo varied the quantity in different patients, giving it to ſome in great profuſion; to others in a more moderate way; but not one of the patients ſurvived: on the contrary, their deaths were evidently haſtened by the

medicine. At length, he was ſo happy as to meet with an inſtance of recovery. As this, and the preceding, were the only ſucceſsful ones, he conſidered attentively (as I afterwards learnt) what ſimilarity or connection there was between the caſes of the two happy patients? and he diſcovered that they were both with child; "beer and brandy therefore, he concluded, was a ſpecific when given to *pregnant women* at the criſis of this diſeaſe, but hurtful in all other caſes." He plumed himſelf not a little on his ſagacity in having aſcertained ſo curious a fact. A few days afterwards he adminiſtred the remedy to a lady in the ſituation mentioned, in full confidence of its ſucceſs. But contrary to his firm expectation,

pectation, her end was ſo viſibly haſtened by it, that it did not eſcape the notice of the friends and attendants; who, in the heighth of their grief, did not even ſcruple (to Mr. Wilkins's no little mortification) to hint to him their ſuſpicions. He was once more, therefore, thrown on the wide ocean of doubt, from which all his ſagacity proved inſufficient to reſcue him. Struck with the firſt fact, he was ſtill poſitive that it involved a real diſcovery, and concluded that his not having yet developed it, was owing ſolely to his own want of ſagacity; ſo that being no longer able to bear the diſtraction of his thoughts, and earneſt to get at the truth, he, at length, deigned to diſcloſe the whole matter, in

confidence to me, and ardently preſſed me to give him my beſt advice.

Had I not been apprized of the buſineſs, and had it been of a leſs ſerious nature, it would have been impoſſible to have ſuppreſſed my riſibility. But being prepared, I kept my countenance tolerably compoſed; and after he had ended his ſolemn harangue, anſwered him to the followed effect:

"That the difficulty attending the *treatment of a new diſeaſe*, eſpecially of the preſent kind, was ſo great that the public were infinitely indebted to him for the pains he had taken in ſo important a particular. The only method of acquiring that knowledge I owned

was

was from *obſervation*, or (as he had more emphatically expreſſed it) by *liſtening to the voice of nature*; but that in the preſent inſtance, I humbly apprehended he had not rightly interpreted her language. In the caſe of Mrs. B——, nature I imagined, had not ſpoken with reſpect to the general treatment of the diſeaſe under which ſhe happened to labour. That longing in diſeaſes, was by no means uncommon, but that ſuch longings, or the cures reſulting from appeaſing them, were not uſually conſidered by practitioners as connected with the diſeaſe itſelf, but with the particular ſituation of the patient at the time. It had not, for example, been uncommon for a perſon in a fever to crave

for porter, and to receive a cure in consequence of that longing being gratified. But it had not been inferred from thence, that porter was a specific in fevers, or even that it would have the same effect on the same patient, if it was not preceded by the violent longing; which indeed was properly the disease cured by it; the fever being only mitigated in consequence of its removal, as it had before been exasperated by its presence. That the greatest possible care was required in generalizing propositions, but more especially in medicine, where the least error might be productive of the most serious consequences. In the present case there was something more than I had yet noticed, for that

by

by his account, the lady was pregnant. The liking to the liquid had been conceived previous to the illneſs; and probably ——." I was going on, but Wilkins's good ſenſe (the miſt being now diſſipated) eaſily perceiving the ſtrength of the argument, he was aſhamed of his error, and begged that no public mention might be made of it. Indeed, though I, at times, laugh at his extravagancies, yet upon the whole, I cannot but admire his natural good ſenſe, and benevolent and amiable diſpoſition. What few failings he has, evidently proceed from an exceſs of the latter virtue, *an ungovernable paſſion for diſcovering the uſeful*, which indeed is capable of leading a man into

the moſt glaring and ridiculous abſurdities.

As we have ſince repeatedly conferred together on the ſubject of the diſeaſe, and mutually attended to its appearances, we have happily hit on a more ſucceſsful method of treatment. As it begins with violent inflammatory ſymptoms, we bleed and evacuate plentifully; and if we are called in time, a proper uſe of theſe, together with a temperate regimen, generally prevent any fatal conſequences; and I have the happineſs to inform you that the diſorder is now viſibly diſappearing in this part.

Your ſincere Friend, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

DEAR DENNIS,

AMONG Mr. Wilkins's other oddities, I wonder I have never yet written to you on his *absence of mind*, to which, on account of his intense meditation, he is very subject; and frequently requires as much the assistance of a *flapper*, as the mathematicians in the *flying island*. I shall give you a few instances of it in this letter.

As his thoughts are so much employed in speculation, and as (like Sancho) he cannot resist the impulse of any new and pleasing idea, he frequently starts up from dinner, or from company, as if suddenly possessed, and retires

tires to his ſtudy in order to ſecure the precious remark. The like ſometimes happens even when moſt ſeriouſly engaged with his patients. A perſon unacquainted with his ſingularities, would at firſt conclude him to be diſordered in his ſenſes.

One evening he had been writing a letter to the celebrated Dr. Huxham, (with which therefore he had taken ſome pains) containing the caſe of a young lady in the neighbourhood, for the Doctor's opinion. When he had finiſhed, he proceeded to throw ſome ſand over it; but, being totally abſorbed in contemplating his performance, he took the ink glaſs by miſtake, and very calmly ſhook out its contents. As the

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mere writing had coſt him much pains, and as the poſt was that inſtant preparing to ſet off, I do not remember to have ſeen him in ſuch a paſſion, as on diſcovering his blunder.

He had one day been deeply meditating on the emetic qualities of antimony; and in the midſt of his ſpeculation, had occaſion to write down a *recipe* for a chalybeate draught for Lady T——. But antimony running in his head, inſtead of writing *vin. chalybeat.* ℥ ſs. as he intended, he wrote *vin. antimonial.* I took it for granted that he meant it for an emetic, and made it up as directed. The lady had not taken it many minutes before it began to operate violently indeed! Wil-

kins

kins was ſent for in haſte; and learning the circumſtance, took it for granted, that I had committed an error. When he returned he had ſcarce began to inform me of it, but, caſting his eyes on the day book, he diſcovered the miſtake to be his own; and retired, ſeemingly convinced of the danger of a medical practitioner, indulging reveries while engaged in buſineſs. Luckily, however, the ladies complaint proved to be a foul ſtomach, ſo that the emetic was of more ſervice to her than the chalybeat could poſſibly have been.—To this anecdote might be added, that it is by no means uncommon for Mr. Wilkins to forget his appointments. A patient ſends for him in a hurry. If he does not happen

to

to note it in his list immediately, it is much if it does not slip his memory. I have known him engaged in a labour, where in an interval of ease, he has asked leave of absence for a quarter of an hour to visit some patient whose case was urgent. A philosophical reverie has driven all thought of the lady out of his head; and he has rode off half a dozen miles, the Lord knows where, in the usual course of his business, leaving the unhappy patient to be delivered as she could.

A few weeks ago he had an invitation to dine at B——, a village about fifteen miles distant. As he had a patient or two to call upon in his way, to save himself the trouble of coming back,

back, he ordered the porter, then newly come, to follow him, intending to ſend home by him the preſcriptions. But neither of the patients happening to want any thing, and forgetting the orders he had given to Thomas, he rode away on a full trot towards B—. Thomas followed as faſt as his legs could carry him; and you will eaſily conceive the lathered and breathleſs condition in which he arrived at B—, as he kept pace with the horſe all the way; and the weather was not a little ſultry. Wilkins was aſtoniſhed to behold him on alighting, and imagined he was come for him to ſome caſe of emergency. But on explaining the circumſtance, Wilkins very humanely and genteely apologized for his forgetfulneſs,

getfulneſs; gave him a crown; bid him go to ſome inn to reſt and refreſh himſelf, and afterwards to walk home as leiſurely as he could. But begged him particularly not to divulge the ſecret; an injunction which, as you will perceive by this letter, was rigidly obſerved.

After having been hard at work in the elaboratory, and being quite exhauſted and faint with fatigue, he repaired to his cloſet, in order to recruit his ſpirits with a dram; an indulgence which he never allowed himſelf, but on ſome extreme occaſion. In the ſame cloſet ſtood a bottle of lamp oil; and as his thoughts were ſtill intent on his operations, he laid hold of the latter,

latter, (the firſt bottle that offered) and without examination, poured out a glaſs full, and drank it off. His thirſt and abſence hindered him from perceiving it at the inſtant. But preſently after he diſcovered his miſtake; a violent nauſea and ſickneſs was the conſequence, and evacuations upwards and downwards employed him, at home and abroad, for the remainder of the day.

One morning as he was dreſſing, and at the ſame time deeply meditating on my caſe, the thought of the doctrine of *abſorption* ſtruck him juſt at the inſtant of pulling off his night ſhirt, and he flew to pen and paper to take it down. His fancy was ſo tickled with the

the diſcovery, that when he returned to his toilet, forgetting that he was in buff, he put on his coat and waiſtcoat, (without his ſhirt) and as he was rather beyond his time, rode away in haſte to viſit the young daughter of Lady S——, of whoſe delivery I formerly gave you an account. After examining the patient, he ſat down to breathe a little; and being over heated with the hurry of his journey, and the warmth of the day, threw open his waiſtcoat to cool himſelf.—The bluſhes of the ladies on viewing his naked belly, the merry jokes of Sir John, and the confuſion and aukward apologies of Wilkins, I leave to be ſuggeſted by your own more fruitful imagination.

About a fortnight ſince he was ſhaving himſelf, (for he never truſts that operation to a barber) and when he had done about one half of his face, the other remaining covered with lather, (like the barber's cuſtomer in the Upholſterer) a new and brilliant theory ſuddenly dazzled his imagination, of which I mean to give you an account in ſome future epiſtle. He immediately laid down his razor, and flew to his ſtudy; and as the idea was fruitful, and kept him in conſtant employ for more than half an hour, he was of courſe quite loſt in his reverie. At this time the Counteſs of ——, a patient of ours, whoſe ſeat is at a village about three miles diſtant, called in her coach and deſired an audience with

with Wilkins. I immediately ran to inform him. He ſtartled at the name, which dazzled him more than even the viſion from which he was awakened, as he had by this time pretty well exhauſted it on paper. But totally forgetting his *bodily* ſituation, he flew to the chariot at the door, in the condition deſcribed, heightened by an old greaſy woollen night cap, which had formerly been red and white, neither of which colours were now very diſtinguiſhable, and his old ruſty morning gown, whoſe colours were equally faded, bound round his waiſt with the red garter as formerly deſcribed. His ſtockings were down over his ancles, and his ſhirt collar tucked under his waiſtcoat, to ſave it from the lather.

My lady, knowing (I imagine) her man, could not refrain from a loud fit of laughter, on feeing him in fuch a pickle; which quite difconcerted Wilkins, who did not at firft perceive the reafon of it. But obferving at the fame time a mob gathered round him, and hearing their farcaftical remarks, he inftantly recollected himfelf; and overwhelmed with confufion, precipitately retired, ftammering out an excufe as he fled; but unfortunately, in his hafte, tumbled over the ftep at the door, which in his hurry, and retrograde retreat, he did not think of, which added not a little to the rifibility of her ladyfhip, and the reft of the fpectators. I obferved his dilemma, went out immediately, and

made

made a proper apology to her lady-ſhip, whom I eaſily prevailed on to walk into the parlour till Mr. Wilkins ſhould be in a condition proper to appear before her. His apology on entering, and the agreeable manner in which ſhe received and rallied it, added not a little to the entertainment, or to poor Wilkins's confuſion; and he has not yet heard the laſt of it from the family.

Mr. Wilkins's abſence is ſo notorious that the very boys make their jeſt of it. One day as he was walking up the town in a very thoughtful mood, and ſolemn pace, halting at times, as is cuſtomary with people in ſuch a ſituation, he happened very unluckily

to be eſpied by one of the fellows who engaged in the electrical experiments lately recited, and who had ever ſince been waiting for an opportunity of revenge. Perceiving him to be perfectly abſorbed, he engaged ſeveral boys, who were at play juſt by, to bring, from a neighbouring reſervoir, a veſſel full of a certain ſomething, of no very agreeable odour, the name of which I ſhall leave to your ſagacity to diſcover. The material was gently emptied out on the ground, and one of the boys, by the man's direction, laid himſelf down about a quarter of a yard before it. When Wilkins arrived, he in courſe ſtumbled againſt the boy, (the fellow behind, at the ſame inſtant, giving him a friendly

puſh,

puſh, leſt the ſtumbling block ſhould not have been ſufficient) and he fell plump into the quagmire. The plight in which he found himſelf, added to the exulting taunts of his foe, and the loud laughter of the boys, together with his diſcovering that ſeveral of the firſt gentry of the town were eye-witneſſes of his unſeemly condition, produced in poor Wilkins, a ſituation of mind, which, though it may be imagined by a lively fancy like yours, would be very aukwardly repreſented by the unſkilful pen of

Yours, &c.

LETTER XIX.

DEAR SIR,

I HAD been half inclined to think, notwithſtanding a former remark, that Mr. Wilkins's principal inducement to philoſophical purſuits, was, (as himſelf believes) *the hope of being uſeful to mankind.* But have lately ſeen ſufficient reaſon to alter my opinion.

Being lately in one of his beſt humours, and when the fit of communication was on him, he took me into his ſtudy, and opening his eſcrutore, took out a large bundle of manuſcript papers, (a ſpice of that vanity which is common to ſcribbling mortals, evidently

dently appearing in his countenance) and addreſſed me on the ſubject of them in the following ſtrain.

" I have been labouring in the philoſophical vineyard, for the good of mankind theſe twenty years paſt, my dear Harcourt, but the world is as yet very little benefited by my diſcoveries, as I have hitherto, through a natural diffidence, confined them to the ſmall circle of my practice. But I now feel a ſomething within me which tells me that I do the world an injuſtice in withholding them, and that it is the indiſpenſable duty of every one who makes an uſeful diſcovery, to communicate it. I compare the diſcoverer of truth, to the rich man; he

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is only the ſteward, to whoſe care the good things of the world are committed, not to miniſter to his own pleaſures, but to diſpenſe them for the good of others; and I hold the man who makes any other uſe of either to be highly criminal. I enter on this buſineſs the rather, becauſe I am not now a young man; and ſhould I happen to die, my executors, not knowing the value of my papers, they may either be wholly loſt to the world, or at beſt very inaccurately and imperfectly given.

"As I have conceived an high opinion of your underſtanding in philoſophical matters, I would wiſh to have your judgment on theſe papers, previous

to

to their publication; *and you will defeat my intention in this meaſure, if you do not give that judgment* IMPARTIALLY. Authors are too apt to be blind to their faults; though I believe I may venture to ſay that this is leſs the caſe with me than with moſt others. I would beg, however, to hint that the papers which I am about to ſubmit to your ſcrutiny, will require your utmoſt attention; for I have ſent ſeveral of them to the *Royal Society*, the Council of which, through not being capadle of underſtanding them, have, I imagine, ignorantly concluded them to be of no value, for as yet I have not ſeen any notice taken of them in the Philoſophical Tranſactions. And I am ſorry to obſerve, that that once famous ſociety

ciety is degenerated from what it was in the days when honoured with the name of the illuſtrious NEWTON. But permit me to repeat, dear Harcourt, that if you think my lucubrations will not do me honour by the publication, by all means inform me of it; criticiſe me without mercy, for by that I ſhall meaſure your friendſhip. Should works which have coſt me ſuch immenſe labour, and ſo much ſtudy, be coolly received by the public, or gibbetted in the reviews, I do not know that I ſhould be able to ſurvive the piercing grief which it would occaſion me. Not that I have any fears from proper judges, but it is poſſible that others may be as incapable of comprehending the truth, and diſcerning the merit of

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the doctrines contained in these papers as the Council of the Society. This age, alas! is not an age of science!"

From this speech, which so evidently spoke the man, and his real motive for *studying for the good of mankind*, it was not difficult to take the hint of my conduct. It was obvious that the only way of *obliging* him was by a non-observance of his injunction. The fate of *Gil Blas* would teach me as much; and you well know that it is not now my interest to make Mr. Wilkins my enemy, as an honest compliance with his request would infallibly do. I therefore made him an answer expressive of my sense of the high honour which he did me, and the friendship he manifested

fested for me, in this instance of his confidence, and assured him that his injunction should, to the best of my ability, be observed. The titles of such of the papers as I recollect (for I have forgot the greatest part of them) were as follow:

"A new and compleat system of *vitality*; demonstrating, by invincible arguments, that air is the vital principle in animal bodies, "from the little sparrow on the house top, to the lordly creature in the superb mansion."

"A treatise on negative electricity." In this paper it was proposed to be proved, that *negative* electricity is possessed of medicinal virtues, directly op-

posite

poſite to *poſitive*. That as one was a *ſtimulus*, the other was a *ſedative*; as one *increaſed*, the other muſt *diminiſh* perſpiration, &c.

"A propoſal for a new, eaſy, and pleaſant method of curing diſeaſes by conveying the virtues of medicines into the ſyſtem by means of electricity."—The medicine whoſe virtues were to be introduced, was to be placed within the conductor, or otherwiſe; the electricity diſcharged through which into the patient's body, would carry with it into the ſyſtem, part of the ſubſtance of that remedy.

"A demonſtration of the ſuperior efficacy of *blunt conductors*, in ſecuring buildings from lightning.

"A new

"A new practice of physic; proving that the bile is the cause of all the diseases incident to the human body, and demonstrating the great importance and necessity of an universal antiphlogistic regimen.

"A treatise on the medicinal uses of hemlock, henbane, and other poisonous plants. With *cases* shewing their efficacy in a variety of diseases.

"An essay on the great utility and importance of admitting mathematical, mechanical, and metaphysical reasoning into medicine.

"A new system of surgery, demonstrating the impropriety and absurdity of

of dreſſing wounds, fractures, &c." In this treatiſe it is propoſed only to bind up the wound, or fracture, after replacing the bone, and leave the cure entirely to nature.

"A vindication of the *general* uſe of *inſtruments*, in *parturition*.

"An attempt to prove that the gout is an effort of nature to make a *ſore*: to which is ſubjoined a propoſal for curing that malady by the application of bliſtering plaiſters to the part.

"A demonſtration of the great utility of extracting ſugar from potatoes, and certain other vegetable ſubſtances.

"Chemical elements of agriculture; ſhewing the great advantages of ap-

plying the principles of the hermetic art, to that ſcience.

"A new ſyſtem of aſtronomy; containing an account of the original formation of the planets, and their hiſtory, from the time of their being knocked off from the ſun by the comet, to the preſent age.

"A treatiſe on light and fire; *proving* that they are compounds of *phlogiſton* and *empyreal air*."

"A diſſertation tending to ſhew, that phlogiſton has a *centrifugal force*; and that it diminiſhes the gravity of bodies.

Chamelionia;

Chamelionia; or, a demonſtration, that animals are not nouriſhed by the food they *eat*, but by the air which they *breathe*.

To theſe were added ſeveral, treating of ſubjects which have already been mentioned in my former letters, and therefore need not here be touched upon.

On theſe performances, and many others not noticed, I made occaſional remarks; but they were ſuch as would either tickle, or at leaſt not wound, the vanity of the author. I adopted the plan of the ingenious Editors of the Medical Regiſter. They praiſe many books, but cenſure none: Their ſilence, however, is conſidered as equivalent to the moſt ſevere ſatire, though

Mr. Wilkins, by no means, conſtrued any paucity of praiſe of mine into ſuch meaning. As I have myſelf, occaſionally ſcribbled in the news-papers, and magazines, I knew ſomething of an author's weak ſide; and as my happineſs requires that I ſhould make Mr. Wilkins my friend, I, by no means, miſſed the golden opportunity of tickling him in his tender part. His friendſhip for me in conſequence thereof, has riſen even to enthuſiaſm. He therefore determined to publiſh his works as ſoon as he could prepare them for the preſs, and has ſince been indefatigable in reviſing them. But as he ſeemed above all things to dread their not being ſo well received as he wiſhed, and even died, as it were, at

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the thought of being cut up by the Reviewers, (notwithſtanding his pretence of publiſhing merely for the public good) the hope of ſtill further ſecuring his friendſhip, prompted me to propoſe to him to *inſure* ſucceſs to his labours, by adopting the following meaſure.

"That as ſoon as the volumes were publiſhed, he ſhould get two or three of his friends to call themſelves *the Mathematical Society*, one of the members of which, ſhould write him a letter, as in the name of the whole body, paying him the higheſt compliments imaginable on his diſcoveries, deſcribing their importance and great utility, pointing out the infinite obligations

which the world is under to him on account of them; and ranking him the foremoſt of all thoſe who have benefited the world by uſeful diſcoveries. That to this letter there ſhould be ſubjoined an anſwer, thanking the learned ſociety for their honourable and glorious teſtimony in his behalf; but at the ſame time, intimating a conſciouſneſs that the applauſe was not unmerited. That theſe letters ſhould be printed in all the news-papers, and periodical publications. That the world would imagine it to be the act of the *Royal Society itſelf*, no other mathematical ſociety being known; which idea ſhould be ſeconded and induſtriouſly propagated by himſelf and friends; and which by the way, would afford him ample revenge on the

the R. S. for their treatment of his *invaluable* papers. That this ſtep would effectually ſecure the applauſe of the public; and perhaps awe even the *reviewers themſelves* into reverence and adulation. If he thought he could not ſucceed in ſuch a meaſure among his acquaintance, or did not like to propoſe ſuch a thing to them on the ſcore of *delicacy*, the letters might be fabricated by *himſelf*; for that to my own knowledge the trick had been played by an author now living with all imaginable ſucceſs.

He ſmiled at my propoſal, but whether or no he means to adopt it, I cannot tell, for we were juſt then interrupted by an urgent meſſage from a

not tell, for we were juſt then interrupted by an urgent meſſage from a patient, and I have not ſince had an opportunity of diſcourſing with him on the ſubject. His virtue and good ſenſe, will undoubtedly lead him to deſpiſe ſuch a meaſure; but how far his vanity and fears may incline him to liſten to it, muſt be left for experience to determine.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XX.

DEAR DENNIS,

MR. Wilkins ſupped and ſpent the evening out about a week ago, (a thing which he very rarely does) and there happened, it ſeems, a *fracas* between the lady and gentleman whom he viſited. The former, to uſe the Engliſh phraſe, *wears the breeches*. I heard of this lady's fame the firſt day after my arrival at S——, as the moſt noted ſcold in this part of the country. She is indeed, a perfect virago, as you may judge by the following relation.

After ſupper Mr. M——, (the lady's huſband) propoſed to paſs the remainder

remainder of the evening in making entertaining philoſophical experiments, of which he was very fond. Mr. Wilkins, no doubt, would readily have conſented, as it was juſt in his *own way*. But the lady propoſed cards. As Mr. Wilkins was, by no means, fond of cards, he ſeemed rather to favour the huſband's propoſal; and the latter, feeling that it became his dignity as maſter of the houſe, to ſupport his own nomination, ſeconded as it was by the only perſon in company, repeated his motion in more urgent and peremptory terms. Mrs. M——, nettled at being contradicted, reddened up and told him, that "ſuch nonſenſical ſtuff ſhe really deteſted; and that if he was determined on introducing it, ſhe would

leave

leave the houſe for the evening, and go to ſome neighbour who would be more indulgent of her deſire," adding, "that it was hard indeed to be contradicted in ſo trifling an affair. Had ſhe propoſed any thing unfaſhionable or uncommon, he then might have had ſome reaſon for objecting." Wilkins whiſpered to Mr. M—— to accede, for quietneſs ſake, to the lady's propoſal; but the latter, aſhamed to be *henpecked* before company, determined to maintain his authority, and inſiſted that no cards ſhould be brought upon the table that evening; calling at the ſame time to the ſervant to bring up the philoſophical apparatus. Mrs. M——, whoſe temper is highly choleric, flew from her ſeat in a rage, and in the violence

lence of her paſſion, uttered an oath, "that if a ſervant dared to bring any inſtruments into her preſence, ſhe would tear them in pieces, and throw them into the fire;" and the footman very unluckily entering at that inſtant with an electrical machine, and an air pump, ſhe flew towards the door in a moſt violent fit of rage, and fairly did as ſhe had threatened. Fired at the affront offered to himſelf and viſitor, Mr. M—— vented his reſentment (in words) at his beloved, who not being uſed to ſuch ſpirited behaviour, from an *huſband*, and fearing that if ſhe once gave way her dominion was at an end, not only returned him his own with intereſt, but not finding a ſufficient vent for her mighty rage by the or-

gans

gans of vociferation, ſpit repeatedly in his face, with all the venom of *diſappointed woman*; and ſeizing the prime conductor which lay on the floor, beat it about his head, at a moſt unmerciful rate. The choler of M—— being rouzed by the ſmart of the blows, he began to return the compliment; a pitched battle enſued; and, what you will ſay is rather extraordinary, *the grey mare proved the better horſe*. For being a large maſculine woman, and M—— but a ſlender man, her temper alſo being hot and violent, and his on the contrary, rather milky, the former, giving full looſe to her ire, fell too without dread of the conſequences, and even hoping for the worſt; while the latter, more tender hearted, and fearful

fearful of hurting his antagonist, may rather be said to have acted only on the *defensive*. In five minutes time, however, the skin of M——'s whole face had yielded to the fierce nails of his Amazonian opponent, who tore it away with as little remorse as an Indian savage would the scalp of an enemy. She had made her teeth meet in various parts of his body; and a knife being at hand (behold, husbands! the dire effects of female rage) she cut him in two places, and in all probability would have dispatched him, had he not instantly fled from the room, and fortified himself in another apartment. Mr. Wilkins, frightened at the uproar of which himself had been the unwitting cause, after striving in vain to reconcile

concile the parties, eſpecially when he found that M—— was ſafe, fled home in the greateſt horror; but had ſcarce entered the ſhop when M—— appeared at the door, in the bloody condition deſcribed, in order to have proper remedies applied to his wounds; for which purpoſe he had eſcaped out at the parlour window. His bodily wounds being dreſſed, his friend Wilkins very humanely and affectionately endeavoured to pour the balm of comfort on thoſe of his mind. But ſoon found that the mutual tide of their grief was as yet too great; and inſtead of acting the part of the calm mental phyſician, ſwelled the flood of his friend's ſorrows to its utmoſt height, by demonſtrations of the moſt tender ſympathy,

pathy, and melting pity. He fell on Wilkins's bosom, and gave full loose to the grief and agony of his heart, which was so great that he could not refrain from a violent and long continued flow of tears. The sense of his unhappy situation quite unmanned him. "O my dear friend, he cried, would that I had never married! And yet why do I give utterance to a wish which my heart even now recoils at? I loved her to distraction before I wedded, and found myself miserable without her. I still love, I even doat on her, notwithstanding her faults. I know they are involuntary, and proceed from a violence of temper which, unhappily for us both, is not in her power to controul. Were her disposition but even

tolerable,

tolerable, how bleſt ſhould I think myſelf in the poſſeſſion of her! Has heaven, alas! which has afforded ſuch ample means of relief for the diſorders of the *body*, provided no remedy for thoſe of the *mind?* Were it poſſible, my dear friend, that her temper could be altered to what I once imagined it, what is there that I would not ſuffer, what is there that I poſſeſs, which I would not joyfully give, to the phyſician who ſhould make the happy diſcovery?"

As Mr. M—— durſt not venture home, he was put to bed in Wilkins's houſe; and an anodyne being adminiſtered to him, he reſted better than, from the circumſtances, could have

 been

been expected. But so great was the impression which the miserable situation of his bosom friend, and old school fellow, made on the tender breast of Mr. Wilkins, that he did not go to bed that night. The manner in which he passed the night, can only be imagined by those who are acquainted with the warmth of his friendship, and his extreme sensibility.

Next morning he appeared remarkably solemn and thoughtful, and after M—— was gone home, (peace having first been concluded with the enemy) locked himself up in his study till noon. He did the same after finishing his business (for he ate nothing that day) and we heard no more of him for

upwards

upwards of five hours. About nine o'clock at night he rang for me. I found him with a variety of books lying open before him, which I imagined he had been consulting. He placed them a little aside, and begged me to sit down. After several painful sighs, and a variety of other evident tokens of grief of heart, he opened the business on which he had called me, in the manner following.

He first informed me of the preceding night's disaster, as already related; and then poured out, in very lively and affecting strains, his grief for his unhappy friend's misfortune; after having given a loose to which he thus proceeded.

"Assuredly it is possible in nature to cure, or correct the irregularities of temper, as well as to heal bodily diseases. The Creator, who has been so careful in the latter respect, cannot have wholly overlooked the former. It would be incongruous to suppose it, seeing that our happiness depends not less on the harmony of the temper, than the health of the body. When, for example, a man and woman are joined together for life, and a fault in the temper of one of them turns that state into a curse, which was expected to have been a source of happiness, the party not in fault is even made more miserable than the other. But this is evidently unjust; and, together with various other considerations,

tions, which have occurred in the courſe of this day's intenſe application to the ſubject, have convinced me that nature has provided proper remedies for the *temper*, and that, as in phyſic, nothing but our induſtry is wanting to diſcover them.

"On conſulting ſuch authors as are likely to throw any light on this myſterious and difficult ſubject, I find that ſome of them propoſe to regulate the temper by means of proper diet. I approve of the principle, but it would be a work of time. And beſides there would hardly be a poſſibility of getting any patient, much leſs one of ſo violent a caſt of temper as the lady in queſtion, to renounce all other grati-

fications, and perſevere for life in the regimen required. I have even reaſon to think that the advantages to be derived from it, would, by no means, compenſate for the inconveniencies, eſpecially in the caſe before us. But I flatter myſelf I have been ſo happy as to hit on a method which will not only effect the deſired purpoſe *at once*, but in a far more effectual and infallible manner than could poſſibly be hoped for from the plan juſt mentioned.

"I find related in a celebrated author, that the blood of a dog, transfuſed into the body of a man, communicated to the latter the mental characteriſtic properties of the former. That the man, for example, barked, howled,

ſnarled,

ſnarled, &c. in every reſpect like a dog. This fact, I cannot but obſerve, is demonſtratively confirmed by the well known principle, that *the life is in the blood*; for from thence it follows of courſe, that *ſuch as the blood is, ſuch is the animal.* Hence appears the reaſon of a well known phenomenon, which has often ſtruck me, but for which I have not, till now, been able to account. Animals of different ſpecies have different and ſpecific tempers. The fox, for example, is ſubtle; the aſs dull. The lion is courageous, the hare timid. The tyger is fierce; the lamb quiet and gentle. And in like manner we might run through the whole animal creation. Theſe differences of temper evidently

proceed from the different and ſpecific nature of their *blood.*

"From this theory the eaſieſt inference imaginable follows, viz. *that the temper or characteriſtic ſtate of the* MIND *of an animal, may be varied by altering the nature of its blood.* And it appears evident to me, that as different *vegetables* were calculated to heal ſuch and ſuch diſeaſes of the *body*, ſo the deſign of nature in thus varying the tempers of *animals*, was, that they might be applied to the curing the diſorders of the *temper.* This obſervation indeed, has not eſcaped the notice of former philoſophers. Thus, the hearts of lions eaten, have been thought to inſpire courage; the fleſh of goats, luſt; and

ſo

ſo of others. But they have evidently proceeded on a wrong principle; for not only the blood of animals when killed is purpoſely *thrown away*, but the parts eaten, by paſſing through the digeſtive organs, have their nature entirely altered; and as if they were not already *dead* enough, they are further changed by the deſtructive force of fire; though it is obvious, that not only the *blood*, but the *living blood*, is the only part of an animal on which, in the preſent buſineſs, we can have any dependance. From this reaſoning therefore, as well as from the fact before recited, it is evident that *the blood itſelf, in its natural and living ſtate, muſt be transfuſed immediately into the vaſcu-*

lar

lar ſyſtem, and then it will undoubtedly have the effect deſired.

" This diſcovery, therefore, of the great deſign of nature in varying the *tempers* of animals, and its *cauſe*, we are enabled to apply to the moſt important purpoſes, though evidently no other than thoſe originally intended; all creatures having been made for the good of man, and ſubſervient to his uſe. By transfuſing the living blood of animals into the veſſels of the human ſpecies, we may vary their *temper* as we pleaſe. If, for example, a man has a termagant wife, by transfuſing into her the blood of a lamb, ſhe ſhall become gentle and mild. If ſhe be impatient, the blood of an aſs will

make

make a very *Grizzle* of her. If foolish, the blood of a fox will make her a wit; and if as crofs as Juno, the blood of turtle doves will bring her down to be as kind and complying as Venus herfelf. And all this will be done without any trouble or expence, or fuch at leaft as is not worth mentioning, which adds to the merit of the difcovery, and is a farther proof that it had its foundation in an original defign of nature, agreeable to what has been already mentioned.

"Now I mean to apply this difcovery in the cafe of my unfortunate friend; and am confident that the moft happy effects will immediately refult from it. The only doubt that remains with me, and

and on which I would requeſt your judgment, is, "whether the *aſs* or the *lamb* is the ingredient moſt wanting in the compoſition of the lady in queſtion?"

I could not ſuppreſs an immoderate fit of laughter on hearing ſo ridiculous a propoſal ſo ſeriouſly delivered. Abſurd as it was, yet for the ſake of ſecuring his friendſhip, I would willingly have forwarded it, could it have been done with the leaſt proſpect of ſucceſs. But as that was not the caſe, the following appeared to me to be the more elegible mode of conduct.

After paving the way to my diſſentient, by paying him the moſt fulſome compliments

compliments on the ingenuity of his ſyſtem, I replied, "that in my opinion the queſtion was, not what animals ſhould be employed on the occaſion, but whether it was poſſible ſo far to ſubdue the *tyger* in the lady's diſpoſition as to get her to ſubmit to the operation at all? For that very probably ſhe would ring poor M—— no very agreeable changes on the words *aſs* and *lamb*. That from the famous inſtance of the foreign nobleman, it was a doubt with me whether the operation could be performed with ſafety. And, in fact, whether the relation in the author to whom he alluded, was not entirely fabulous, however conſonant it might be to his (Wilkins's) admirable theory. That ſuppoſing it

true,

true, yet as the man animated with the blood of a dog, performed the *actions* of that animal, whether it would not equally follow that the *braying of the aſs*, or the *bleating of the lamb*, among other properties of theſe animals, would not alſo be transferred to the lady? Though probably, her huſband would rather bear with thoſe, than with her tongue in its preſent ſtate.—That I ſubmitted to him, whether it would not be prudent to try the event of the experiment previouſly on *animals?* For that if it would ſucceed agreeable to the theory in human ſubjects, it muſt equally in them. The blood of a lion, for example, transfuſed into the veſſels of an hare, would give that timid animal courage, in the

ſame

ſame proportion as it would to man. And the blood of a fox would impart wiſdom alike to the aſs, and the dunce of the human ſpecies." Wilkins had diſcernment enough to perceive the juſtneſs of the laſt mentioned argument, and agreed to make the experiments, which we ſet about that very evening. We procured ſeveral dogs, cats, and lambs; an aſs, an hare; and a fox, from a fellow in the town, who had ſeveral, which he carried about for ſhew; together with a variety of ſuch other animals as were attainable; and the two following days were ſpent in transfuſions; the particulars of which it would be tedious to relate. The reſults, however, were ſuch as that in many caſes, either the

animals

animals died, or elſe became ſo ill that no juſt inference could be drawn. But in general, the appearances with regard to the *temper*, were, by no means, favourable to Mr. Wilkins's theory. The aſs retained his ſtupidity, though animated with the blood of the fox. The lamb did not bark, though filled with the blood of the dog. The cat did not appear to be leſs irritable, notwithſtanding that the blood of the gentle lamb glided through its veſſels; neither was the hare more fierce, though actuated with the vital principal of the cat. In ſhort, the reſults of the experiments, were ſo far from verifying Mr. Wilkins's theory, that himſelf at length, convinced of its abſurdity, reluctantly gave it up.

I am, &c.

LETTER XXI.

DEAR SIR,

SINCE I wrote laſt, we have been favoured with the company of our old friend and ſchool-fellow, Jack Steady. In return from a viſit to a place not far from hence, his horſe fell with him, and Mr. Wilkins being the neareſt medical gentleman, he was brought hither for aſſiſtance. His bruiſes, however, proved to be but trifling; he was more *frightened* than *hurt*; and in conſequence of the *former* rather than the *latter*, readily accepted Wilkins's invitation to take up his reſidence with him for that night. I did not happen to be at home when he

 came,

came, and you will guefs at our mutual furprife and pleafure at the unexpected rencounter on my entering the room. "Harcourt!" faid Steady, in amazement, "Is it really thee?" Without waiting to anfwer, I ran up to him, caught his hand with both mine, poured out the joy of my heart at meeting him, together with the moft ardent gratitude for his vifit; and, imagining he had come purpofely to fee me, afked, "how he came to know that I lived here?" He replied, "that though he would gladly have gone twice that diftance to fee me, his prefent vifit was not owing to defign, for that he was ignorant till that moment of the place of my refidence." And both himfelf, and Wilkins, proceeded

ceeded to inform me of the particulars of the accident. Finding that his hurt was ſo trivial, I could not refrain from expreſſing my joy at his misfortune, ſince it had been the occaſion of ſo happy an interview. Wilkins ſeemed delighted that he had obliged ſo dear a friend of mine; and after dinner, very politely retired to his ſtudy, leaving us, with a bottle of wine, to ourſelves. After much talk on domeſtic affairs, and enquiry after old acquaintance, (you, in particular, was not forgotten by him) he proceeded to queſtion me concerning my preſent ſituation, of which I gave him a very particular account, together with the character, and a variety of anecdotes of Mr. Wilkins, with which he ſeemed greatly delight-

ed. And after indulging a hearty laugh, ſaid, "I alſo have to do with a genius little leſs ſingular than yours, though of a different caſt;" and then in his turn proceeded to relate the hiſtory of the gentleman whom he was pleaſed to call his *principal.*

"I have lately," ſaid he, "taken up my diploma; and as my circumſtances will not permit me to launch forth into practice on my own bottom, have put myſelf under the protection of the noted HYPOCRITUS* WRIGGLE, with whom I live in the capacity of *author*, and *medical aſſiſtant.* This gentleman has the ſkill to cover an artful and deſigning diſpoſition, with the outward

* Quere? Is not this word mis-ſpelt? ought it not to be HIPPOCRATES?

outward ſemblance of gravity and ſimplicity. He paſſes with the public for a man of humanity and deep learning; and has had the addreſs to work himſelf into conſiderable practice by his ſubtle conduct, an hiſtory of which might aptly enough be termed, "The "Art of Riſing in Phyſic." I ſhall not trouble you with a recital of his intriguing with apothecaries and nurſes, of being called out from company, and a long catalogue of other artifices, (all which he has adopted with ſucceſs) but proceed directly to what may be properly called *his own.*

"His firſt great maxim is, "bring "your name often before the public; "it will, by degrees, become fami-

"liar to them, and they will at length "think you a man of consequence." For this purpose, the doctor contrives to have his name appear every now and then in paragraphs in the newspapers, which every body read. For example.

"Yesterday as Dr. Wriggle was re-"turning *in his chariot* from such a "place, he was attacked by two high-"waymen, who demanded his mo-"ney, &c."—Or,

"On Wednesday last, as Dr. Wriggle and his lady, &c."

I interrupted him with observing, that the case was natural enough for a person when robbed to publish it in the newspapers.

But

But replied Steady, "Dr. Wriggle "was never robbed."

"Not robbed?"

"No. It was a mere invention, a pretext for *bringing his name before the public!* Half the robberies we read of in the newſpapers were never committed.—There are a variety of other methods by which a man may *bring his name before the public* in the newſpapers, all which Dr. Wriggle has ſucceſsfully employed.

2dly. "Let every thing about you "ſpeak learning and gravity."

"The hall of the Doctor's houſe, for example, is a perfect *muſeum*. A patient no ſooner has the ſtreet door opened to him than he is ſtruck with the appearance of moſſes, ſhells, dried foreign animals, and the like. He is led immediately to conclude, that the Doctor (like your Solomon) is a very *deep* man, as indeed he is in *one* ſenſe of the word. Dr. Wriggle has even had the addreſs to unite both the foregoing maxims. He has made a preſent to a certain celebrated Repoſitory of Natural Curioſities, of a *mummy*, which he has taken care to have placed in a very conſpicuous part of the collection. The mummy indeed is faſtened up in a box, and is never ſeen, or enquired

enquired after. But on the box itſelf, is written in characters ſufficiently legible, THE GIFT of HYPOCRITUS WRIGGLE, M. D. &c. The viſitants learn by this, that there is ſuch a man as *Dr. Wriggle*, and that he would be thought a great *virtuoſo*,* which is all that the Doctor meant by the preſent.

3dly.

* The following anecdote, related by Steady, will ſerve as a ſpecimen of the Doctor's knowledge in his *favorite ſtudy*.

"Dr. Wriggle is fond of being thought a great naturaliſt, and on that ſubject will freely converſe even with thoſe who are by much his inferiors. He had, in particular, an old gardener, who uſed to procure him inſects, &c. in order that the Dr. might find them out by the deſcriptions in his ſyſtematical authors. The old man

3dly. "Engage in controverſy with eminent men," a moſt excellent way of bringing a man into public notice. This was the Doctor's motive for attacking Dr. Variolus, and others. It was the ſame principle that led him to deſcend

man, one day, deſirous of trying the Doctor's ſkill, ſhewed him a very *particular* and *well known* inſect, aſking, "if he could tell him what it was?" Wriggle viewed it with attention, "Is it ? (ſaid he to himſelf) or ? or rather ? &c" running on with a number of generic and ſpecific names, which the man (who told me the ſtory) could neither recollect nor underſtand. At length, confeſſing his ignorance, he aſked the gardener if *he* knew it? "I dont know what "you *larned* men may call it in Greek and "Latin, (ſaid the gardener) but we plain fel-"lows call it a cr—b l—e."

descend to an altercation with the celebrated Dr. Marefwater. Here indeed he had a double advantage; for the public were artfully led to believe that he engaged in this task from a principle of pure *philanthrophy!* A principle of all others the most remote from the breast of Dr. Wriggle.

4thly. "Always pretend that you have a deal of bufinefs on your hands, and the world will conclude that you are in great practice." With this view Dr. Wriggle is conftantly out fo many hours in the day, and always in a bustle. *At first setting out*, he used to have a number of poor people whom he visited *gratis*. He fat them down in his list

liſt as *prime patients*, which liſt he took ſufficient care to diſplay to his brethren of the faculty. With the poor themſelves, who were incapable of diving into his motives, this paſſed for *charity*. But Dr. Wriggle always took care that his carriage ſhould ſtop, not at the houſe of the *pauper*, but of ſome perſon of conſequence in the neighbourhood; the inhabitants of which, were, in courſe, imagined to be the Doctor's *patients*.

"If a friend happens to be with him at home, and another friend chances to call on him at the time that the former is going away, the Doctor takes a guinea or two ſlily out of his pocket, and diſplaying them in his hand with a

ſeemingly

ſeemingly careleſs air, ſays,—"You "ſee, Sir, theſe are the people we get "our money by."—The viſitor is thereby made to believe, that the gentleman was a *patient*, and that the two guineas had juſt been received as a *fee*.

5thly. "Force yourſelf into the company of great men, and the world will think you one of the number; according to the old maxim, *tell me the company you keep, and I will tell you what you are*." It was *partly* with this view that he courted the acquaintance of the famous Dr. Worthy,*

make

* By the overſetting of an ink ſtand, the following paragraphs were ſo blotted in the copy, that the whole of them could not be made out.

make the world believe

first in his *friendship*

succeed him in *practice*

great man saw motives

turned him out

last illness *seen*

by, much less trust

health, called every

day to *enquire* about him

admitted no further than the hall,

stop

there a considerable time that people might *see his carriage at the great man's door*; and you will easily conclude that Dr. Wriggle did not fail to make his advantage of this circumstance with the public.

"With

With a ſimilar view, he has ſince announced the publication of his *dear friend's* works

unfiniſhed papers, artfully

obtained,

letters never intended

for the publ

good round price

The Doctor, beſides, makes other advantages of his *friend*'s reputation

imitates his hand

writing in his preſc

champion of his *unaſſailed* fame

Benſonian medal

apothecaries, nurſes, and others, in his intereſt and *pay*, in different parts

of

of the town, who have it in instruction to *blazon their patron's fame*. The language of the public now is, "The world has suffered a great loss in the death of Dr. Worthy." My friend's *puffers* are directed to reply, "Why to be sure, Dr. Worthy was a great physician, so was Philip of Macedon a great hero; but *Philip* was succeeded by an ALEXANDER, and *Worthy* by a WRIGGLE!

After interrupting him with a hearty laugh at his description of his master's character, my curiosity prompted me to ask him—"But what, pray, is your business with this gentleman? Though *apothecaries* employ assistants, I never heard that there were *journeymen physicians*."

"My

"My employment, he replied, "is *chiefly* in the capacity of Author and Puff. Dr. Wriggle, as I obſerved before, is continually making his appearance in public, either in paragraphs or eſſays in the newſpapers and magazines, or elſe in pamphlets. But the Doctor cannot write; and to me he has modeſty (a quality by the way which you would not expect to meet with in Wriggle) to acknowledge it. *He* hints the nature of what he would have written, and *I* put it to paper. I have now been abſent from him for ſome time, during which the public has heard nothing from Dr. Wriggle. Now I am returning to London, you will ſee that the town will be deluged with his publications. The Doctor,

 beſides,

besides, is about removing to another quarter;* and we must contrive, (I fear at poor Worthy's expence) to appear frequently in print, in order that the public may know, from the date of our Puffs, where he lives. A most excellent mode of advertisement!

(C——e the ink stand!)

"You have seen, I presume, several treatises published with the Doctor's *name*. These, though not very graciously received by the faculty, or applauded by the reviews, the Doctor has had the interest to get well spoken of in at least *one* publication, with the printer of which he is intimately acquainted.

* Some *palace*, I think, or *nobleman's seat*.

quainted. And you will judge of his *modesty* by the following account of his own *oration*, written and sent by himself.

"We have often had occasion to "admire Dr. Wriggle as a *physician*; "we have more than once admired "him as a *philosopher*. We have now "to admire him in the character of "an *orator*; to form which, (accord-"ing to Cicero) such an infinite num-"ber of important qualifications must "concur. In the multiplicity of busi-"ness in which this learned physician "is constantly engaged, we wonder "how he can possibly find time, &c." This, though it may be matter of amazement to the *printer*, and even to

the *public*, is by no means ſo to Dr. *Wriggle*, or *me*."*—He was proceeding to anecdotes more curious than any of thoſe related. But at that inſtant Mr. Wilkins, to my great regret and diſappointment, imagining, I ſuppoſe, that we had ſaid all we had to ſay to each other, returned from his ſtudy, in order to ſpend, with his gueſt, the remainder of the evening. Supper was therefore brought, (unwelcome meal!) a converſation of a very different nature was introduced; we chearfully emptied a bottle or two, and then retired to reſt. In the morning, Steady roſe early to purſue his journey, and make up for his loſt time. And after our taking a mutual and affectionate farewell, without waiting for the formality of breakfaſt, he rode off.

As

* See alſo the GAL —; in which he has himſelf ſtiled THE DIVINE WRIGGLE.

As, however, I have reaſon to think that Wilkins will be in London in the courſe of next ſummer, (when he propoſes to call on his viſitor, in order to get introduced to Wriggle, of whoſe character I have given him the above account) and as Steady has promiſed to commence a correſpondence with me, I hope I ſhall ſoon be enabled to delineate to you the remainder of this extraordinary character, and even to introduce him to you in *propria perſona*. Should that be the caſe, you may conſider this as a mere *introduction* to the performance, the *prologue* to the *comedy*, which I doubt not will afford us both, ample matter of merriment and riſibility.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER XXII.

DEAR SIR,

MR. Wilkins had lately been dipping at times into the *Universal History*; and one day at dinner our converſation turned on the various revolutions which had taken place in the different kingdoms of the world. He expatiated with great eloquence on the excellence of hiſtory in informing us of the events which had happened previous to our own exiſtence, and enlarged much on the happineſs, as well as important advantages, which mankind derived from that rich ſource. At the ſame time, not ſatisfied with the *paſt*, his curioſity was alſo raiſed with

reſpect

respect to the *future*; and he lamented exceedingly, that in human affairs we had no means of obtaining the least information in that particular. He expressed deep regret that the moral world was not governed by laws equally obvious with the natural; and that their events were not alike subject to mathematical calculation. If we would know the state of the planetary system five hundred or a thousand years hence, we can satisfy ourselves, by a proper calculus, with the greatest exactness and certainty; but in affairs which more intimately concern us, we are left wholly in the dark. In the planetary system, we have the requisite *data* from objects of sense. We know the laws of their revolution; and by

obſerving their places at preſent, can compute them to any future period. But in morals nothing of this kind takes place. The objects which only can afford the *data*, beſides being fleeting and uncertain, come not under the cognizance of our ſenſes. All is tranſacted behind the curtain; ſo that the only method whereby we could poſſibly acquaint ourſelves with future events, would be by rendering life ——— but that is imp———. Ha!" At that inſtant a new idea ſeemed to have ſtruck him; he pauſed awhile, looked thoughtful, then ſtarted from the table, and haſtened to his ſtudy, where he remained, loſt to the little concerns of buſineſs, the whole afternoon.

In

In the evening he made his appearance, and took me with him into the parlour. He ſeemed to be wonderfully pleaſed as with ſome great diſcovery. After making an apology for his abrupt departure from dinner, he deſired me to ſit down, took his ſeat by me, and then addreſſed me as follows:

"I have been ſo happy, my dear friend, as to have hit on a method of acquiring the important ſpecies of knowledge, which at dinner time I ſo pathetically lamented the want of; and cannot but congratulate mankind on a diſcovery which will afford them ſuch infinite advantages and ſatisfaction. The *future* will now be more

compleatly

compleatly known to us than even the *paſt!*—I ſhewed you at noon that the acquiring a knowledge of future moral events, by mathematical computation, was, in the nature of things, impoſſible; and as we have (now at leaſt) no intelligence with thoſe ſuperior beings, who may be ſuppoſed capable of giving us information in theſe matters, the only method that remains would be *to preſerve our exiſtence* (if poſſible) *to the period whoſe hiſtory we want to be acquainted with.* Now I flatter myſelf, that I have diſcovered a means whereby this effect, ſtrange as it may ſeem, may be brought about.

"But to proceed to the ſubject.—By the celebrated diſcovery of the Ruſſian academicians,

academicians, we are enabled to correct our erroneous ideas, relative to freezing, and no longer confine them to chryſtallized water, whitened fields, hoary trees, and aching fingers. All bodies in a ſolid ſtate we now conſider as ſo many ſpecies of ice. Iron, for example, is the ice of the martial fluor, and tallow the ice of animal oil.

"Now it is to be noticed that the operations of nature are never performed in a ſolid, but always in a fluid or vapoury form. The ice of *muſt* will not ferment. The ice of animal oil will not burn. To theſe proceſſes it is requiſite that they ſhould be thawed into fluids, or even rarified, by a ſtill greater heat, into vapour. While they continue

tinue in a ſolid form, they remain in a ſtate of ſuſpence, of inactivity, of ſleep, of death.

"A candle, for example, may be conſidered as ice; and therefore its powers, or active principles, are in a ſtate of ceſſation, or ſuſpence; even as a clock when it is ſtanding ſtill, but which *art* can again ſet a-going at pleaſure. If I put this candle into a proper ſtate by means of heat, it kindles, it flames; and, if left to itſelf, would, in a few hours, burn entirely away. If I let this candle burn only a-while, then put it out, or in other words, reſtore it to its ſtate of inactivity, I may keep it for any length of time; but its power of inflammation remains, and

may

may be renewed at pleaſure. I may, for inſtance, burn it a few minutes now, a few minutes a year hence, and ſo on till it be conſumed. But by varying the time of its combuſtion, and the interval of its renovation, I may prolong its exiſtence to any diſtant period I pleaſe.

"We have every reaſon to infer from analogy, that flame and life are, at the bottom, one and the ſame thing. Modern diſcoveries have placed this matter even beyond doubt. Call therefore the inflammation of the candle its *life*. Let it burn, (that is *live*, or *exiſt*) a little now, again a year hence, and ſo on, till its life be quite burnt out. Apply this to the life of an animal, and

what

what a glorious idea preſents itſelf to our view! I am aſtoniſhed that it ſhould never have occurred to a philoſopher before.

"The period of our exiſtence is uſually confined to about threeſcore years, and we have hitherto lived it out *in continuo.* We are, therefore, confined as it were to a moment, a mere ſpan of exiſtence. We know indeed what has paſt, though very imperfectly, from hiſtory; and our ſenſes inform us of what is going forward during the ſhort period of our being. But of futurity, alas! we remain in a ſtate of total ignorance, for reaſons already given. Yet how many thouſands of our countrymen are at this inſtant anxious to know

know what will be the ſtate of Britain five hundred years hence? And what would they not give to be able to peep up at that diſtant period to ſatisfy themſelves in ſo important a particular! What would not Halley have given could he have lived in the year 58, to be ſatisfied of the truth or falſhood of his doctrine, relative to the cometary ſyſtem! And what pleaſure would it not give a monarch, or a gentleman, to be able to know the ſtate of his poſterity, or an author that of his fame, at the diſtance of thirty centuries? But all this may be obtained with the greateſt eaſe, by means of the diſcovery, which my good genius has this day ſuggeſted to me. By living a little now, and a little then, and ſo on

repeatedly,

repeatedly, I may know for example, how the world goes an hundred, a thousand, or ten thousand years hence; I may prolong the period of my existence even to the day of resurrection.

"That the analogy really holds good with regard to animals, is certain from facts that are frequent in our days, though an age or two ago they would have been deemed impossible. We see the vital motions of human beings to stand still, during a whole hour. They are then in the state of an extinguished candle. At the end of that time, life is rekindled in them by the assistance of art, as effectually as is the flame of the extinguished taper by fire. They then both equally burn on; and if life

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can be renewed after having been interrupted for an hour, it may equally be renewed at the diſtance of a year, or a century. We have only to preſerve the body in the mean time from putrefaction; and this may effectually be done by *freezing*, which is the ſtate of the non-exiſtent animal already ſuppoſed.

"Now as I am determined to have the honour of being the firſt ſubject of this glorious experiment, I would wiſh to conſult with you a little about the *means*. Shall I ſhut myſelf up in an ice-houſe? Will the temperature of this climate be ſufficient to ſecure me againſt the influence of the ſuns reſolvent beams? Or had I not

better, think you, retire to ſome more northern region, or to the ſummit of ſome Alpine mountain, where, intombed in everlaſting ice, or buried in eternal ſnow, my automaton may be ſafely preſerved till twice fifty years; at the expiration of which I mean to be revived for a while, in order to ſee what is doing in the world, and to learn what has gone forward during the interval of my non-entity: (How the people of that age will ſtare at me!) When this point is ſettled, if you, my dear friend, will be ſo kind as to take upon you the management of my congelation, and interment, I will take care to leave proper directions to my deſcendants, in order to

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my being revivified at the defired period."

A perfon unacquainted with Mr. Wilkins, who fhould hear the relation of this curious anecdote, would think it romance. To have kept my countenance at this fingular propofal, would have argued an apathy beyond that of a Stoic; and I was never more at a lofs than for the manner in which I fhould anfwer it. Chriftmas was now at hand. To have given him the leaft offence, might have been fatal to my repofe. Mere reafoning, I judged, from the firm confidence which he feemed to have in his theory, would have been by no means fufficient to undeceive him. After tickling his va-

nity, therefore, with a profusion of compliments, expressive of my *admiration*, and *astonishment* at the depth of his genius, and the infinite merit of his discovery, I judged it most prudent to answer him in the manner following.

That I by no means meant to deprive him of the glory of being the first person who should make this great experiment. But that as the business was as yet merely speculative, though to the eye of reason absolutely demonstrable, I had so great a regard for his valuable life (as well as for the welfare and happiness of my fellow creatures, which were so nearly connected with it) that I would presume to submit

mit whether it would not be better firſt to make the experiment on ſome animal? If it proved ſucceſsful, as indeed there was no doubt, he might ſtill have the honour of being the firſt *human being* on whom it was tried, and even the firſt *animal* on whom it was made in the way he mentioned.

As he had no doubt of its ſucceſs, he conſented to the propoſal, not to ſatisfy any ſcruples of his own, but merely to convince *me*. As it happened at that very time to be froſty, he ſat about the experiment the ſame evening. A little dog, partly by natural, and partly by artificial cold, was compleatly frozen; and you may eaſily gueſs how eager he was the next

morning to ſatisfy me of the truth of his theory by the event. The animal was put into warm water, and the methods propoſed by the Humane Society were made uſe of to revive him. He thawed indeed, but alas! life was not reſtored! It was only *a thawed dead dog!*

Concluding that there was ſome error in the *mode*, he repeated the experiment, and applied the reſolvent principle in different ways. By the vapour of water, for example; by warm quickſilver, oil, ſand, the open air, by friction, and by the human breath; but in neither inſtance did the reviviſcence, in the ſmalleſt degree, take place.

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At length, it occurred to him, that in cold countries they restored the frozen parts of animals, by rubbing them with snow; other means of thawing, proving not only ineffectual, but even fatal to the part. As we had, a few days before, a fall of snow, he tried the experiment in this mode; but it failed, alas! though repeated in every variety of circumstances which even *his* inventive genius could suggest.

Having thus left him to undeceive himself by *facts*, he was, by this time, I imagined, prepared to listen to *ratiocination*. I therefore ventured to submit to him "whether there was, in fact, the analogy which he imagined

between the candle, and an animal? That the candle was a mere chemical ſubſtance; whereas the animal was an organized body; the fine mechaniſm of which was probably deſtroyed by the expanſion conſequent on the congelation. That the inſtances of recovery after drowning, if they bore any analogy to flame, could only probably be compared to the *blowing in of a candle whoſe wick is not yet extinguiſhed*; but that the analogy did not, by any means, hold good when the vital power of the animal was once wholly ſuppreſſed." In ſhort, though it was hard for him to give up ſo darling and dazzling an hypotheſis, yet by theſe reaſonings, together with his own experiments, he ſeemed at length

length to be convinced; and I believe he has now laid aſide all thoughts of putting his congelation project in execution.

I am, &c.

P. S. *Chriſtmas* is at hand. My next, I hope, will inform you of the completion of my happineſs. O! how I long for the joyful period!

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

My Dear Friend,

THE happy ſeaſon approached; I felt an encreaſing deſire of its arrival, and the laſt week ſeemed longer than all the preceding interval. As it was ſo long ſince I had ſeen the dear angel (for to a lover what an eternity is three months!) my anxiety for an interview became the more ardent, and was encreaſed by a thouſand little circumſtances of not ſufficient conſequence to you to mention. A child did not long more for the promiſed toy, on the approaching fair, than I did for the arrival of that bliſsful tide which was to return to my arms the dear object of my wiſhes, on whom the

the whole happineſs of my future life entirely reſted.

At length, the happy period arrived. The poſt chaiſe ſtopped at the door, and before I could run to hand her out, ſhe entered the ſhop. Our eyes met inſtantly, and but that the laws of vitality forbad, our ſouls would have ruſhed through them into union. We were conſtrained, however, to put ourſelves to the mortification of affecting indifference by the arrival of Mr. Wilkins from the parlour, whither he conducted the dear charmer, whoſe expreſſive looks, gave me the pleaſing aſſurance that her affection for me remained in its full force.

It ſeemed an age to dinner time, but at length I was called. When I entered the dining room, her anxious eyes met mine, as if waiting for them, and involuntarily declared her ſentiments in much ſtronger language than words. She ſeemed conſcious of this, and overpowered with bluſhes, inſtantly turned them aſide, with a modeſt dignity which I even adored. I paid her thoſe compliments before Mr. Wilkins, on the occaſion of her return, which any indifferent perſon would have done from mere courteſy. And though I could not refrain from continual glances, yet ſuch was the majeſty of her deportment, or the awe of parental preſence, that I could not once catch her eyes during dinner time,

nor

nor could I obtain that ſatisfaction even when I retired, which I own alarmed me. About an hour after dinner, Mr. Wilkins went out on buſineſs. I immediately flew to the parlour, and threw myſelf at the feet of my ſoul's idol, expreſſing the tranſports which I felt at her return. Perceiving by her reception of me that my fears were ill founded, and that her affection was even encreaſed, I ſprung from the ground, claſped her to my melting boſom, and we remained for ſome minutes mutually intranced in bliſs. Recovering, I bathed her dear lips with kiſſes, and was proceeding to pour out the raptures of an heart overflowing with gratitude and love, after ſo long an abſence from its object; but the

firſt

first embrace at meeting over, which she judged it not improper to indulge, she gently put me away with her wonted ineffable modesty. I seated myself by her side, and had the inexpressible happiness of being in her company near two hours; at the end of which time she expected her father's return. I enjoyed during that blissful period all the happiness which honourable love could ask, or female virtue bestow.

In the course of this blissful interview, it was agreed, that as she was now to remain at home, our acquaintance should be continued, under proper restrictions, for a few weeks, in order to give it the air of novelty; at

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the end of which time, I had leave to propoſe the matter to Mr. Wilkins, by whoſe determination, however, ſhe was ſtill reſolved to abide, whether favourable or not, to her *wiſhes* (for that was her endearing expreſſion.) But he was not to know that we had, as yet, formed any connection; I was only to aſk his permiſſion to *pay my addreſſes to her*.

The days glided happily on, and I enjoyed in her company, at intervals, the full meaſure of bliſs that nature was capable of ſuſtaining. I daily dined with her, played with her occaſionally at cards; heard her divine voice, while ſhe accompanied it with ſuch ſtrains, as only a celeſtial could

equal

equal. And my being conſtantly in her dear preſence, and united with her in the Hymeneal band, were all that was now wanting to render my happineſs compleat. I had the ſatisfaction to find that her wiſhes entirely correſponded with my own.

My aſſiduity to pleaſe Mr. Wilkins in the mean time, you will eaſily imagine, was not a little quickened. I had formerly ventured, on many occaſions, to ſpeak my own ſentiments on his philoſophical opinions and projects; but I now flattered him even in his abſurdities, and (God forgive me) frequently applauded his wiſdom, when I ought, in juſtice, to have ridiculed his folly. There was no inſtance, though

though ever so trivial, in which I did not strive to oblige him, and win his friendship.

At length the three long weeks were past, and the important period arrived when I should solicit him for the completion of my happiness.

I was with him in his study, and we had just been revising some of his pieces for publication. I repeated, and urged more home, the puffing scheme which I had lately suggested to him; he at length confessed himself to have been highly delighted with it; that he had already determined to adopt it, and only feared that I should one day or other betray the imposture.

But I pledged myſelf to him for ſecrecy in ſuch ardent terms, that he was ſatisfied of my confidence, and we even drew up a copy of the advertiſement. In the courſe of our reviſe, I ſtuck at no flattery to tickle him in his weakeſt and moſt tender part; I found indeed that there was none ſo groſs that he would not ſwallow. And knowing the quarter from whence he had his fears, I even ventured to tell him, (pardon kind Venus the lie!) that "I "was acquainted with ſeveral of the "gentlemen concerned in the reviews, "and could make intereſt with them "to ſpeak in the higheſt terms of his "performance." The man melted within him at this aſſurance; his heart ſeemed entirely at my diſpoſal; and to

expreſs

expreſs the workings of his gratitude the more ſtrongly, he claſped me ardently to his breaſt, and aſſured me, "that there was nothing that I could "aſk, in his power to grant, which he "would not think himſelf infinite-"ly obliged by giving him an op-"portunity to beſtow." I immediately ſeized the bleſt occaſion. My vanity even ſuggeſted to me, that he had made this unreſerved offer purpoſely to give me an opportunity of aſking the deſired boon. I fell inſtantly at his feet, and ſaid "There is one favour, Sir, in your power to grant, by which you would make me the happieſt of men. I aſk not gold, nor any other bauble of worldly value. But you have a daughter!—Would you deign to

permit me to offer my addreſſes to her, and to uſe your intereſt with her in my behalf, all that I can do for you in future, I ſhall think infinitely too little for ſo great a bleſſing."

He ſtarted back at my propoſal, and ſeemed quite thunder ſtruck! After a long pauſe, with viſible emotions of agony and diſtreſs, he anſwered me in the manner following.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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