

A N

E S S A Y

On the more common

WEST-INDIA DISEASES;

A N D T H E

REMEDIES which that Country itself  
produces.

To which are added,

S O M E H I N T S

O N T H E

MANAGEMENT, &c. of NEGROES.

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By a P H Y S I C I A N in the WEST-INDIES.

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*Nulla in re, proprius accedunt homines ad Deos,  
quam salutem hominibus dando.*                      C I C E R O .

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L O N D O N :

Printed for T. BECKET and P. A. DE HONDT, in the  
Strand. MDCCLXIV.

[Price One Shilling and Six-pence.]

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T O

DANIEL MATHEW, Esq;

**T**HE following Effay, which is written on a subject of the utmost importance to the West-Indies; I beg leave, Sir, to address to you: Both as it affords me a pleasing opportunity of recommending to others, that distinguished humanity, wherewith your Negroes have ever been treated; and, in particular, of expressing the high regard, with which I am,

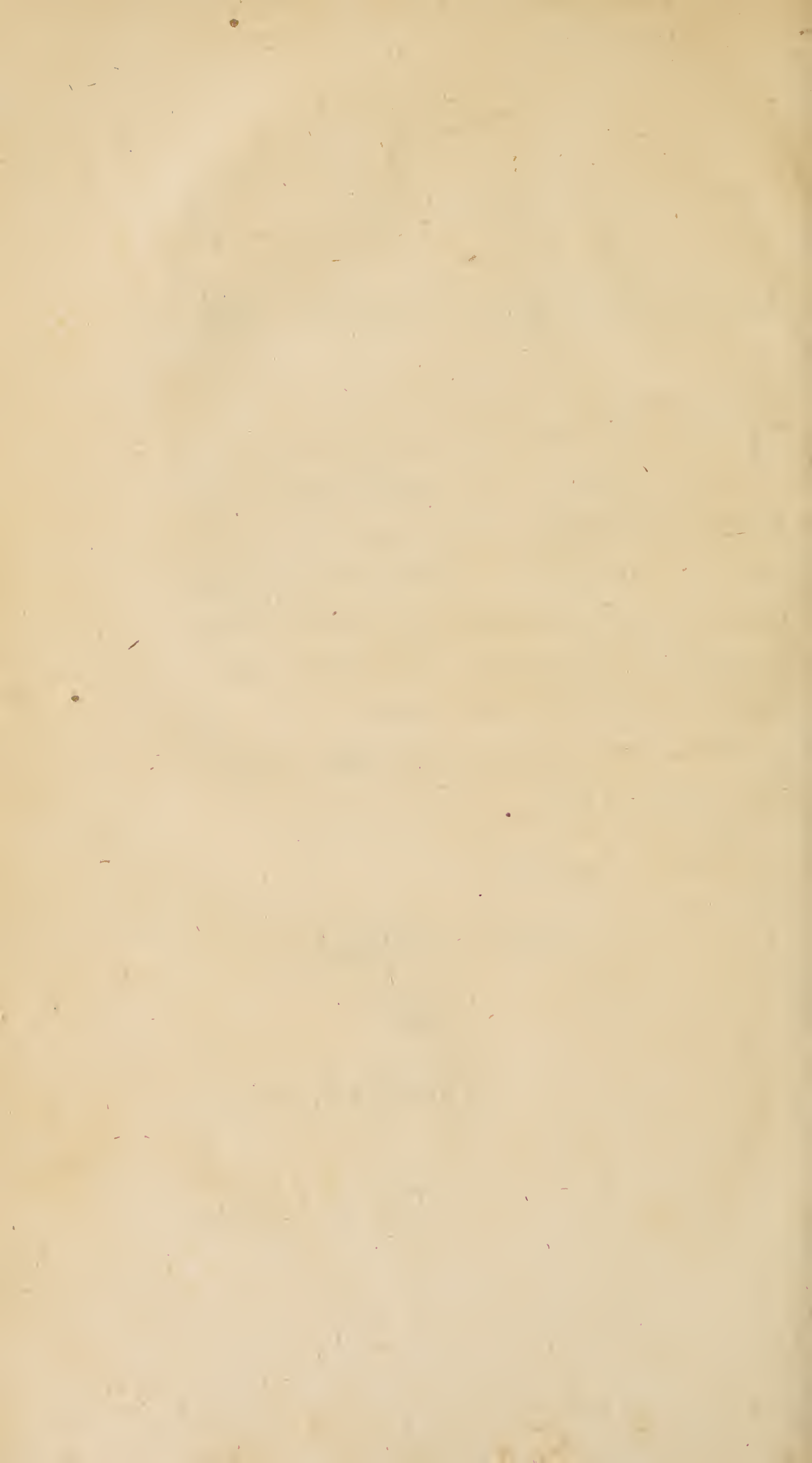
S I R,

Your most obliged,

And

Very humble Servant,

The AUTHOR.



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# C O N T E N T S.

P R E F A C E, Page i.

## P A R T I.

*Of the choice of Negroes,* 7

## P A R T II.

*Of the treatment of Infants,* 14

*Of Chigres or Chigoes,* 18

*Of the Itch,* 19

*Of Coughs,* *ibid.*

*Of Worms,* 20

*Of Fevers,* 23

*Fluxes,* 26

*Of the Lax or Diarrhea,* 31

*Dry*

# C O N T E N T S.

<i>Dry Belly-Ach,</i>	Page 32
<i>Tetanus,</i>	34
<i>Of the Dropsy,</i>	36
<i>Cholera Morbus,</i>	38
<i>Vomiting,</i>	39
<i>Malignant Sore Throat.</i>	ibid.
<i>Of the Liver and Spleen præternaturally swelled,</i>	41
<i>Gout, Gravel and Diabetes,</i>	42
<i>Fluor Albus,</i>	44
<i>Rheumatism and Sciatic,</i>	45
<i>Pain in the Stomach,</i>	46
<i>Heart-Burn,</i>	47
<i>Ringworm,</i>	48
<i>Of Costiveness,</i>	50

## P A R T III.

<i>Leprosy,</i>	53
<i>Elephantiasis,</i>	54
<i>The Joint-Evil,</i>	55
<i>Yaws,</i>	ibid.
<i>Of the Nyctalopia,</i>	60
<i>Of the Guinea Worm,</i>	62
	<i>Rup-</i>

C O N T E N T S.

<i>Ruptures,</i>	Page 63
<i>Of Burns, &amp;c.</i>	65
<i>Of Ulcers about the Ankles.</i>	66

P A R T IV.

<i>Of Sick Houses,</i>	71
<i>Conclusion,</i>	74

## ERRATA:

- Preface, Page 6. line 1. for *than*, read *as*.  
Page 18. line last, for *Roucon*, read *Rocou*.  
Page 29. line 9. for *Acafon*, read *Acajou*.  
Page 31. line 20. for *to the*, read *with the*.



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# P R E F A C E.

IT has often been matter of astonishment to me, that among the many valuable medical tracts which of late years have been offered to the public, no one has been purposely written on the method of seasoning new Negroes, and the treatment of Negroes when sick: and yet the importance, if not the dignity of such a work, must appear obvious to all who are in the least acquainted with the West Indies. For it is a melancholy truth, that hundreds of these useful people are yearly sacrificed to mistakes in these two capital points. To supply this defect, as far as in me lies, and to enable those who are intrusted with the management of Negroes, to treat them in a more scientific manner than has hitherto been generally practised, is the principal design of the present Essay. It is, therefore, wholly divested of the parade of learning, being purposely written with as much shortness as was consistent with perspicuity.

B

spicuity. The more effectually to attain these ends, I have divided the performance into F O U R P A R T S.

In the F I R S T, after giving some hints on the choice of new, or salt-water Negroes as they are called, I briefly expose the preposterous methods made use of by some in seasoning them; and recommend such other methods as experience has taught me will most commonly not disappoint the planter.

The S E C O N D P A R T, treats of those diseases whereunto the Blacks are most exposed in the islands; and points out such medicines as the country affords for their removal. As this is of the last importance to the owners of Slaves, plantations being often far removed from medical assistance I have attempted to make the directions in this part so explicit, that a common capacity, with proper attention, will be thereby enabled to save many valuable lives; a circumstance not less profitable to the owner, than pleasing to humanity. This, therefore, if tolerably executed, cannot fail of be

ing eminently useful at this time, when the demand for Negroes, on account of our new acquisitions in America, must become annually greater. Slaves from Africa already fetch an exorbitant price; but more purchasers must necessarily enhance their value: of course, upon a principle of profit, they deserve the utmost attention of the master; and, on motives of honesty, that of the manager or overseer.

In the T H I R D P A R T, such distempers as more peculiarly affect the Negroes are taken notice of. Among these, the leprosy is the most dreadful; for which no remedy has hitherto been discovered; and which continues to spread its ravages daily, to the disgrace of art, and detriment of the planter. I am, however, still of opinion, that the Almighty has not left us without a cure for this disease; and persuade myself it is to be found among the vegetables of the torrid zone. Indeed, too little attention has been hitherto paid to this important branch of medical history. The islands contain innumerable medicines of high efficacy, not known in Europe; and doubtless a much greater number still remain to

be investigated by future inquiry. Such discoveries, however, are not to be expected from the gentlemen of the faculty. Their time must necessarily be devoted to the calls of their profession; as few of independent fortunes go to practise in the West Indies; and yet physicians are the only persons who are qualified for this momentous employment. It would therefore, perhaps, well become the wisdom of the Legislature, to enable those gentlemen to devote a part of their time to these studies, as whatever means tend to alleviate the maladies of human nature, cannot be too commonly known, or rendered too numerous. Premiums are daily bestowed on improvements in agriculture, &c. but no rewards have ever been offered for discoveries in the *Materia Medica*; as if every art was more necessary than physics, and every object more considerable to the health of the community. And yet these discoveries would not, like many others, be confined in their influence to one nation only. The world would reap the advantage of them, for the world is interested in the improvement of medicine; and the palms which might be gathered by Br

in such pursuits, would be more lastingly honourable than the laurels of their conquests.

In the FOURTH and last DIVISION, I make some observations on the food and cloathing of Negroes; the sick houses where they are confined; and mention a few important medicines, for which succedaneums are not to be found in the islands, and which no plantations ought ever to be without.

Upon the whole, I flatter myself, this small tract will be of real service to the West India practitioners, as well as to the owners and managers of Negroes, since I have recommended no means, whose efficacy I have not experienced. Let it not, however, be imagined, that the precepts contained therein, will qualify unmedical readers to cure their sick Negroes without proper medical assistance. Such pretensions, in any writer, would be the height of empiricism. All that I mean is, that those who have the management of slaves, and will give themselves the trouble to consult this Essay, will not henceforth be so much at a loss how to treat the diseased, till proper advice can be called

in, than they have hitherto been. Yet for want of this knowledge in managers, I have often observed the most fatal consequences ensue.

To conclude, if this performance shall produce the salutary effects for which only it was written, I shall think my leisure well employed; for though the diseases of Blacks are its primary object, *Homo sum & humani nihil a me alienum puto.*

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A N  
E S S A Y  
O N T H E  
M A N A G E M E N T and D I S E A S E S  
O F  
N E G R O E S.



P A R T the F I R S T.



*Of the Choice of* N E G R O E S.

**T**H E different nations of Guinea are not only very different in their manners and passions, but from the constitution of their native climates are subject to a variety of different disorders. Thus the Cormantees, who are a brave and free people at home, cannot submit to the unavoidable severities of bondage; while the Minnahs are too apt to destroy themselves upon the least, and even without any provocation. Again, the Negroes from Mundingo have worms, almost all of them; while those from Congo are very liable to drop-  
fical

tical indispositions. For these reasons, one should be cautious not to purchase the natives of those countries; or if planters are under a necessity of buying such, the young only should be purchased.

In the Ibbo country, the women chiefly work; they, therefore, are to be preferred to the men of the same country at a negroe sale: and yet there is a great risque in buying women; for, from their scantiness of cloathing in their own country, not to mention other reasons, they often labour under incurable obstructions of the menses, whence proceed barrenness, and many disorders.

It is scarce necessary to observe, that the healthy only should be chosen. The marks of health are a glossy sleekness of the skin, unspotted and without breakings out; their eyes should be clear, tongue red, chest open, and belly small. They should have the free use of all their limbs; and if not much past fifteen, so much the better for boys; but girls should only be twelve years old, or younger.

When brought to the plantation, the new Negroes should forthwith be cloathed, and put under the care of some sober elderly person, if possible, from their own country, who must be answerable for their having their food regularly given them. Their food should be as little different from what they eat at home as may be; and this must be learnt from their country folks.

In



In general, it is not amiss to have new Negroes blooded; but the quantity should never exceed six ounces, even from the stoutest. Vomits of thistle-feed, or rather castor oil purges are more extensively useful: but above all, a decoction of worm-grass, clarified with lemon juice, or cow-itch sheathed with melasses, should be administered, and repeated twice a week, for the first six weeks. The dose of the worm grass decoction ought at first to be small. Half an ounce of that plant, if fresh, and six drachms, if dried, will impregnate a quart of water with its virtues; and of this, a gill is a sufficient quantity, at first, for a grown Negroe. The same attention is not required in dosing the cow-itch; I never knew it produce any untoward symptoms.

Some planters give sweet mercury, in order to kill worms: but as new Negroes cannot well be restrained from drinking cold water, that practice is dangerous. Block tin (not pewter) in powder, is given for the same disease: it is indeed not noxious, but then it seldom answers the prescriber's intention. Scrapings of tin are useful.

The other remedies for worms will be more fully treated of in the sequel.

If the Negroes have brought with them any palm oil, they should be permitted to anoint their bodies therewith, after washing them clean in some running water.

I am persuaded, that anointing and bathing, if more common, would not only render Negroes more sturdy, but preserve them from colds, and many other infirmities.

This salutary practice prevailed among the Romans. Many nations in the East use it at this day; as do most of the Negroes on the coast of Africa.

No doubt, sweating is a highly healthful evacuation in warm climates, by preserving the juices from putrefaction, &c. &c. but perspiration there is often too profuse, and of course must weaken the constitution. Anointing would lessen that waste.

New Negroes should have a comfortable blanket, or bamboo as it is called, given them to sleep in; and they should never be permitted to sleep on the ground without a mat under them. The not attending to these minute circumstances has proved fatal to many Negroes.

The Negroes bought in crop time are much more likely to do well than those who are purchased in the rainy months; for Negroes should not only be allowed to drink what quantity of the cane juice they think proper, but even obliged to drink it.

In case you are under a necessity of purchasing Negroes in the wet months, great care should be taken to restrain them from unripe yams and Guinea corn; these will infallibly produce the Lax, a serious disorder,

der, to which salt-water Negroes are but too subject.

There is seldom much necessity for bleeding, vomiting or purging new Negroes in North America; but then their appetite should be moderated: they love animal food, and too great an indulgence therein will certainly do them mischief.

Negroes at no time should be treated with rigour; but new Negroes, in particular, must be managed with the utmost humanity.

To put a hoe in the hands of a new Negroe, and to oblige him to work with a seasoned gang, is to murder that Negroe. The African must be familiarized to labour by gentle degrees. This precept respects not only the aged, but even the young.

No Negroe can be said to be seasoned to a West India climate, till he has resided therein for at least a twelvemonth: and those who are accustomed to one island, run no small risque of their lives when transported to another, perhaps equally healthy; unless, in their new settlement, they are indulged with every conveniency they enjoyed in their old.

In clearing the islands which of late have been ceded to us, many Negroes will inevitably perish: a mournful consideration, especially where the land thus to be cleared, is to be purchased of the government for money. It is, however, in the power of

medical science to diminish, and greatly too, the number of those who must otherwise be sacrificed to the pursuit of riches.

In order to effect this valuable purpose, the owner of an estate in woods is first of all to permit his Negroes to clear away as much ground as is requisite for building their hutts, and planting Indian provisions.

They should be exposed to the wet as little as possible; and if they chuse to smoke tobacco, a pipe should not be refused them.

They should wear Edinburghs in the field; but when they come home, they should have a warm Bamboo to put on, in case their coarse linen is wetted.

Negroes employed to clear grounds, should never begin their labour with an empty stomach: and perhaps that master would be rewarded for his expence, who should indulge his field Negroes every morning with a glass of the medicine recommended in the chapter on the pain of the stomach.

Besides Indian provisions, Negroes should have a weekly allowance of flour, rice, or split English beans, with herrings, or other salt meat: or if those things were to be had at market, perhaps that master would do better who should give his Negroes a pecuniary consideration in lieu of them.

A gang of Creole Negroes, being transported from the place of their birth to another island, most commonly undergo a seasoning:

ing: nay, it has often been observed, that slaves carried from one plantation to another, though on the same island, are apt for some time to droop and be sickly. Wholly to prevent this is impossible: but it is within the limits of art, to render those consequent diseases both less fatal and less frequent. This will be effected, if to the method above recommended, you encourage and treat them with the utmost humanity.

Many causes may be assigned, why Negroes purchased in crop time are more likely to get over the diseases of seasoning, than such as are bought in the rainy months. They are then less apt to catch cold; the Indian provisions they then eat are less crude; and above all, the cane juice (of which they should be permitted to drink as much as they please) is highly nutrimental and salutary.

New Negroes should never be sent to mountain plantations; for there they are very liable to catch cold, or fall into fluxes, which always prove troublesome to remove, and sometimes fatal.

This precept, in a more particular manner, respects the rainy months: the reason is obvious, from what has already been said on the subject.

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AN  
ESSAY  
ON THE  
MANAGEMENT and DISEASES  
OF  
NEGROES.



PART the SECOND.



*Of the treatment of Infants.*

**A**lthough Creole Negroes do in fact cost more money to their owners than salt-water Negroes, yet as they are more healthy, and better for all the purposes of a plantation than these; so too great care cannot be taken either of the Negresses when pregnant, and in the month, or of their infants when born.

Black women are not so prolific as the white inhabitants, because they are less chaste, and more liable to uncurable obstructions of the monthly discharge; their children too  
more

more frequently perish, within ten days or a fortnight after their birth, than those of the white people. The disease which at that time proves fatal to them, is the locked jaw, or, as it is called by the West Indians, the jaw falling.

This proceeds from the infants not being kept sufficiently warm, from the administration of new spirits, crude aliment, but above all, from their not being thoroughly freed from the meconium, or black discharge, after their birth.

The remedies of the three first causes are apparent; but how to bring away the meconium deserves particular attention.

Castor oil, and a pessary of the stalk of the common physic nut (*Ricinus*) are the means commonly made use of; but the latter is not always capable of procuring such stools as are wanted; and the oil, especially that obtained by coction, is often too rugged in its passage through their tender bowels.

The following medicine is liable to neither of these objections: Mix ten grains of the best rhubarb in a fine powder, with four ounces of water; add ten grains of magnesia alba, a common spoonful of pepper-mint water, a tea-spoonful of spirit of lavender, and as much syrup of vervain, or roses, as will make it palatable. Half a spoonful of this mixture, well shook, should be given every two hours, till stools  
are

are procured ; and the child's belly should be frequently rubbed with a warm hand before the fire. This medicine ought to be continued, but in a smaller quantity, for at least a fortnight ; I never knew any die of the locked jaw, or cholic, who took it in the manner prescribed.

New-born Negroes should be forthwith washed in warm spirits, and cloathed in warm flannel, &c.

The mother should be well supported with warm nourishing slops ; and the child should suck her as soon as her milk is ready. The mother's milk is the infant's best food ; it is gently aperient, and well suited to its tender digestive organs.

Every Negress should suckle her own child ; and indeed they are, in general, abundantly supplied with milk to do it.

Fewer Negresses die in child-bed, or of its consequences (not one in 300) than white women ; but the children of the latter are less liable to perish within the month than those of the Blacks.

Black children should at least be six weeks old, before they are suffered to taste any other food than the milk of the mother.

Few Negroe children are born deformed ; not one in ten thousand.

After the month, the diseases which chiefly affect infants, proceed from an acid in their bowels, and from teething.



A sourness in the intestines is always discovered by green watery stools: but swelled gums, a hot mouth, frequent flavering, and thrusting its little fingers into its mouth, indicate teething.

As far as I have been able to remark, the black children cut their teeth more easily than the white children; but when the above-mentioned symptoms are observed, their gums should be forthwith opened with a lancet.

The green stools are to be removed by the Rhubarb medicine recommended before, by broths made of animal food, by crab's eyes, or by spirit of hartshorn.

If the child is severely griped, a small quantity of the vinous tincture of ipecacuan should be administered; and eight or ten drops of laudanum at bed-time.

The mother should abstain from sour fruits and vegetables.

The properest time to inoculate negroe children, is either before their teething commences, or after their teeth are compleat.

They should be prepared; and medicines that destroy worms, are those which ought chiefly to be depended upon.

Negroe children should not be permitted to suck their mothers longer than twelve or fourteen months: long nursing diminishes a woman's fecundity.

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When

When the young Negroes can run about, they should not be allowed to be carried to the field with their mothers, but should be intrusted to the management of some antient and sensible Negress, who will take care to have them properly fed.

At eight years of age, they are made to pick grass, carry a small basket with dung, and under the direction of those of riper years, to pull up weeds in the cane-piece.

### *Of* CHIGRES *or* CHIGOES.

IT is said there are two kinds of Chigres, one common, and the other poisonous. My opinion is, that none ever are troubled with the latter insect, but such as are in a bad habit of body.

All the young, as well as the new Negroes, should have their feet and hands examined regularly once a week; for want of this precaution, Negroes often lose many a joint of their toes, &c. and so become less useful upon a plantation.

A little snuff mixed with a small quantity of verdigrease, is the best powder that can be put into the hole from whence a Chigre has been extracted.

The Indians preserve themselves from these, and other troublesome insects, by anointing their feet, &c. with a paste made of Roucon and oil.

*Of the* ITCH.

NEGROES of every age and sex are apt to catch the Itch. This disease requires no description.

Sulphur made into an ointment, with salt butter and green pepper, will cure it: A no less effectual remedy is tobacco steeped in urine, and bathing in the sea.

There is a species of Itch which Negroes from Guinea often bring with them to the West-Indies. This they call the Crakras. It chiefly infests the ankles, and often, if scratched or neglected, produces inveterate ulcers.

This disorder is not to be cured by external means only: It requires smart purging with salt water, and bathing therein. If these do not remove the eruption, the patient should be dosed every third day, with pills made of the juice of Semprevive (Aloes) and Chonch-shells finely pounded, with about one grain of sweet Mercury to each half drachm of the composition.

The best external application is weak mercurial ointment, with a mixture of Sulphur.

*Of* COUGHS.

COUGHS are common in the West-Indies, from the latter end of October to the latter end of February.

They are seldom attended with a fever, but often with loss of appetite.

A vomit of thistle-seed should therefore always begin the cure, which a syrup made with garden balsam, sugar and rum, will soon remove.

A sweat, with an infusion of wild sage, is also efficacious: But the medicine most to be depended upon, is half an ounce of gum elemi, dissolved in four pints of good rum. Of this a large spoonful should be given three times a day to adults, and so in proportion.

I have also known troublesome Coughs removed by drinking a warm infusion of wild liquorice.

The Hooping-Cough is not frequent in the West-Indies: I do not remember to have seen it there above once or twice; and then the lungs seemed to be touched with a slight degree of inflammation.

In that case bleeding, but in small quantities, is indispensably requisite; but then emetics must not be administered.

In the cure of a Hooping-Cough, I have always found change of air as necessary as physic.

### Of W O R M S.

W O R M S are scarce more fatal to the young, than they are to those who have attained to manhood in the West-Indies.

Worms

Worms therefore naturally present themselves to be treated of in this place.

As in Europe, when uncommon symptoms afflict a patient, the venereal disease may be considered as the cause; so in the West-Indies, Worms may always be suspected as the parent of every untoward morbid appearance.

The truth is, there is scarce one symptom with which the animal œconomy may be affected, which Worms are not capable of exciting.

The Worms common in the West-Indies, are the same with those which are common in Europe; only the solitary, tape, or jointed Worm, as it is called, is oftner seen there than in Britain, and some Creoles are much afflicted with a kind of small Worms (*Ascarides*) in the stomach, which I do not remember to have observed in Europe.

Worms kill more people in the West-Indies than all other diseases, the flux only excepted.

Both the old and new world boast of remedies to kill Worms; but as this fatal malady is more common in the torrid zone than in Europe, so the tropical remedies are more specific in this complaint, than the European.

I have tried almost an infinite variety of medicines against Worms; but the most  
 effica-

efficacious among them have often proved less successful than I could have wished.

Purgatives are undoubtedly useful in the expulsion of Worms, and among these the juice of the aloes justly claims the pre-eminence.

An infusion of the roots of the stinking weed in water, is often a good vermifuge, especially if juice of tansy be added thereto, with a small quantity of garlick.

Many commend the juice of the wild ipecacuan (*Apocynum*) as an antidote to Worms. It operates with violence, both up and down, and I have known it sometimes do wonders.

But cowitch with melasses, and the clarified juice of worm grass (*Spigelia*) are more to be depended upon. I have also known good effects arise from oil and lemon juice.

Sugar is commonly supposed to favour Worms. This however I know from repeated experiment to be a vulgar error; for perhaps no one thing in the *Materia Medica* is more deadly to Worms than cane liquor, unless we except Muscovado mixed with an equal proportion of sweet oil, especially that made by expression from the coco nut, or cocoa.

The inner bark of the mountain cabbage tree, Indian pink, and the milk of the wild fig,

fig, are praised by some for removing this disorder. I have not sufficiently experienced their efficacy.

The remote causes of the frequency of Worms in the West Indies are, 1. The warmth of the climate. 2. The great use of vegetable food; and lastly, humidity. Its immediate cause is relaxation.

### Of F E V E R S.

ALTHOUGH Worms are more fatal in the torrid zone than Fevers, yet these too prove often more deadly there than in Europe.

Inflammatory Fevers, as well as local inflammations, *e. g.* pleurifies, &c. are not common in the West-Indies: Indeed I do not remember to have seen buffy blood above twice in that climate, and then the blood was extracted from a new comer, young and plethoric.

The reason of this extraordinary exemption from inflammatory diseases is, 1. The warmth and moisture of the climate. 2. Copious perspiration. 3. Acidulated drinks. 4. Impaired appetite; and lastly, laziness.

Excess in eating, drinking, and exercise, between the tropics, neither corroborate the solids, nor encrease the density of the blood. These errors in the non-naturals may render West-India blood acrid; but they certainly do

do render the bile peccant, both in quantity and quality.

This is the passport to almost all the Fevers in the West-Indies; for it may well be doubted whether ever the blood is the primary seat of a Fever, unless in new comers to the torid zone.

Of course the impropriety of frequent bleedings, as always practised by the French, and too often by us, must be glaring; and the necessity of carrying off the peccant matter by vomit and stool no less apparent.

Fevers in the West-Indies seldom put on the appearance of inflammation beyond the first twenty-four hours; after that they become putrid, or malignant, or nervous.

In the first stage of the disease, blood may be let, but it should be in a small quantity.

Vomits (pretty strong in their kind, *e. g.* tartar emetic) and acidulated purgatives should then be administered, or rather these should be combined, and repeated till the febrile symptoms diminish.

When the bilious matter has once entered the blood, which it will soon do if sweats are uncautiously used at first; vomits and acid purges become then less useful, and the morbid matter must be thrown out on the skin, by means of wild sage-tea, silk cotton (Ceiba) tea, avocato pear (Laurus) tea,  
or



or what I prefer to all of them, sourish weak punch.

In this disorder it often happens, that a weak purgative or emetic will produce uncommon evacuations: This should not alarm the prescriber, but should make him support the patient well with madeira whey, or well made punch.

This Fever often subsides into a remittent, and then into an intermittent Fever.

A strong infusion of the halbert-weed leaves, or the Spanish carnation (Poinciana) drank constantly, will bring back the bile to it natural state, that is, will remove the Fever.

But for this important purpose, the bark unquestionably merits the palm. Nor does it only produce a wholesome bile; it invigorates the whole animal œconomy.

In malignant Fevers neither vomits nor purges are essentially indicated, but medicines that operate by the skin should be administered; and as this Fever is contagious, (the mass of blood being dissolved and become putrid) recourse should be had to stronger sweats than those lately recommended. Among these, musk, camphire and castor, are the most to be depended upon. Then blisters become adviseable; but to apply them when the disease is in the first passages, is only to torture the  
 E patient.

patient. Wine is eminently serviceable in the malignant Fever, as also in the nervous, where the same medicines will save the patient. Only blisters are seldom necessary.

In case the lungs are affected, which often happens, in any of the abovementioned Fevers, a small quantity of blood may be extracted, even though the pulse is not strong; but then I would prefer cupping, or rather epispastics.

### F L U X E S.

THIS disorder naturally follows the former, for it is often produced by the same causes, corrupted bile.

It also arises from suddenly suppressed perspiration, and a too great indulgence in eating of watry crude vegetables.

Of course the Flux prevails most either in the rainy months, or in autumn. It sometimes is accompanied with a fever, and sometimes not.

When attended with a fever, bleeding may be performed, but a profuse discharge of blood by stool is no indication for drawing blood.

The Flux in the West Indies is either watry with blood, or bilious with blood, and excrement.

Both these dysenteries are equally difficult to cure, and equally dangerous, unless medicines are early applied.

The

The intentions then to be pursued, are first to expel the peccant humours, to soften their acrimony, and by that means abate the gripes; and lastly, to strengthen the tone of the intestines.

To perform the first intention, vomits and purges are requisite; but then all vomits and all purgatives are not equally eligible. The class of irritating and heating must always be discarded.

Where ipecacuan is not at hand, the following emetic may be depended on. Bruise two drachms of yellow thistle seed, and infuse it in half a gill of boiling water; let it stand till it cools, then strain and sweeten it to the palate. This is a sufficient dose for a grown up Negroe.

The yellow thistle seed is not only a safe emetic, but like the ipecacuan is a strengthener of the intestines.

Some use the juice of the wild ipecacuan (apocynum); but it is too rough and irritating.

The pods of the lignum vitæ are also administered by some as a vomit, but they also are likewise too surly.

At night, twenty drops of laudanum should be mixed with half a pint of wild sage-tea to promote perspiration, and prevent the sick persons getting up in the night; they should also be covered with a good warm

blanket, and not allowed to lie on the bare floor.

On the following morning, a sufficient quantity of castor oil should be given, and to prevent its griping, twenty drops of sal volatile may be added thereto; by which it will become miscible with pepper-mint water.

The castor oil may be wrought off by warm water gruel, or what the Negroes call hot water.

Their food should be saloop, with a glass of red port or madeira wine in it; they may also be indulged in pepper pot, made chiefly of Ochra (Hibiscus) and Angola peas (citysus) with little or no salt, but seasoned with green pepper; if at any time faint, a frequent symptom in this disorder, a small quantity of red wine diluted with water, in which heated iron hath been extinguished, and made more grateful by a little grated nutmeg or cinnamon, should be allowed them.

One should imagine, it would hardly be necessary to advise to cover the bellies of the diseased with warm blankets; and yet, for want of this simple precaution, I have known many Negroes lost.

The vomit and purgative should be repeated at least twice each, at the interval of a day; and the opiate formerly recommended should be given every evening.

By

By this means both the numbers of stools will be diminished, and their quality amended; and then recourse may be had with safety to lubricating, and subastringent medicines.

Of these, many valuable ones are to be found in the West Indies; the principal are the rinds of both kinds of pomegranate (*punica*); the bark and gum of the acafon (*anacardium*); the seeds of the sea-side grape (*polygonum*); the Guava bark, and Guava jelly (*psidium*); and the logwood (*hæmatoxy-lon*.)

These, either by themselves, or combined together, and made into tea or boiled, will seldom disappoint the prescriber.

But if any preference can be given to the above remedies, that preference is due to the logwood in decoction; yet will its virtues even then be improved, by adding a gill of red port with grated cinnamon, or the Canela of the West Indies, to every quart of the medicine.

The dose to a full grown person, is a gill three times a day.

Glysters made of the ingredients above-mentioned are also excellent auxiliaries in the Flux, if thrown up often in small quantities, and not hot, but especially if a little good suet, starch, or the white of an egg, be added thereto.

A serviceable glyster may be also compounded of lime-water, the yelk of an egg, a little starch made of Cassada (*Jatropha*) and a spoonful of old rum.

At this time, pills made of equal parts of wax, and the cherry-tree gum (*Anacardium*) and given to the quantity of a drachm a-day, often effectuate a cure.

If the intestines are ulcered, which may be known by the fœtidness of the discharge, and obstinacy of the disorder, recourse should be had to lime-water, milk, and the whites of eggs. And if this prescription fails, turpentine should be rendered miscible with forge-water, by means of the yelk of an egg, and given to the quantity of two drachms a-day; opiates will keep it from running off too speedily.

In the autumnal putrid Flux, after proper evacuations, I have known oranges, lemons, and even limes produce singular advantages.

They are analogous in their operation to the elixir of vitriol.

I have seldom known any recover of a Flux who had the thrush in the mouth, and through the whole tract of their intestines.

The Blacks are less subject to aphthæ, than the White people.

If any thing can be serviceable here, it must be change of air, riding, sailing, &c.  
for

for I never saw any advantage from medicines in the dysenteric thrush, no not from the bark.

I do not approve of flour dumplings, unless the flour is fermented, and then the addition of fresh suet will make it not only nutritive, but medical in the Flux.

Negroes, who have recovered of a Flux, should never be put too soon to hard labour: relapses are almost always dangerous.

To strengthen them, the bitter infusion should be given for a week or two; to which some toasted rhubarb may be added.

An infusion of the bark in forge water is also an excellent restorative.

Where worms crawl out of themselves from the mouth or nose of dysenteric patients, such seldom recover; and as worms are to be found in all Negroes, it is often absolutely necessary to combinè worm medicines, to the remedies recommended in this chapter.

### *Of the L A X or D I A R R H E A.*

THIS is a common complaint in the West-Indies; here figured stools are seldomer seen than in Europe.

It is never attended with a fever, and scarce ever accompanied with gripes; it often arises from obstructed perspiration, and often from crude raw vegetables. Acids will also produce it.

Where

Where it is habitual, and upon the slightest error in the articles of food or exercise is apt to grow worse, the most exquisite diet is necessary; but change of air bids fairest for removing it.

One half drachm of toasted rhubarb will generally remove it; if one dose is insufficient, two or three most commonly effectuate a cure. An opiate should be given every night.

Purslane fried with oil or lard, and roasted Bananas are useful in this disorder. Simarouba tea is likewise good.

## DRY BELLY ACH.

THOUGH fluxes are more common in the West-Indies than the Dry Belly Ach; yet that disorder too often occurs, and is frequently fatal.

It requires no description; its cause in general is cold: sometimes improper food and drink.

From whatever origin it proceeds, the poor wretch who labours under it, suffers the sharpest torture, and when at worst the muscles of the belly, and even the intestines themselves, are spasmodically contracted. This, if not speedily removed, soon terminates either in a palsy, or gangrene of the bowels.

The indications of cure are first, to alleviate the pain, and lastly, to procure a free passage through the intestinal canal.

Opiates



Opiates repeated every hour, and administered in large quantities, are the only anodynes I know in nature, and the best medicine to stop the vomiting, which too frequently attends this melancholy disorder.

Warm bathing and oils rubbed into the belly, scarce procure any ease; but bleeding in a small quantity at the arm, or rather cupping the abdomen, and scarifying, often alleviate, and sometimes even remove the spasmodic stricture. Yet opiates are chiefly to be relied on.

They even facilitate the operation of purgatives, however opposite that may appear to theory; and therefore they should always be combined with the oily cathartic formerly recommended, and with the oily or balsamic glysters.

Strong purges do not succeed even after anodynes have opened the passage; they excite spasms: and yet, tobacco glysters often produce the most salutary effects.

When you have reason to suspect the passage blocked up by curdled milk, &c. crude mercury with anodynes must be had recourse to.

The best glysters are made of a decoction of French and common physic nut, with stinking weed, of each half a handful, to be boiled in a quart of water to a pint; add thereto a spoonful of the juice of the aloes,  
F
a gill

a gill of oil, the yelk of an egg, and a table spoonful of laudanum, or two drachms of diascordium, or rather theriac.

The glysters should be in small quantities, and often injected. The warm bath assists their operation; and candle grease with spirits may be chafed into the belly.

But while injections are attempting to clear the bowels below, purgatives should be taken by the mouth, and co-operate with them.

A sudden ceasing of the pain, with a sinking pulse, foetid breath, &c. are infallible symptoms of death, unless blisters applied to the belly, and the bark with elixir of vitriol remove those appearances.

This disorder leaves a great soreness behind it, and like other intestinal ailments produces flatulent symptoms, which bitters and exercise, with bathing in the sea, are the likeliest means of removing.

The Blacks are oftner tormented with the Dry Belly Ach than the Whites; and among these, such are oftneft the subject of its torture, who indulge in new fiery spirits, with little water, and much souring.

## T E T A N U S.

THE dry belly ach often causes the Tetanus, and all its symptoms. This is a dreadful disease, because too commonly fatal.

The

The speediest assistance is here necessary, and yet with the speediest help the physician is often miserably disappointed in his expectations.

Here opiates again are what are chiefly to be depended on; but warm bathing, blistering the wrists, the back-bone, the stomach, the nape of the neck, should also be used.

I have rubbed in blue ointment into the belly, &c. but never saw any good from it. I have fumigated the locked jaw thrice a-day, without doing either good or harm. I have cupped and scarified the parts affected, but all to no purpose; I have given antimonial pills (Ward's); which have sometimes succeeded with me in the dry belly ach, but here they proved ineffectual.

I have seen the spasms mitigated, by tying the poor wretch down upon a board, and rubbing into the members contracted, sweet oil six parts, spirits of turpentine two, laudanum one. British oil has likewise done good.

Musk, asafœtida, and alkaline salts I have administered in great quantities, but I cannot say they ever did much service. Nothing, however, should be neglected which has the least chance of recovering the patient, for with every assistance he too often perishes.

I have combined cinnabar with musk, and given them in great quantities in this disease, but all to no manner of purpose.

Opium then, is what is chiefly to be relied on, and it is astonishing what quantities of it may be swallowed without either procuring sleep, or affecting the brain.

### *Of the* D R O P S Y.

THIS disease, in all its appearances, is common in the West-Indies.

Heat and moisture debilitate the solids, and break the tone of the blood in those climates.

Hence all ages and all sexes are there liable to watry complaints.

In children the watry tumor is most commonly occasioned by worms; expel these, and you cure the patient.

Obstructions of the menstrual courses will often cause a dropisy of the legs, &c. in young women; make their menses flow, and you reduce their legs, &c. to their healthy standard.

I have known water produced in the belly, by a Negroe's drinking too plentifully of cold water, when he was running down with sweat. If the Negroe was otherwise healthy, medicines that operate by sweat will carry off the swelling.

Where the disease is the result of profuse bleedings, from whatever cause, or over-purgation; generous diet and strengthners are the likeliest to remove it.

A fowl stuffed with cowitch, and made into broth, has sometimes carried off this disorder by stool and urine.

If the swelling is considerable, and the bowels are sound; the Negroe should be tapt, and the future accumulation of water prevented by aloetic purges and bitters.

This disease has sometimes been cured by gunpowder, taken inwardly with cow-pifs.

I have seen singular good effects from the following medicine; put into a tin boiler with a cover, an ounce of cinnamon, half an ounce of nutmeg, two drachms of salt of steel, or even steel filing, a pound and a half of lime juice, and as much good old rum, and place it in a vessel with boiling water for an hour, then strain it, and give near a gill of it morning and evening; it operates chiefly by urine. A handful of scraped horse-raddish may be occasionally added.

The liver is commonly affected in this disease in the West-Indies, and therefore deobstruents are properly mixed with cathartics in dropsical cases.

In the dropsy of the skin, scarifications and burying in the hot sand at noon, are a remedy which may be depended on, provided regular exercise and orange bitters lend their assistance.

## CHOLERA MORBUS.

THIS disorder is not so common here as in Europe, but when it makes an attack, its effects are, in general, more deadly, unless remedies are speedily applied.

The Cholera Morbus, in this country, seldom proceeds from the too free use of fruits, as in England; with us it arises more commonly from poisoned crabs, and poisonous fish.

Fish poison is peculiar to the West-Indies; and what is remarkable, the same fish are often salutary or otherwise, in different parts of the same island.

This, though vulgarly imputed to copperas banks, can only with propriety be ascribed to the submarine vegetables whereon they feed.

For all these poisons, if not immediately mortal, the best antidotes are teas of the flowers of cedar, of the sensitive (*Mimosa*) of the chickweed, and of the yellow prickly wood.

The indications in the cure of the Cholera Morbus, are, first, to check the inordinate discharge up and down; secondly, to dilute and cotemperate the humours; and lastly, to restore the tone of the intestines.

The remedies recommended in the flux will check the discharge; water gruel, sage tea, and hot water, will render the hu-

mours

mours less acrid ; and exercise, bathing in the sea, bitters, and the bark, will invigorate the intestines.

Much might be added on the article of fish poison. It is a new and curious subject, but this is not a proper place for an ample disquisition.

## VOMITING.

A CONSTANT rejection of whatever is taken into the stomach, is a more common disease than the former, and often as deadly.

It always proceeds from some peccant humour irritating the stomach.

Salt of wormwood mixed with lemon juice, and swallowed in the act of effervescence, will sometimes stop it.

Opiates have also, not unfrequently, produced the same effect.

Warm water poured on toasted cassada, or oatmeal made brown, will often stop a vomiting.

But mint juice mixed with sugar, and warm goats milk, will generally succeed, where the former have failed.

Purgative glysters should be administered.

## MALIGNANT SORE THROAT.

THIS disorder is a malignant fever, principally affecting the throat, &c. How then

then can mercurials be serviceable in this case? They relax the solids, and destroy the tone of the blood.

How then can purgatives be useful? They weaken the habit, and sink the pulse, which is already naturally too low.

Nor is bleeding, in this disease, more to be recommended than cathartics and mercury; it thins the blood, and weakens more than either.

What then is to be depended on?

Gentle diaphoretics; tea made of devil's bit, wild sage tea, weak four punch, madeira sangree mixed with seville orange; a mouth-water or gargle made of canker-berry, privet, alum, honey, &c. is also useful. Steaming the throat with warm vinegar does good.

For want of attending to these rules, more Negroes for some years past have perished by sore throats, than by any other disease.

Elixir of vitriol, tincture of the bark, and tincture of roses sometimes remove the malignant angina.

I never saw above two inflammatory sore throats in the West-Indies. Their coming to matter ought to be prevented by cooling purges; but should a suppuration ensue, the tumour must be forthwith opened.

A small quantity of nitre swallowed leisurely twice or thrice a day, will often prevent the suppuration of the almonds of the ear, &c.

Negroes



Negroes, as well as White people, are very subject to the toothach, and an external swelling of the glands of the neck, &c. called the mumps.

These proceed from their lying with their heads, &c. too slightly covered, or from their walking to visit their wives, &c. in the night time.

If the tooth is hollow, it should forthwith be extracted: at this, the Negroes are sufficiently expert.

The mumps is to be removed by warmth, friction, and sweet oil; if inflamed, castor oil may be given.

*Of the LIVER and SPLEEN præternaturally swelled.*

THOSE disorders, which were known to the antients, but which are now infrequent in Europe, are common in the West-Indies, both among the White people and Blacks.

Though at first they are scarce to be distinguished, in process of time, the swelling may be felt, and at last becomes visible. It is scarce ever attended with pain or feverishness, but always with loss of appetite, and commonly with adhesion to the surrounding membrane.

The Negroes do certainly remove this adhesion, by frequent friction with their fingers, by laying the diseased across a hoghead; in short, by putting the body in  
 C such

such an attitude, as to enable them to insert their fingers below the small ribs.

I do not remember to have seen any patient with either or both of the above disorders, who laboured under a jaundice.

The lime-juice medicine recommended in the chapter on the dropsy, is also sovereign in these ailments, which are always tedious, but seldom kill.

The mercurial pill of the Edinburgh Dispensatory, combined with steel filings, has sometimes been tried with success.

If purgatives are ever thought adviseable in these obstructions, they should be composed of gum guajac, calomel, and soap of tartar.

Soap medicines with hog-lice have also done service.

When the tumour points externally, and there is reason to apprehend, from preceding symptoms, that matter is formed, it should be let out by a caustic and lancet; as some have recovered after this operation.

## GOUT, GRAVEL and DIABETES.

I NEVER saw a Negroe with the Gout or Stone in the urinary passages and bladder; the truth is, the White people are less frequently tormented with these excruciating ailments in the torrid zone, than in Europe.

Warmth and moisture would therefore appear to be enemies to the production of either of them.

Where

Where the soil is of a clayey nature, and retains humidity so long as to render it putrid, there the Gout may rage, tho' even in such soil it is less painful, and the fits not so lasting as in Europe, especially if proper perspiration is encouraged.

But if the Creoles are less afflicted with these maladies, I have seen many wasting away with a continual discharge of colourless, and almost insipid urine.

This præternatural discharge is by some writers of eminence ascribed to a disorder in the liver; but I should rather impute it to a watery poverty of blood, and a morbid relaxation of the urinary viscera.

This theory of the Diabetes seems also to be confirmed by the remedies which cure it. These are all of the astringent kind, and may be found in the chapter on fluxes.

Diaphoretics, or such medicines as operate by sweat, are also useful. But neither these nor astringents will thoroughly corroborate the parts without cold-bathing, and alum whey.

Alum and bole may also be made into a plaister, with the white of an egg and turpentine, and applied to the region of the loins.

The Canada balsam, &c. either dropt on sugar, or mixed with the yolk of an egg, strengthens the urinary passages.

But no remedy I know in nature is so efficacious, in this and the following disorder, as pills made of the gum elemi and pounded niccars (Guilandina)

Patients labouring under a Diabetes are always thirsty; but they must counteract their appetite to drink, and rather than swallow large aqueous draughts, only moisten their mouths with tamarind-beverage, or orange juice.

Lime-water with milk may be used, as also the waters of the hot-bath at Nevis, which is more powerful in all cases of relaxation than that of Bristol.

Where the Nevis water cannot be had, impregnate good soft water with a red hot iron.

## FLUOR ALBUS.

THE Blacks are less subject to this disease than the White inhabitants; among whom I have known infants, not three years old, and women of sixty, wasting away with it.

This distemper is not easily cured in Europe, and to tell the truth, European remedies seldom cure it in the West-Indies.

Astringent injections are the most likely to succeed in the Fluor Albus; but the best injections do not always radically remove the disease.

The injection most to be depended on, is a strong decoction of the pomegranate bark, old rum, and elixir of vitriol.

This

This mixed with an equal proportion of lime or Nevis-water, should be thrown up, thrice a-day, to the quantity of half a gill at a time.

Fomentations of balaustines, guava bark, and sea-side grape bark in rum are also useful.

The medicine to be relied upon in the Fluor Albus, is the following.

Mix four parts of gum elemi, with two parts of cherry-tree gum; add one part of salt of steel, and as much good turpentine; make them into pills of six grains.

Give three of these pills three times a-day in half a gill of pomegranate tea.

Cold-bathing, bark, and elixir of vitriol, or tincture of roses, accelerate the cure.

## RHEUMATISM *and* SCIATIC.

THESE diseases are even more common in the torrid zone than at home; but they are seldom acute.

Of course bleeding and purging (evacuations too frequently used to remove them) are almost always improper in this climate.

The discharge by urine is with difficulty excited in this country, and could it be promoted with certainty, would not carry off the Rheumatism. Warmth, friction, bathing, and oil, are useful in these diseases.

But

But external remedies will not cure them, if they have taken any root in the constitution.

Dr. James's powder, when it operates by sweat, is sometimes serviceable in the Rheumatism and Sciatica.

Dover's powder is more generally useful.

Tincture of ipecacuan, sal volatile, and laudanum, in equal proportions, have also been of service.

But the following preparation is the only one to be depended upon.

Mix equal parts of gum guajac, nitre, and foliated earth of tartar; add one third of cinnabar, and make them into pills of six grains, with melasses.

Of these pills give three thrice a day.

No curable Rheumatism ever resisted this remedy, continued for three weeks.

Ward's pills have been administered in these ailments, but I never knew them produce any signal service.

Experience has taught me to think better of the infusion of glass of antimony in madeira.

That tincture possesses many virtues.

### PAIN *in the* STOMACH.

NEGROES often complain of a pain in the Stomach. This, when it does not arise from worms, is always to be remedied by the following prescription.

Mix

Mix an ounce of foot, half an ounce of stinking-weed roots, velvet roots as much, six drachms of orange, or shaddoc rind, and three or four cloves of garlick, with three pints of rum; let the mixture stand in the sun a few days, then strain it and keep it well corked for use.

Half a small wine glass full is a dose.

A spoonful of the juice of the semprevive (Aloe) will also remove it; but the elixir proprietatis is a more elegant remedy.

This disease proceeds, in general, either from indigestion or worms.

The roots of wild indigo, of cowitch, and of lemon, infused in water, and sweetned with melasses, have often done service, if French authors may be credited.

## H E A R T - B U R N .

**T H I S** is a very common, and though not a deadly, is yet a troublesome disease.

It arises from the too free use of vegetables, a weak stomach, and inert bile.

Chalk, crabs-eyes, or lime-water, will always give ease in this distemper; but essence of pepper-mint, spirits of hartshorn, or salt of wormwood, are more to be depended on.

Vomits are always necessary, but the mustard vomit deserves the preference.

The Negroes are not so subject to this disorder as the White people, and yet they live more upon vegetables than their masters;

but then their greens, &c. are always well seasoned with salt, and green pepper (*capficum*) and they drink little punch and no wine.

I have known old rum mixed with water and sprinkled with nutmeg, persisted in as a common drink at meals, remove the Heart-burn when all other remedies have proved ineffectual.

I know a gentleman who is much subject to the Heart-burn, and whose only relief is a large draught of warm milk.

In this person the Heart-burn probably proceeds from a putrid acrimony.

### R I N G W O R M.

This disease is almost as common as the itch, but is not so easily removed.

It affects every part of the body, but especially the joints.

It is always attended with a violent itching, and is highly infectious.

Many remedies are used by the West Indians for the cure. The chief of these are what follow.

Rub the parts with a coarse cloath till they begin to bleed, and then squeeze into them the zest of a Seville orange.

Mix two drachms of gunpowder, with as much lime juice as will bring it to the consistence of a thin liniment; this rubbed in  
morning



morning and evening, after hard friction, often proves effectual.

When the Ringworms are not numerous, an application of salt-water and urine will cure them.

Bathing the parts with warm salt-water, and first runnings is always of service.

But the most certain remedy which the West-Indies afford for the cure of Ringworms, is an epithem made of the flowers of brimstone, and the juice of the Ringworm shrub.

This vegetable is common in the islands, and needs no description. Dr. Hillary has described it in such a manner as an European botanist may class it.

But though these applications will remove this ailment; yet the remedies which Europe affords, are both more certain and more speedy.

Among these a strong solution of blue stone in lime-water, or corrosive sublimate in the same menstruum, deserve the preference.

Purgatives are scarce ever necessary in this disorder: but sweating, especially in a warm bath, is highly expedient at the close of the distemper.

## Of COSTIVENESS.

THIS is a common, and though not fatal, is yet a troublesome disorder.

The White Inhabitants are more subject to it than the Blacks, and the women more than the men.

It generally proceeds from inert bile, and relaxation; of course warm bathing which is sometimes prescribed for it, is improper; and immersion in cold water will do service, though generally thought hurtful.

But cold bathing alone will not do; mild purgatives joined to bitters must be given internally.

For this purpose a handful of the wild fenna, infused in half a pint of water, and quickened with a spoonful of the juice of the semprevive may be given.

Or vervain may be drank every morning as tea, with some of the halbert-weed flowers or those of chamomile.

Or castor oil, sharpened with an infusion of stinking-weed, or velvet-root, may be used.

The following pills are also serviceable; grind up equal parts of jalap, French physic nut, castile soap and juice of aloes, and make them into pills of six grains. Two taken every night will generally procure a stool the next day.

I have

I have also known half a pint of sea water, with twenty or thirty drops of the essence of antimony, drank in a morning, produce salutary effects.

Sometimes I have combined the bark with purgatives, and have thus generally succeeded in curing an habitual costiveness.

Moderate exercise, especially on horseback, is absolutely necessary.

A large sponge wetted in sea water, and applied suddenly to the belly, will sometimes do service, and may be used, when riding is inconvenient.

All strong purgatives, especially those that are indued with restraining properties, are improper; at least till the bile is become healthfully acrid.

I am of opinion that the Senega rattlesnake root, mixed with nitre, and the juice of the aloes would do good in this disease; for though combined with an opiate, which effectually hinders it from exciting a nausea, it generally produces a copious discharge by stool.

Half a drachm of gum guajac dissolved in the yolk of an egg, and mixed with vervain tea, is a good purgative.

Two or three guajac pods infused in warm water will often give a stool; a larger number of them, in the same way, act as an emetic.

Chocolate is a proper breakfast and supper to such as are habitually costive, and purgatives may be blended therewith, so as totally to disguise their bad taste.

In that case the cathartic should be reduced to the finest powder imaginable; and if the Chocolate is mixed with water, by means of the yolk of an egg, the taste will more effectually be sheathed.

To some people strong coffee is a purgative

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AN  
E S S A Y  
ON THE  
MANAGEMENT and DISEASES  
O F  
N E G R O E S.



PART the THIRD.



L E P R O S Y.

**A**LTHOUGH the White people in the West-Indies are not exempted from this dreadful calamity; yet as the Negroes are most subject thereto, I chuse to begin the third division with it.

I could write a great deal upon this disorder, and but little to the purpose: like the gout, it is the disgrace of art.

I am doubtful, whether it be infectious or not. The children of infected parents are not always seized with the Leprosy, and I  
have

have known the wives of the Leprous remain free from it for years.

It is however the part of prudence to remove the distempered from the sound.

This disorder frequently arises from being over-heated, and getting too suddenly cool. It however ofteneft breaks out without any visible cause.

Mercurials and antimonials irritate the disease; neither is any good done with sarfa, saffrafas, lignum-vitæ, or China root.

I am, notwithstanding, persuaded, that the antidote of the Leprosy is to be found in the West-Indies. What profit, what pleasure would accrue to the happy discoverer?

I once saw a Negroe man whose wool grew whitish, and whose skin put on a farinaceous appearance. He was a hideous spectacle. His appetite was good.

## ELEPHANTIASIS.

SOME pretend that this enormous swelling of the lower extremities is curable when taken in time.

Experience has wofully taught me the contrary.

But tho' it resists all the efforts of art, this disorder gives rather inconvenience than pain, and is no ways infectious.

It is luckily, however, not very common in the islands.

*The* JOINT-EVIL.

THIS is too frequent a complaint, but as far as I know, it is confined to the Blacks.

It commonly attacks the toes; the joints of which successively drop off almost without pain, and always without a fever.

It stops when it reaches the foot; and sometimes the last joint of the great toe prevents its progress.

The patients are in all other respects healthy, and produce healthy, nay fine children.

I do not remember to have seen this unaccountable disorder demolish the fingers.

I can say nothing positive with regard to the cure of the Joint-Evil; physicians are seldom consulted for it.

As it appears to be a topical disorder, might not warm bathing and the bark suppress it in its rise? And might not amputation check it in its increment? When it is at the worst, I believe it must take its course.

## Y A W S.

IT is lucky this disease attacks the Negroes but once; for it is both tedious and difficult to cure.

It breaks out in every part of the body, but chiefly about the hips and privities.

The

The eruption causes little or no pain, and scarce yields any ichor. It occasions no wasting of the flesh, because their appetite keeps good.

The Yaws however, when repelled, infallibly ruin the constitution. This is frequently practised by surgeons on board the slave ships.

The repellents used for this purpose, are a mixture of iron rust with gunpowder and lime-juice. Sea-water is also an assistant.

This pernicious fraud is with difficulty perceivable by the purchaser; and yet it is of consequence that he should detect it.

When there is a glossy smoothness of the skin, in those parts where the Yaws commonly break out, you may almost be certain that repellents have been used.

But in case the Negroe has been purchased before such discovery, the sooner the disease is again thrown upon the surface, the better chance has the Negroe to regain his wonted health.

The best method of effectually expelling the Yaws from the blood, is by giving half a drachm of sulphur, every night, in a pint of hot sage tea.

Burnt niccars (Guilandina) are also good for the same purpose.

Venice treacle is equally useful.



But with all these, good strengthening food is indispensably requisite.

A fortnight's use of these means, commonly throws out all the Yawey matter upon the skin.

A variety of external applications are then recommended by the old Negroes; but if aught is applied to the eruptions, it must not be of a repellent nature.

Keep the sores clean by frequently washing them with warm water, or greasy dish washings.

You are never to open a Yaw with a lancet, say the French: Indeed it seldom is necessary to perform that operation. But should it be requisite, I can see no danger from the use of steel.

There is generally one Yaw much larger than the rest; this the Negroes call the master Yaw. When that begins to dry away, and no fresh matter has been for some time cast out upon the surface, the expelling medicines may then with safety be left off; and recourse had to such, as will most effectually secure the habit from any latent taint.

This purpose is best answered by a gentle salivation, continued for six weeks, or two months.

The quantity spit in the twenty-four hours should never exceed a quart, and the patient  
I should

should be made to drink abundance of warm fops, sage tea, water gruel, milk and water, &c. &c. during the salivation.

I have tried almost all the preparations of mercury in the cure of the Yaws, and have found them all to succeed: but that which I have most dependance on, is the mercury seven times sublimed.

I have also great reliance on Plummer's pill, especially if camphire be added thereto.

The common mercurial pill of the London Dispensatory will cure the Yaws; but then it must be prevented from running off by stool, by the addition of opiates.

The Baron Van Swieten's solution of the corrosive sublimate, has been long known to the West-India planters as a remedy for the Yaws.

Uction may repell the Yawey matter into the habit; and therefore quicksilver should not be used in that form, to produce a salivation.

But by whatever preparation of mercury a spitting is excited, the patient must be well supported by warm and nourishing drinks.

A decoction of lignum-vitæ, and of turpentine, should also be drank; and if it operate gently by the skin, so much the better.

By these methods a relapse is most readily prevented, which is always more difficult to  
remove

remove than the first disease; and which, if it have corroded the bones, is sometimes not to be cured.

When the skin is sufficiently cleared of the eruption, and one or two large Yaws remain, the spitting may be gradually diminished; and those master Yaws, as they are called, should be destroyed by gentle escharotics, such as blue stone, verdigrease, corrosive sublimate dissolved in lime-water, or burnt alum mixed with lemon juice.

When these are thus destroyed, the lignum vitæ decoction, formerly recommended, should still be persisted in for two or three weeks; and now twenty or thirty drops of antimonial wine should be added to the evening potion.

A decoction of the China-root may now also be used.

When by bad management the natural progress of the disease has been interrupted, and either ugly ulcers ensue, or the bones become diseased; these must be dressed with red precipitate mixed with yellow basilicon, or with the green balsam of the Edinburgh Dispensatory.

Antimonials and camphire should then also be added to the calomel; little or no spitting should be excited; but the medicines should be permitted to alter the habit by gentle degrees.

In that case also I would recommend the continued use of Plummer's pill.

When the Yaws are not able to open a passage through the callous soles of a Negroe's foot, the patient can neither walk, nor even stand without excessive pain, and his feet swell more and more daily.

This troublesome symptom the English call the Tubbas; and the French Les Crapes.

The remedy for the Tubbas, is to bathe the parts affected in a decoction of the leaves of the castor-bush, and to pare the callus to the quick; the pustules will then make their way through the sole, especially if assisted by any emollient poultice or warm cow-dung; and may be destroyed by the escharoticks formerly spoken of.

No part of the pustule must be left behind; otherwise it will certainly regenerate, and by that means render the Negroe useless, at least for a time.

### *Of the* NYCTALOPIA.

I NEVER saw the Hemeralopia in the West-Indies; but the night-blindness I have seen there.

That however is not common in the Leeward-Island government; and all those I ever knew affected with this extraordinary malady, were not creole Negroes, but those brought from Africa.

The eye to all appearance is perfectly sound, even when it does not transmit one luminous ray to the retina.

Neither do any of the Nyctalopes complain of head-achs. They generally too have a good appetite.

At sun-set their sight becomes dim; and as soon as night prevails, they become absolutely blind; in which unhappy situation they remain till day-light, when they recover the faculty of seeing.

Some writers have considered the night-blindness as a kind of ague in the eye; but then it would excite pain, and be attended with some degree of fever.

My own opinion is, that it is a periodical palsy of the proper organ of vision; from whatever cause that palsy may be supposed to arise.

But waving theory, it is a happiness the disease may be cured, and more speedily than one could imagine.

To effectuate this, I generally begin by giving a vomit; and if the patient is costive, a castor-oil purge may be also premised.

I then order a seaton to be put in the neck; and as soon as the discharge is established, I have recourse to the bark prepared in water, and made more palatable with orange-peel, and a little old rum.

Two ounces of bark generally restore the patient to vision.

At first, I combined snake-root and valerian with the cortex; but I have since found that the bark will do unassisted, even without the featon.

All those to whom I have given this specific have been wrought, either up or down, pretty smartly, by its first administration.

The eyes should be frequently bathed with rum and water, or hungary water and that of roses, or camphorated spirits, for some weeks after the disease is removed.

They should also wear a shade over their eyes in the day time.

### *Of the* GUINEA WORM.

THIS extraordinary Worm, which chuses the cellular membrane of the human body for its habitation, was first taken notice of by Galen; but is best described by the Arabian physicians.

It is a native of Arabia, Persia, and of Negroe-land; and White people who bathe in certain waters, in those countries, are equally liable to it with the Blacks of Africa.

I fancy it is not a Disease of the West-Indies; for all those I ever saw afflicted therewith, had brought it with them to the new world from Guinea.

It is a tedious, but not a dangerous disease; especially if permitted to break through the skin itself; and no harsh means are used to effect its removal.

I can see no use of internal medicines to make it sooner quit its nidus; because I am not convinced it ever gets into the human body by drinking water.

Yet sulphur, garlick and pepper, are recommended to be given inwardly; perhaps aloes should be combined with them.

As it is roundish, like a nerve, the best way is gently to wind it round a small cylinder, every day, till the whole is extracted. It seldom exceeds two feet in length.

If it breaks; violent inflammations and sinus's ensue, which patience and the knife must remove.

## R U P T U R E S.

ALTHOUGH the White inhabitants are more subject to Ruptures, of every kind, here, than in Europe; yet as the Negroes are most afflicted with them, I chuse to treat of them in this division.

Ruptures in the groin, next to those of the navel, are most commonly to be met with in the West Indies.

They generally speaking arise from some sprain, or over-exercise; though sometimes

the abdominal contents will fall down, without any other visible cause than relaxation.

No time should be lost in reducing them into the belly by manual assistance; and of securing them, when there, by a proper bandage. For this purpose, every plantation ought to be furnished with steel trusses from England.

But in case the Rupture cannot be reduced in the common way; some blood should be taken away; for by this evacuation, both the spasm and inflammation, which usually attend an incarcerated Rupture, will be removed.

But should phlebotomy fail; a smart purgative should then be administered; which, with a little assistance from the hand, will often remove the strangulation.

Good effects have also arisen, in this case, from brisk injections; especially such as are compounded of tobacco, and French physic-nutleaves.

Smoke-glysters of tobacco are no less useful; especially if administered, so as to quicken the operation of a purgative taken by the mouth.

But if all these means still prove ineffectual, and the inflammation rather encrease, with vomiting, &c; recourse must then be had to the knife: for if the gut once mortify, part of the fœcal discharge must forever be voided by this sinus; and the patient runs an imminent risque of his life.

This



This operation requires a steady hand and dexterity in cutting; and therefore I would never advise it, could the Rupture be reduced by any other means.

I know a Negroe with a very large scrotal Hernia; which encreases every full moon, and then becomes uncommonly painful for some days; especially if he does not live very temperate during that time; and be not purged with castor oil.

He can himself reduce the gut; but the omentum coheres; so that he is never free from an external swelling.

There are some astringent applications, which may so strengthen the relaxed parts, in new ruptures, as to prevent their return; but even then a truss should not be neglected.

A truss should also be worn for years after the operation. The cicatrix occasioned by a caustic seldom prevents a relapse of the intestines.

### *Of BURNS, &c.*

BOILERS are very apt to get scalded; especially when they are obliged to continue their labours in the night time.

If the skin is raised into blisters; these should be immediatly snip'd, and the water let out, otherwise that will become acrid, and erode the subjacent parts.

K

Banana

Banana leaves, or those of the castor bush are good applications against burns; so is the fire-weed.

But sweet-oil blended with vinegar; or that drawn from linseed and mixed with plantane water, are more to be depended on.

White ointment and Turner's cerate, may finish the cure.

Those who feed the mill with canes, are sometimes liable to have their hands ground off between the rollers, especially in the night time.

Wouldst thou prevent this horrid accident? leave off working during the night:—or if that cannot be done, at least change those who supply the mill every two hours; by this means their growing sleepy may be prevented.

### *Of ULCERS about the Ankles.*

I SHALL conclude this part with some few observations on fordid Ulcers, which too frequently infest the ankles of Negroes, especially in islands, where the soil is of a clayey nature.

They are difficult to be cured, for I have known a six weeks salivation often ineffectual.

Runaway Negroes, and those who are nastily lazy, or who eat dirt, a perversion of appetite not confined in the West-Indies to the

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the females, are most liable to fordid Ulcers: They bleed upon the slightest occasion, and generally produce an œdematous swelling of the member.

If the Ulcer has arisen from any external injury, and the patient is otherwise in a good habit of body, he need only be purged once a week with sea water, and bathed in the same in order to be cured.

The part affected should be dressed twice a-day; because matter soon becomes acrid in the West-Indies.

After washing the Ulcer with vitriol water, and soaking up the pus with scraped lint, French physic-nut leaves should be pounded and applied fresh to the sore.

I have known that application succeed, when the most pompous prescriptions of the shops have failed.

Exercise is pernicious; and yet if the Negroe does not stir a little, the swelling of his leg will encrease.

Those who have Ulcers about their ankles and toes, should have shoes given them to wear till they heal; and should use a bandage a considerable time after the part is cicatrized.

Without this precaution, a return of the sore is always to be apprehended.

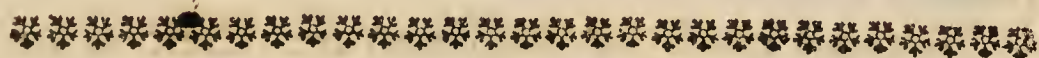
As the White inhabitants generally wear shoes and stockings; they are less subject to these sores than the Negroes.

But when they are afflicted with Ulcers; it is a difficult matter to heal them, because such people are but too much addicted to the use of raw, new spirits; than which, nothing so effectually contaminates the habit.

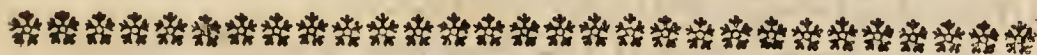
In that case, recourse must be had to alterative medicines, especially such as were recommended to prevent a return of the Yaws.

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AN  
E S S A Y  
ON THE  
MANAGEMENT and DISEASES  
OF  
NEGROES.



PART the FOURTH.



**B**UT it is not enough to take care of Negroes when they are sick, they should also be well cloathed and regularly fed.

The neglecting either of these important precepts is not only highly inhuman, but is the worst species of prodigality.

One Negroe, saved in this manner, more than pays the additional expences which owners of slaves by this means incur. But supposing it did not, it ought seriously to be considered by all masters, that they must

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answer before the Almighty for their conduct toward their Negroes.

Where neither humanity nor self-interest, are able to make masters treat their slaves as men, the Legislature should oblige them. This the French have done much to their honour.

As Negroes are ignorant, they must be vicious; this ought always to be attended to in their punishments.

Thirty nine is the lash of the law; half that number is, in my opinion, a sufficient punishment for any offence they can commit.

Negroes must be punished for their own as well as their master's sake; but lenity should always temper justice.

A Negroe should never be struck with a stick; nor ever punished in a passion.

Black drivers should never be permitted to give above one or two strokes of their whip, to any of those who are under their command, without leave from the manager.

How shocking to philanthropy is it, to think there are human beings, who are made to act from motives of fear only! Surely were Negroes instructed in the practical principles of Christianity, they would be rendered much better servants; and would prevent much severity, whereto they now unavoidably are exposed.

Negroes should have woollen, as well as linen cloathing given them every year. I repeat it again, the health of the gang would fully repay this expence.

They should have their allowance shared out to them, every Tuesday and Friday. Starved Negroes must be run-aways.

They should never be fed above a month on the same food.

They should have some mountain-ground, or gut-sides allotted them, for planting Indian provisions: And Saturday afternoon should now and then be given them to take care of their little gardens.

They should be allowed to rear small stock. And some of the better sort of them may be indulged in breeding hogs, goats, &c.

### *Of Sick Houses.*

EVERY plantation ought to have a large sick house, and if it were floored, so much the better.

Every plantation should have a proper hut for the reception of yawey patients: This ought to be to leeward, and at a distance from the sick house; which should be built near the dwelling house, but to leeward of it.

Every

Every sick house should have a chamber-ventilator to windward; and should receive some light from the roof.

Every sick house should have a necessary; which ought to be cleaned, at least, twice a-day.

It should also be furnished with a hearth and chimney.

The nurses are, too commonly, so old, that they cannot take proper care of the sick, let them have never so good an inclination to do their duty.

A nurse should be strong, sensible, and sober. It is a most important office in a plantation.

In every plantation some sensible Negroe should be instructed to bleed, give glysters, dress fresh wounds, spread plaisters, and dress ulcers. This is of great consequence.

Were I to give a model for a compleat sick house. It should consist of four detached chambers in a square form. In the center should be a pump and bathing place; and the whole should be surrounded with a strong lemon or lime-hedge, with a gate to lock. Round the borders such herbs, as are more commonly used in physic, should be planted; and there should be a walk round the square, for the convalescents.

The chamber to leeward should be appropriated to fevers, small-pox, &c.

That



That to windward should be for chirurgical and common medical cases.

That on the right should be appropriated for boiling drinks, victuals, &c. of the sick, and for lodging the nurse: with a little surgery.

That on the left should be appointed for the reception of venereal patients.

The windward ward should have a piazza; and each of them a necessary, and ventilator, except the kitchen, which should be cooled by a window.

This plan would doubtless cost money; but if we must have slaves, our own interest would, methinks, teach us to take all imaginable care of them when they become sickly.

Every estate ought to be visited once a week by some physical person; and oftner, if occasion require.

Planters should remember the sixth commandment. Those who presume to prescribe to the sick, and are not qualified by study and experience, must be murderers.

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## C O N C L U S I O N .

**E**VERY owner of an estate ought to have the following medicines sent him annually from England.

Spanish Flies.

Castor.

Calcined Hartshorn.

Spirit of Hartshorn.

Sal Volatile Drops.

Cloves.

Oil of Cinnamon.

Ipecacuan.

Jalap.

Opium.

Nutmegs.

Rhubarb.

Spirit of Lavender.

Tinctura Thebaica.

Alum.

Common Caustic.

Crude Mercury.

Corrosive Sublimate.

Oil of Turpentine.

Plaster, common.

Turner's Cerat.

Verdigrease.

Vitriol, blue.

Vitriol, white.

With some skins of leather, some rolls of tow, and a little lint. Each plantation should also have a glyster-syringe, and a small one.

In

In the above list I have recommended no empirical compositions. Creoles are but too fond of quackery. If any such are sent, the British Oil, James's Powder, and Turlington's Balsam, seem to deserve the preference.

F I N I S.

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