

**MEDICA SACRA; OR, SHORT
EXPOSITIONS OF THE MORE
IMPORTANT DISEASES
MENTIONED IN THE SACRED
WRITINGS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649645510

Medica Sacra; Or, Short Expositions of the More Important Diseases Mentioned in the Sacred Writings by Thomas Shapter

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Cover @ 2017

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IN THE SACRED WRITINGS.



BY

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LONDON:

LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMAN;
AND C. UPHAM, EXETER.

1834.

311.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY MANNING AND SMITHSON,
LONDON HOUSE YARD.

TO
JOHN BLACKALL, ESQ. M. D.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS,
SENIOR PHYSICIAN
TO THE
DEVON AND EXETER HOSPITAL,
LUNATIC ASYLUM, &c. &c.

THE FOLLOWING PAGES
ARE INSCRIBED,
AS A TESTIMONY OF RESPECT, AND ADMIRATION OF
THOSE HIGH TALENTS AND ACQUIREMENTS,
WHICH HAVE JUSTLY RAISED HIM TO
PROFESSIONAL PRE-EMINENCE IN
THE WEST OF ENGLAND,
AND
AS AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE MANY FAVORS
HE HAS CONFERRED ON HIS OBLIGED
AND GRATEFUL FRIEND,
THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

IN the following little work, an endeavour has been made to investigate and illustrate the nature of some of the diseases mentioned in the HOLY SCRIPTURES:—the inquiry was first undertaken as a matter of private amusement; in the course of pursuing it, however, so much more gratification was derived than had been anticipated, that I am induced to suppose others might participate in the feeling.

I would distinctly disclaim any pretensions to style; I have aimed solely at clearness of expression; but yet have to regret that the nature of the investigation has occasionally entailed the necessity of introducing languages with which it can

scarcely be expected every general reader is acquainted.

Perhaps some may say, that whilst there exists a work under the same title as this small production of mine, with the important prefix of Dr. Mead's highly and justly esteemed name, another was superfluous: sufficient apology, however, on this score may be offered; for independently of my dissent from many of the views of Dr. Mead on the diseases under discussion, it must be borne in mind, that the *Medica Sacra* of this learned physician was published in Latin, and that its preface contains the following anathema against those sufficiently bold to translate it.

“ *Βεβηλοι* autem hæc non scripsi; sed iis tantum, qui aut sacris theologicis, aut medicis, initiati sint et eruditi. Eaque de causâ Latino potissimum sermone in lucem edere placuit; quem per multa jam sæcula docti homines ad ea inter se communicanda, quæ aut nova, aut præter vulgarem opinionem dicta viderentur, ubique fere adhibue-

runt. Si quis igitur libri hujusce Anglicam versionem suscipiat, non tantum, me invito, id se facturum sciat; sed etiam contra jus illud æquabile, quo de re sua, prout libeat, statuere unicuique conceditur."

Whether from these investigations conclusive proof results to the overthrow of that somewhat prevailing notion, that the diseases mentioned in the Sacred Writings are in themselves miraculous, is rather a subject of inquiry for the ministers of our SACRED RELIGION, than for the Medical Annotator; though at the same time they must be admitted as evidence, that God has vouchsafed by these means to make a demonstration of His will. By the term miracle, I understand some visible, or otherwise sensible effect, which is contrary to the common laws of nature; therefore, if the truth of these commentaries be admitted, it must equally so, that the Sacred diseases (I must be excused for the use of this term) are not contrary to the laws of nature, as they are, to the present day,