

**EXPERIMENTAL ESSAYS ON THE
FOLLOWING SUBJECTS: I. ON THE
EXTERNAL APPLICATION OF
ANTISEPTICS IN PUTRID DISEASES. II. ON
THE DOSES AND EFFECTS OF MEDICINES.
III. ON DIURETICS AND SUDORIFICS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649579747

Experimental Essays on the Following Subjects: I. On the External Application of Antiseptics in Putrid Difeafes. II. On the Does and Effects of Medicines. III. On Diuretics and Sudorifics by William Alexander

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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WILLIAM ALEXANDER

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Bot: by the Hon^{ble}
Jas. I. D. J. Cleburne -
J. M. Wilson - Oct 1770



EXPERIMENTAL

ESSAYS.



Entered at Stationers' Hall, agreeable to
Act of Parliament.

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- I. On the External Application of ANTISEPTICS
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- III. On DIURETICS and SUDORIFICS.

By WILLIAM ALEXANDER,
SURGEON in EDINBURGH.

*Hæc autem sola potest obtineri ratiocinatione exactâ, dum
data experimenta, singulatim perfectè expensâ, in omni-
bus suis proprietatibus examinantur, dein inter se com-
parantur sedulo, ut convenientia, vel diveritas, pateat,
tumque prudentissimâ fide notantur ea omnia, quæ in iis
contineri perfecta clarè inde deduci possunt.*

BOERHAAVE Institut. Med. §. 24.

L O N D O N,
Printed for EDWARD and CHARLES DILLY, in the Strand.
MDCCLXVIII.

T H E

P R E F A C E.

THE experiments contained in the following Effays were begun several years ago for my own amusement, and, I hoped, improvement. The greatest part of them have been read before the Philosophical Society of this city, and some of them before the Royal Society in London. All of them were made with as much accuracy as my time and judgment would allow of ; and every phenomenon arising therefrom is related exactly as it appeared, as they were not designed to support any hypothesis already formed. Whether the conclusions

A drawn

ii P R E F A C E.

drawn from them are just or not, I will not pretend to determine: this, however, I can say, that wherever they may be wrong, they are so from an error in judgment, and not from an intention to establish a theory of my own, or mislead the reason of others.

To the first essay on antiseptics it may be objected, that it is incomplete, and wants several very essential experiments to confirm its utility. This is certainly true; but the reader will see I was at some pains to bring animals into a putrid state, that I might thereby have an opportunity to make those necessary experiments that are wanting. Could I have succeeded in this, or had I lived in a place where putrid diseases are frequently to be met with,

with, the essay had appeared in a different manner from what it here does. I now publish it as containing some hints to those gentlemen under whose care putrid diseases often fall, hoping they will make proper use of them, as every one must be convinced that the methods proposed are at least innocent.

The experiments on the doses and effects of certain medicines, were made with a view of selecting the valuable from the useless,—determining the doses and operation of the former,—and throwing the others into that contempt which they justly deserve.

I had proceeded but a very short way in this undertaking, when, as the reader will see, I had very sufficient reasons for desisting from prosecuting it any farther.

iv P R E F A C E.

Out of four capital articles in the *Materia Medica* (which were all I made trials of) two were altogether useless, or very nearly so. And were the whole articles contained in it to undergo the same scrutiny, I am very much afraid, that more than a proportionable number of them would be found equally insignificant.

The experiments on diuretics and sudorifics were intended to clear up some difficulties which I had entertained concerning their action and effects on the human body. Those on sudorifics will furnish some hints which I had not the most distant idea of; some of which will, I hope, if diligently attended to, prove very useful in practice. I am persuaded they ought at least to
make