

**DISCOURSES ON THE
GOUT, A RHEUMATISM,
AND THE KING'S EVIL**

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Discourses on the Gout, a Rheumatism, and the King's Evil by Sir Richard Blackmore

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SIR RICHARD BLACKMORE

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DISCOURSES
ON THE
G O U T,
A
RHEUMATISM,
AND THE
KING's EVIL.

CONTAINING
An EXPLICATION of the Nature,
Causes, and different Species of
those DISEASES, and the Me-
thod of Curing them.

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T H E
P R E F A C E .

THE Art of Healing was,
in the eldest Ages of Learning,
but a tender Plant,
sprung newly from the
Ground; and notwithstanding it was
cherished with Care, and cultivated
by industrious Hands, acquired how-
ever but little Growth and Vigour du-
ring a long Series of Years, and could
only boast of some green and unripe
Fruit; tho', 'tis true, it was then
adorned with Plenty of Leaves and
Blossoms, that promised maturer and
more generous Productions to come.

A 2 . And

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And therefore it is agreeable to Reason that the primitive Enquiries into the Nature of Diseases, and the means of their Cure should be very crude and imperfect: But tho' for this Cause he that seeks for Light in that dark Age of Physick, where he will meet but a few broken Rays and Glimmerings to guide his Steps thro' the intricate Recesses of Medicinal Knowledge, will find his Expectations greatly disappointed, yet many Students employ their Time in ransacking with assiduous Application these Writings of the eldest Physicians, as so many plentiful Hoards and Repositories of necessary Learning; and tho' they acquire by it no Improvement of their Understandings in the Art of healing Distempers, yet some of them may perhaps imagine they shall procure Reputation, and be esteemed learned Men, and perhaps may think their Labour sufficiently paid

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paid by the Attainment of that Character. For seeing Learning, by the universal Consent of Mankind, is allowed to be a worthy and superiour Accomplishment, not only as it dignifies and adorns the Mind above all vulgar Knowledge of human Affairs, but as great Application and uncommon intellectual Capacity are required to procure it, is it a Wonder that so many Persons, ambitious of Preheminence and Distinction, enter their Claim to so reputable an Endowment?

Nor is it improbable that many of a low Genius and moderate Faculties apply themselves with great Diligence to the reading of Authors that flourished in ancient Times, that they may gain this Credit of being great Scholars, while they are conscious of their Inability to raise a Name by superior and more useful Studies, and therefore dignify this inferior sort of

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Knowledge with the Title of Learning.

It is a just Remark, that some Persons antecedently to Judgment and Choice are disposed, by a strong Bias and an inbred Inclination, to admire and reverence all Books of an old Date, in Comparison of which all modern Science and Works of Erudition are, in their Opinion, idle and contemptible; and while they long converse with ancient Authors and search into dusty and Worm-eaten Volumes, that have little else to recommend them but this, that they are many hundred Years old, they become skilful Antiquaries in the old Monuments of the Schools, the broken Fragments of obsolete Writers, and the Ruins of Learning. The Men that are far gone in this Taste, adore whatever they find in our eldest Forefathers, tho' ever so fruitless and insipid, extoll all Things that are covered with

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venerable Dust and Cobwebs, and has a stale, rancid and musty Relish. This Passion for old Authors is taken Notice of by Mr. Lock in his Posthumous Works, and likewise by Sieur D'Ablencourt in the Preface to his Translation of Lucian; where he says, I know this Translation will not please all the World, chiefly those, who Idolize all the Words and all the Thoughts of the Ancients, and who do not believe there is any one good Work of which the Author is still alive.

I have lately read, in an obscure unspoken of Book, a Letter feigned to be written at the Command of a Man of Quality in the Country, by his Steward to a Bookseller in London, which sets this fond Admiration of old and odd Authors, as well as those that are scarce and hard to be gotten, in a clear View; and it will not, I imagine, be impertinent to relate the Substance of it in this Place.