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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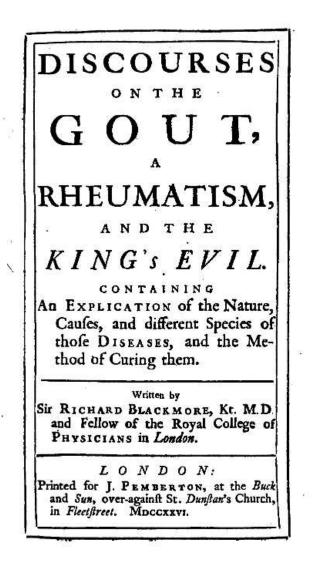
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SIR RICHARD BLACKMORE

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PREFACE.



H E Art of Healing was, in the eldest Ages of Learning, but a tender Plant, sprung newly from the

Ground; and notwithstanding it was cherisched with Care, and cultivated by industrious Hands, acquired however but little Growth and Vigour during 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 Bloss, that promised maturer and more generous Productions to come. A 2 And

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And therefore it is agreeable to Reafon that the primitive Enquiries into the Nature of Difeases, and the means of their Cure should be very crude and imperfect : But the for this Caufe be that feeks for Light in that dark Age of Phylick, where he will meet but a few broken Rays and Glimmerings to guide his Steps thro' the intricate Receffes of Medicinal Knowledge, will find his Expectations greatly disappointed, yet many Students employ their Time in ranfacking with affiduous Application thefe Writings of the eldest Phylicians, as fo many plentiful Hoards and Repositories of necessary Learning; and the they acquire by it no Improvement of their Understandings in the Art of healing Diftempers, yet some of them may perhaps imagine they Shall procure Reputation, and be efleemed learned Men, and perhaps may think their Labour Sufficiently paid

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paid by the Attainment of that Character. For feeing Learning, by the univerfal Confent 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 conficious of their Inability to raise a Name by supersor and more useful Studies, and therefore dignify this inferior fort of A 3 Know-

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Knowledge with the Title of Learning.

. It is a just Remark, that some Perfons antecedently to Judgment and Choice are disposed, by a ftrong Biass 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 fearch into dufty and Worm-eaten Volumes, that bave little elfe 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 obfolete Writers, and the Ruins of The Men that are far Learning. gone in this Taffe, adore whatever they find in our eldest Forefathers, the' ever so fruitless and insipid, extoll all Things that are covered with vene-T

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venerable Duft and Cobwebs, and has a stale, rancid and mufty Relifb. This Paffion for old Authors is taken Notice of by Mr. Lock in his Poftbumous Works, and likewife by Sieur D'Ablencourt in the Preface to his Tranflation of Lucian; where he fays, I know this Tranflation will not pleafe all the World, chiefly those, who Idalize all the World, 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 lateby 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 impertiment to relate the Substance of it in this Place.

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