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called Aether, by Matthew Turner**

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AN ACCOUNT OF THE EXTRAORDINARY
MEDICINAL FLUID, CALLED AETHER ***

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An Account of the Extraordinary Medicinal Fluid, called Aether.
By Matthew Turner (d. 1788?)

**AN ACCOUNT OF THE EXTRAORDINARY
MEDICINAL FLUID, CALLED AETHER.**

By M. TURNER, SURGEON,
IN
LIVERPOOL.

LONDON:
Printed by J. WILKIE, at the Bible in St. Paul's Church-yard.

The Publisher of the following short Account of the AETHER having prepared, and successfully made Use of it in his private Practice, for several Years, has at length determin'd to endeavour to extend it's Utility, by thus making it public; as he knows of no one who has ever published it's *medicinal virtues*; or

offered it to Sale in it's *Perfection*; or given the Criteria by which they who are unacquainted with it might distinguish the *Genuine* from the *Spurious*: And he doubts not but every candid Person who examines it, will agree with him, That it carries with it the strongest Marks of a valuable Addition to the *Materia Medica*, and therefore ought to lie no longer in Obscurity.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE AETHER, &c.

This truly extraordinary Chemical Preparation is not a new Discovery, having been known and esteemed, as a valuable Curiosity, by many of the greatest Chemists and Philosophers, both Ancient and Modern; particularly by Sir *Isaac Newton* [Footnote: Quere 31st, at the End of his Optics.], and the Honourable Mr. *Boyle* [Footnote: Treatise on the Producibleness of Chemical Principles.], who both mention it in their Works, tho' not by this Name: And therefore before any Thing is said of it's Virtues as a Medicine, it may not be improper to explain the Nature of it, and enumerate a few of it's remarkable Properties, considered as a Curiosity in Chemistry, in which Light chiefly it has hitherto been view'd by those who have been acquainted with it.

It is a kind of ETHEREAL OIL, produced by the Decomposition of the Vinous Spirit by Means of the Vitriolic Acid, and differs essentially both from Vinous Spirits and Essential Oils in several Respects, tho' it agrees with them in some, as will appear hereafter: But as the Vinous Spirit may be decomposed by means of all the three Mineral Acids, *viz.* the *Vitriolic*, the *Nitrous* and the *Marine*, and as these all act differently on the Spirit, they will, of Course, produce three different Kinds of AETHER, which, from the Name, of the Acid employ'd in making them, are term'd *Marine*, *Nitrous*, or *Vitriolic*: the last only is the Kind here understood, it's Properties being more singular and extraordinary, and, as an AETHER, more perfect than either of the others; the Reason of which seems to be, that the *Vitriolic Acid* is a much stronger Agent on the Spirit, and more perfectly decomposes it, than either the *Nitrous* or *Marine*.

It is the most light, most volatile, and most inflammable, of all known Liquids: It swims upon the highest rectified Spirit of Wine as Oil does upon Water, and flies away so quickly as hardly to wet a Hand it is dropped upon; from which Properties it probably has obtained it's Name. It is so readily inflammable, as to take Fire at the approach of a Candle, before the Flame touches it. Any Electrified Body will also produce the same Effect.

It is one of the most powerful Solvents known in Chemistry: It is neither *acid* nor *alkaline*, and therefore is perfectly free from that saline Acrimony with which all the common Volatile Spirits abound: It has a greater Affinity with Gold than *Aqua Regia* has, altho' it will not dissolve it in the Mass, or whilst in it's Metallic Form; but if you add AETHER to a solution of Gold in Aqua Regia, it presently takes all the Gold from it's former Solvent, keeping it perfectly dissolved and suspended, without the least Precipitation; and becomes of a yellow Colour: The AETHER, thus saturated with the Gold, does not mix with the Aqua Regia, but may readily be separated from it by simple Decantation, and thus a true and safe *Aurum potable* is readily prepared for those who want such a Medicine. The Union of these two Substances is very remarkable, one being the heaviest solid Body we know, the other the lightest Liquid.

The AETHER is remarkably cold, when dropped upon the Hand, and it affects the thermometer in an extraordinary Manner; for if the Ball of either a Mercurial or Spirituous Thermometer be immersed in it, the Spirit or Mercury immediately sinks considerably, tho' both the AETHER and the Thermometer have stood a sufficient Time together to be brought to the temperature of the Room, before the Experiment was made. The Thermometers dipt into Water, or Spirit of Wine, in the same Manner, suffer not the least Alteration.

They who chuse to see a further Account of the singular Effects which this curious Fluid produces, may peruse what Doctor *Frobenius*, a *German* Chemist, has published concerning it, in the Philosophic Transactions for the Years 1733 and 1741.

But the most valuable Qualities of the AETHER are it's *medicinal* ones; it having been found by repeated Experience to be an excellent Remedy in most *nervous Diseases*; particularly in FITS of all sorts, whether *Epileptic*, *Convulsive*, *Hysteric*, *Hypochondriac*, or *Paralytic*: In habitual HEAD-ACHES, GOUT, RHEUMATISM, PAINS IN THE, STOMACH, WINDY DISORDERS OF THE STOMACH AND

INTESTINES, HOOPING COUGH, ASTHMA, PLEURITIC PAINS, and DEAFNESS, all which Diseases have, in a singular Manner, been removed by it; and that the Publisher may contribute all the Assistance he can in extending the use of this Medicine, the following Methods of applying, it are given, which have been attended with Success.

Particular Directions for using the AETHER.

In the HEAD-ACH.

A fit of the Head-ach is almost instantly removed by applying the AETHER externally to the Forehead, by means of a bit of Linen Rag, in the Manner hereafter directed for it's external Application. Or it may be applied to any other Part of the Head where the Pain lies, being first shaved, if necessary. If the Pain is violent, a Dose of it should be also taken inwardly. In stubborn Cases it will likewise be serviceable to snuff a little of the AETHER up the Nostrils, either alone or mixed with equal Parts of Lavender Water, *Hungary* Water, or Brandy; or it may be more convenient to apply a bit of Linen Rag, wetted with AETHER, up the Nostrils. Any of these Means, or all of them, must be repeated if the Pain is so urgent as to require it. To cure this Disorder radically, when it is of long standing, and to prevent it's Return, the Medicine must be taken inwardly for a considerable Time every Night at Bed-time, or in violent Cases, every Night and Morning in a small Draught of cold Water, according to the General Direction for taking it inwardly, given p. 11. In some particular Cases, Vomits are very serviceable.

A VERTIGO.

A Vertigo, Giddiness, or Swimming in the Head, will generally be removed by proceeding in the same Manner as for the Head-ach.

The EPILEPSY.

No Disease is more difficult to cure than the Epilepsy or Falling- Sickness; yet several Instances have occurred where the most violent Degrees of it, have been cured, even in grown Persons, by taking a Dose of this Medicine regularly every Night and Morning for a considerable Time. The Dose must be regulated according to the Age of the Patient, as mentioned in the General Direction, Page 11. If a Pain is felt in any Part of the Head, the AETHER must be applied to that Part occasionally, and it must be previously shaved, if necessary. It will be proper to give a small Dose of *Tinctura Sacra*, or of the *Pill. Rufi*, at proper Intervals, as once a Week or Fortnight. It will also, in most Cases, be necessary to give now and then a Vomit. If it be suspected that the Patient has Worms, proper Medicines to destroy them ought also to be given.

In CONVULSIONS.

In Convulsions, or Convulsive Disorders, give the AETHER inwardly, a Dose two three Times a Day, or oftener, according to the exigence of the Case; and it should also be applied externally to the Forehead, or any other Part of the Head, during the Fit. If the Patient is full of blood, bleeding is necessary, and if Costive, a Dose of *Manna*, *Senna*, or any gentle Laxative, or a Clyster, should be given.

Hysteric and Hypochondriac DISORDERS.

This Medicine has excellent Effect in *Hysteric Fits*, and in all that Train of Symptoms which Hysteric and Hypochondriac Persons are subject to; such as Risings in the Throat threatning Suffocation, difficult Breathing, Flutterings and Palpitations of the Heart, frequent Fainting, Lowness of Spirits, violent Pains in the Head, Languor of the whole Body, Dullness of the Mind and Senses, with constant Anxieties and Inquietude, &c. The Dose must be repeated according to the urgency of the Symptoms; and the Medicine must be continued some Time after the Complaints disappear, to prevent a Relapse. It will be serviceable during the Use of the AETHER, especially in Case of Costiveness, to take at proper Intervals a gentle Purge, such as *Tinctura Sacra*, *Pill Rufi*, *Rhubarb*, or *Glauber's Salts*. Bodily Exercise of all sorts contributes greatly to the Cure of these Complaints, especially Riding on Horseback.

PALSY.

In *Palsies*, and all Paralytic Complaints, the Patient, if a grown Person, must take the quantity of a Tea Spoonful of the AETHER every Night and Morning. The Dose must be lessened in young People, according to their Age. It will also be proper to snuff a little of it up the Nostrils once or twice a Day, or apply a bit of Rag wetted with it up the Nostrils. The AETHER must also be applied externally to the Part affected, at least once every Day. It should likewise be applied now and then to the Forehead, or any other part of the Head, especially if the Tongue, Eyes, or any part of the Face or Head be affected. If the Arms or Hands are Paralytic, the Application should be made to the lower and back Part of the Neck, as well as to the Part affected. If the Disease has seiz'd the Thighs, Legs, or Feet, the Application must not only be made to them, but likewise to the Back Bone, at the Loins. As this Medicine cannot, on account of it's Volatility and Pungency, be properly applied to the Whole, of a Paralytic Limb at once, but only to a small Part of it, the Application therefore may be made sometimes to one Part, and sometimes to another, as shall be thought proper.

This Disease will require a longer or shorter Continuance of these Means, according to the Degree of it, and the Time it has continued. A Vomit should be given, and repeated now and then as the Patient can bear it; but if Vomits seem too fatiguing, a Dose of *Tinctura Sacra* may be given in their room. Paralytic Patients should use as much Bodily Exercise as possible, and the Head, Neck, and the whole Spine, as well as the Parts affected, should be frequently rubbed with a hot and dry Cloth till they appear red.

GOUT.

This Medicine is of singular Service in the *Gout*, not only while it continues in the Limbs, but particularly when it flies inwards, and attacks the Head, Stomach, or any of the internal Parts; in which Cases a few Doses will not fail to give present Relief. It should be taken in the Quantity of a Tea Spoonful, two or three Times every Day, or oftener, if the Case be violent, during the Gouty Fit. It carries off the Gouty Matter, by Urine, which it renders very thick and turbid. At any Time when there is a Necessity to abate the excessive Pain in the Part affected, the AETHER may be applied to it externally, according to the Method given p. 12. It will be proper to continue taking the AETHER once or twice a Day for some Time after the Fit is gone, and to begin taking it again about the Time of it's expected Return; by which Means, tho' it may not prevent the Return of the Fit, which in many Cases perhaps ought not to be desired, yet it will shorten, it's Continuance, and moderate the Pain of it.

RHEUMATISM.

In Rheumatic Complaints the Patient must take a Dose of this Medicine every Night and Morning, or oftener, if the Pains are violent; and it must be continued till the Disease is removed, or longer, to prevent a Relapse. If the Pain is fixed in any particular Part, the AETHER must be applied to it twice a Day, as directed hereafter. It must be observed, that Bleeding very much conduces to the Cure of obstinate Chronic Rheumatisms, must be repeated at proper intervals if necessary; the Blood in this Disease being generally very sizzly.

Disorders of the Stomach and Intestines.

This Medicine presently cures Flatulent Cholics, removes all Windy Disorders of the Stomach and Intestines, and corrects Acidities lodged there. It is also found to have excellent Effect in correcting that Weakness, or bad Habit of the Stomach and Intestines, which studious Persons, and such as lead sedentary Lives, are particularly subject to, and is attended with sour Belchings, Heart-Burn, Windy Distensions, Pain and Uneasiness in the Stomach and Bowels. It must be taken every Night and Morning, according to the General Direction below. Care should be taken to prevent Costiveness in these Cases, which, is best removed by chewing *Rhubarb*, or taking it any other way, or by a Dose of *Manna*, or *Glauber's Salts*, taken occasionally.

The AETHER is an extraordinary Diuretic in DROPSIES: It is an excellent Medicine in an ASTHMA, and the HICCUP; and may be looked upon as a Specific in that Disease of Children called the HOOPING- COUGH, or CHIN-COUGH; in all which Cases it must be taken inwardly, according to the General Direction below, and the repetition of the Dose must be regulated by the violence of the Disease.

A Dose of it taken at going to Bed after Drinking too freely, has been found to prevent the Head-Ach, Sickness, &c, which usually follow next Morning.

It has removed DEAFNESS, and Hardness of Hearing, by Moistening a little Cotton with a few Drops of it, putting it into the Ear, and holding the Finger for a few Minutes over it, at the same time snuffing a few Drops of it, mixed with Spirit of Lavender, up the Nostrils, or putting a bit of Rag wet with the AETHER, up the Nostrils.

It has frequently removed a temporary DIMNESS OF SIGHT, attended with a Swimming or Uneasiness in the Head, by external Application to the Forehead; and is a promising Medicine in that Sort of Blindness called a GUTTA SERENA, and in Beginning CATARACTS, in which Cases it should be taken inwardly, as well as applied to the Forehead, and up the Nostrils.

It is likewise found to, be of great service in removing PLEURITIC PAINS, and STITCHES in the Side, by applying it to the affected Part, in the Manner directed for external Application.

The Method of taking the AETHER Inwardly.

The General Dose for a grown Person is a common Tea Spoonful; and the best Vehicle to take it in is a Draught of Cold Water. If it be only stirred, in the Water with the Spoon, and the Mixture drank immediately it strikes the Nostrils by it's Volatility, but may be thought by some as agreeable when so taken as when the two Liquors, are more intimately mixed, by shaking them in a Phial, and from thence pouring them into a Glass to be drank; for tho' it has but little Smell in this Manner, it is more warm to the Palate than in the other. The Patient may use, the Way of Mixing he likes best, and if he has any Objection to Water, may take it in any other agreeable cold Liquor. Children in the Month may take two or three Drops for a Dose; those of a Year old may take seven or eight Drops; those of five or six Years old may take from twenty to twenty-five Drops, and so encreasing according to their Years: Or it may perhaps be better, in giving it to Children, to mix a Tea Spoonful of AETHER, with a convenient Quantity of Water, and, shaking it well, give at a Dose about one twentieth Part of this Mixture to a Child a Month old; about one eighth Part to a Child twelve or fourteen Months old; to those about five Years old one third Part of the Mixture; half of the Mixture to those about seven Years old, and two thirds of it to those about fourteen Years old.

The Method of applying the AETHER Externally.

To apply it Externally, you must procure a Bit of Linen Rag, of such a Dimension as to be conveniently covered by the Palm of the Hand; moisten this Rag with a little of the AETHER as it lies upon your Palm, and instantly apply it to the Part affected, pressing it very close, so as to prevent the Escape of it's Fumes, for two or three Minutes, in which Time the Rag will be found dry, and may be taken away. It will be more convenient, on some Occasions, (as in applying it to Paralytic Parts, Rheumatic Pains, and the Gout,) to place the Rag upon a Piece of a soft, thin Bladder and, when moisten'd with the AETHER, to bind it gently upon the Part. A slight Redness usually appears upon the Part after the Application, but it quickly vanishes; but it may sometimes happen, where the Skin is very tender and too much AETHER has been applied to the Forehead, or within the Ears, that it may affect the Skin more than the Patient chooses; which is avoided by applying a less Quantity for the future. This is the Secret of a present famous Practitioner, who having a Method sometimes of concealing his Application, is said to, cure the Head-ach, fixed Rheumatic Pains, &c. by the Touch of his Hand.

It is very easy to conceive, from the extreme Subtlety of this Medicine, that it must produce many excellent Effects in such Diseases as those above mentioned, as it is converted into Vapour by a much less Heat than the common Animal One; so that being swallowed, it can hardly subsist in any Part of the human Body under any Form but that of an extremely penetrating volatiliz'd Vapour; and it is perceptible by it's Smell, as it passes thro' the Pores of the Skin, several Hours, after taking; so that it's stay in the Body is longer, and, it's Effects there more durable, than might be expected from such a subtle Substance.

Notwithstanding the extreme Subtlety of the AETHER, it is perfectly innocent and safe to take, as it contains nothing that is acrimonious or corrosive; so that it may be given even to the youngest Children without Hesitation. It neither purges nor vomits; nor does it encrease any of the sensible Evacuations, except that of Urine, and sometimes that of Sweat, if taken when in Bed; but as it is so distinctly perceived by the smell passing thro' the cutaneous Pores of those who take it, it is probable that it encreases insensible Perspiration. Another observable Property in this Medicine is, that it does not coagulate or thicken the Serum of the Blood, but thins it; and therefore has direct contrary Effects to

all the common Spirituous Compositions, when either taken inwardly, or externally applied, and is essentially different from the most subtiliz'd Vinous Spirits; for tho' Spirit of Wine is used in making it, yet it is so far decomposed by the Process, that it's Nature is entirely changed. In consequence of this Quality in the AETHER, the Publisher has successfully dissolved some particular obstinate Tumours, by applying it to them, when other Means have failed.—This Hint He hopes will not pass unnoticed by the Gentlemen of the Faculty, as it is evident no Application whatever can equal it in Subtlety and Dissolving Power.

The Medicine so much celebrated in *Germany*, and so frequently commended and used in Practice by the late famous Professor *Hoffman*, under the Title of his *Liquor Mineralis Anodynus*, was nearly of the same Nature with the AETHER, but not so powerful, nor so highly subtilized.

Repeated Experience has confirmed the Efficacy of this Medicine in all the Diseases before mentioned; and from the Consideration of it's uncommon Qualities, it may be presumed to be an excellent Remedy in many others, if judiciously given: Hence it seems surprising that so valuable an Addition, to the *Materia Medica* as the AETHER doubtless is, should have been so much neglected, or so little known; but the Reasons are, that the Process whereby it was made was kept secret by some who rated the Preparation at a very extravagant Price, and not sufficiently attended to by others, who consider'd it only as a Chemical Curiosity, not as a Medicine. The chief Merit the Publisher of this Account pretends to, is, *the ascertaining the Medicinal Virtues of this curious Preparation*, by several Years Experience, and making them more publickly known; *the reducing it's Price*, which has hitherto been so extravagant that had it's Virtues and Properties been known, only a small number of the afflicted could have enjoy'd the Benefit of it; and, *the bringing it to a greater Degree of Perfection than any hitherto sold*; what he offers being a perfectly rectified Vitriolic AETHER.

It may not be improper to give the Marks by which good AETHER may be known. It is perfectly colourless, except it has receiv'd some accidental Tinge from the Cork of the Phial in which it has been kept; and so volatile as to strike the Nose very powerfully. It's Smell is more or less sulphureous, according to the management of some Part of the Process. Wetting the Finger with it, or dropping a little upon the Hand, it vanishes instantly, and leaves no Moisture behind; so that the Part scarcely seems to have been wet. Half a Dozen Drops, dropped together upon a Table will disappear in a few Seconds of a Minute, and leave only the Appearance of a large oily Ring behind; but if it leaves the least Watery or Spirituous Moisture, or does not evaporate in much less than a Minute, it is not good. The best AETHER will dissolve in, or mix with, a certain Quantity of Water; and that is the best which requires the largest Quantity of Water to dissolve it: If, therefore, to fix Tea Spoonsful of Water in a small Phial, you add one of the AETHER to be examined, cork up the Phial, and shake them very well together, and upon standing a little while some part of the AETHER appears at Top, in form of Oil, sufficient to cover the surface of the Mixture, it may be pronounced good (provided it also answers, in the other Methods of Trial) and the more appears the better is the AETHER; but if none appears, or not enough to cover the surface of the Mixture, it was either adulterated, or not well rectified. If to this Mixture of AETHER and Water you add a little *Salt of Tartar*, and any Fermentation ensues, the AETHER was not well rectified. Upon shaking briskly a Phial containing AETHER, if the Bubbles, or Proof as they are usually called, do not disappear in less Time, and in larger Bubbles, than any other Liquor, (the Vinous Alcohol perhaps excepted) 'tis not Genuine.

It is the more necessary to observe these Rules of proving the Quality of the AETHER, as the imperfect Sorts have been found to disagree with the Stomach, and produce other bad Effects, besides disappointing the Patient's Expectation. The AETHER that has the foremention'd Properties, (for there are Preparations sold by the same name, which are very imperfect Imitations of it) is made and sold by M. TURNER, Surgeon, in *Liverpool*. The Ounce Phial *two Shillings*; the Half Ounce *one Shilling*. The Phials are square; the Word AETHER, inscribed on one Side, and M. TURNER on the opposite, and sealed with a Lion gardant, &c. Proper Abatement will be made to Druggists, Apothecaries, or the Gentlemen of the Faculty who use any considerable Quantity. To prevent it's escape and loss, a small Quantity of Water is put into each Phial, which should be kept with the Cork downwards, by which Means the AETHER is prevented, by the interposition of the Water, from evaporating.

The Publisher has also appointed it to be sold by Mr. *R. Board*, Chemist and Druggist, in *Grace-church-street*; and Mr. *J. Wilkie*, Bookseller, at the Bible in St. *Paul's Churchyard*, LONDON: and Mr. *Peter Wilson*, Bookseller, in *Dame-street*, DUBLIN.

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