

***JOHN
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***AN ESSAY ON THE APPLICATION
OF THE LUNAR CAUSTIC
IN THE CURE OF CERTAIN
WOUNDS AND ULCERS***

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An Essay on the Application of the Lunar Caustic in the Cure of Certain Wounds and Ulcers

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GREAT AFFECTION.

Nottingham, Jan. 6, 1826.

PREFACE.

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The following pages are presented to the medical public with very humble pretensions. It is chiefly with the minor accidents or diseases that they have to do; but I shall not consider that I have laboured in vain, if I am enabled to mitigate even these little evils of human life.

In these prefatory observations, however, I would suggest the question whether the caustic may not be employed with benefit even in some of the severer diseases to which the human frame is liable. Indeed I consider the investigation as only just begun, and many other uses of the lunar caustic, besides those detailed in the following pages, have suggested themselves to me.

May not the caustic, for instance, be of greater efficacy, because of greater power and of quicker operation, than ordinary blisters, in some internal diseases?

It is repeatedly stated hereafter, that the application of the lunar caustic is a means, in certain circumstances, of subduing external inflammation. Might it not, on this principle, be of service in the treatment of some of the internal phlegmasiæ?

It may be observed, that the lunar caustic may be regarded, almost without further trial, as an effectual preventive of those cases of irritative fever which arise from local injuries, and probably of the effects of poisoned wounds in general. I would not, however, in the latter cases, fail to render "sure doubly sure" by free excision.

Might not an adherent eschar be easily formed in those cases of compound fracture in which the external wound is of moderate size, so as effectually to exclude the external air and prevent cutaneous inflammation, and in more respects than one, to reduce the case to the state of a simple fracture? This object, if attained, would be important indeed, and I hope the suggestion will be submitted to the most assiduous and cautious trial.

I can have no doubt that the use of the lunar caustic admits of being still further extended; and, as I intend to pursue the inquiry, I hope at some future period to publish something more worthy of the attention of the medical public. In the mean time, the plans hereafter suggested must not be adopted without that degree of care, attention, and perseverance, which are obviously necessary to render them successful.

CHAPTER I.ToC

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ON HEALING BY ESCHAR.

Having been led, by several circumstances, to try the effects of the Lunar Caustic in the treatment of Wounds and Ulcers, and having great reason, from these trials, to think that this remedy may be used with much advantage far more extensively than has hitherto been done, I lay the results of my experience before my medical brethren.

A very natural mode of healing certain wounds and ulcers, is by scabbing; but this mode of treatment is attended by many disadvantages, as will be pointed out shortly; yet it may be supposed to have suggested to me some of those trials of the treatment by eschar, which I am about to detail.

I. ON THE ADHERENT ESCHAR.

It appears scarcely necessary to describe the immediate and well known effects of the application of the lunar caustic to the surface of a wound or ulcer. It may, however, be shortly observed that the contact of the caustic induces,