

Some Observations of Vipers.

A curious *Italian*, called *Francesco Redi*, having lately had an opportunity, by the great number of Vipers, brought to the *Grand Duke* of *Tuscany* for the composing of *Theriac* or *Treacle*, to examine what is vulgarly delivered and believed concerning the Poyson of those Creatures, hath, (according to the account, given of it in the *French Journal des Scavans*, printed *January* 4. 166 $\frac{1}{2}$) performed his undertaking with much exactness, and publish'd in an *Italian tract*, not yet come into *England*, these Observations.

1. He hath observed, that the poyson of Vipers is neither in their *Teeth*, nor in their *Tayle*, nor in their *Galls*; but in the two *Vesicles* or *Bladders*, which cover their teeth, and which coming to be compressed, when the Vipers bite, do emit a certain yellowish Liquor, that runs along the teeth and poysons the wound. Whereof he gives this proof, that he hath rub'd the wounds of many Animals with the *Gall* of Vipers, and prick'd them with their *Teeth*, and yet no considerable ill accident follow'd upon it, but that as often as he rubbed the wounds with the said yellow Liquor, not one of them escaped.

2 Whereas commonly it hath hitherto been believed, that the poyson of Vipers being swallowed, was present death; this *Author*, after many reiterated Experiments, is said to have observed, that in Vipers there is neither Humour, nor Excrement, nor any part, not the *Gall* it self, that, being taken into the Body, kills. And he assures, that he hath seen men eat, and hath often made *Bruit* Animals swallow all that is esteem'd most poysonous in a *Viper*, yet without the least mischief to them. Whence he shews, that it needs not so much to be wondred at, that certain *Empiricks* swallow the juyce of the
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most venomous Animals without receiving any harm thereby; adding, that, which is adscribed to the vertue of their *Antidote*, ought to be attributed to the nature of those kinds of Poysons, which are no poysons, when they are swallow'd, (for which Doctrine he also alledges *Celsus*) but onely when they are put into wounds. Which also has been noted by *Lucan*, who introduces *Cato* thus speaking;

*Noxia serpentum est admisso sanguine pestis,
Morsu virus habent, 3 fatum dente minantur;
Pocula morte carent.*

And what also some Authors have affirm'd, *videl.* That it is mortal, to eat of the Flesh of creatures killed by Vipers; or to drink of the VVine wherein Vipers have been drowned or to suck the wounds that have been made by them, is by this Authour observed to be wide of truth. For he assures, that many persons have eaten Pullets and Pigeons, bitten by Vipers, without finding any alteration from it in their health. On the contrary, he declares, That it is a soveraign Remedy against the biting of Vipers, to suck the wound; alledging an Experiment, made upon a Dog, which he caused to be bitten by a Viper at the nose, who by licking his own wound saved his life. Which he confirms by the example of those people, celebrated in *History* by the name of *Marfi* and *Pfilli*, whose Employment it was, to heal those, that had been bitten by Serpents, by sucking their wounds.

3. He adds, that although *Galen* and many modern *Physicians* do affirm, that there is nothing, which causeth so much thirst, as Vipers-flesh, yet he hath experimented the contrary and known divers persons, who did eat the flesh of Vipers at all their meals, and yet did assure him, they never were less dry, then when they observed that kind of Diet.

4 As for the Salt of Vipers, whereof some *Chymists* have
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so great esteem, he saith, that it hath no *Purging* vertue at all in it; adding that even of *All Salts*, none hath more vertue than another, as he pretends to have shew'd in an other *Book* of his, *De natura salium*; which also hath not been yet transmitted into these parts.

5. He denies, what *Aristotle* assures, and what *Galen* saith to have often tryed, that the *Spittle* of a *Fasting* person kills *Vipers*, and he laughs at many other particulars, that have been delivered concerning the *Antipathy* of *Vipers* unto certain things; and their manner of *Conception* and *Generation*, and several other properties, commonly ascribed to them; which the alledged *French* Author affirms to be refuted by so many experiments made by this *Italian* Philosopher, that it seems to him, there is no place left for doubting, after so authentick a testimony.

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THe Reader of these *Transactions* is desired to correct these *Errata* in *Number 8. viz.* page. 132. line. penult. read *Wine* for *Lime*; and page 133. line 10. read *Thresher* for *Tresher*, as some *Copies* have it; and page 136. line ult. read *purifie* for *putrifie*.

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