

1697. to Dr. Martin Lister, Fellow of the Colledge of Physicians and Royal Society; concerning Two Roman Altars lately found in the North of England: With Notes on the same by Tho. Gale, D. D. and F. R. S. VII. Of the Generation of Eels. By Mr. Benjamin Allen. VIII. Account of a Book, *Philippi Cluverii, Introductio in Universam Geographiam, tam Veterem quam Novam Tabulis Geographicis XLVI. ac Notis olim Ornata a Joanne Burone; jam vero Locupletata Additamentis & Annotationibus Joh. Frid. Hekelii & Joh. Reiskii in Quarto.* Amst. Typis Joannis Wolters. Londini Prostant apud Sam. Sam. Smith & Benj. Walfora in Cœmeterio D. Pauli. 1697. IX. An Account of Books lately Printed, or now Printing at the Theater in Oxford.

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- I. Part of a Letter from Mr. John Ray, F.R.S. to Dr. Sloane, dated June 30 1697. communicating Two Observations, the one concerning the Effects of a poysonous Root, the other concerning the Vertues of the Leaves of Hemlock.

Since I understand you are concerned in the Philosophical Transactions, I shall send you an Observation or Two I lately received from Dr. Nathaniel Wood, a Physician in *Kilkenny* in *Ireland*; which, if you think fit, may be thereinto inserted. The First is this, A certain Woman eating by mistake some Roots (as he supposes) of common Hemlock among Parsnips, was immediately seized with Raving and Madnes, talk'd obscenely,

obscenely, and could not forbear Dancing, on which exercise she was so intent, that she would willingly have given her Cow for a Bagpipe. Thus she continued for some time, till at length she was taken with Epileptick Fits, of which Distemper, being committed to my Charge, she was soon cured by the common Method, and has now for several Years lived in perfect Health. What Quantity she eat is not known but on her growing Mad, some such thing was suspected, and on search, a piece of Hemlock Root was found on her Trencher. So far the Doctor. Howbeit, I am in some doubt, whether it was really the Root of Hemlock which this Woman did eat, and which had this Effect upon her, and not some other, because 1. *Jo. Bauhine Hist. Plant. Tom. 3. Part 2. Pag. 181.* relating Two parallel Stories of Two several Families in *Montbelgard*, during his abode there, which were in like manner intoxicated by eating of Roots, which they took to be Parsneps, and which he himself cured; is of Opinion that they were the Roots of *Wild Cicely*, commonly called by the Vulgar hereabout *Cow weed*, because Kine in the Spring time willingly eat it, by Herbalists in Latine, *Cicutaria Vulgaris*, or *Myrrhis Sylvestris*; because (saith he) the Roots of it are more like to Parsneps, than those of *Cicuta* or Hemlock, and because this Plant was abundantly more frequent in the Gardens thereabout then Hemlock. 2. That skillful Herbalist, my much esteemed Friend Mr. *James Petiver* assured me, That being in Company with one Mr. *Henley*, an ingenious Friend and Neighbour of his, he saw him eat Three or Four Ounces of Hemlock-Root without the least Harm, whereupon he himself was encouraged to do the like, eating about half an Ounce. They tasted somewhat like the Root of *Seleri*, or Sweet Smalage, and he perceived no ill Effect or Inconvenience from
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the eating of them. 3. The common People generally believe that the Roots which cause these Symptoms, are no other than old *Parfneps*, which have continued some Years in the Ground, and therefore call them *Madneps*. For my Part, I am not yet satisfied what Roots they are, and should be glad to receive Satisfaction from others.

The other Observation I shall give you in his own Words, without making any Reflections upon it. A Gentleman of my Acquaintance, having a Horse which he highly valued, troubled with that stubborn Disease they call the *Farcy*, employed several usually efficacious Medicines, unsuccessfully. At length, one Day riding abroad on this Horse to take the Air, and being in Discourse with a Gentleman he met in a Place where grew a great quantity of Hemlock, he observed that the Horse began to feed thereon, but checked him at present, and was returning home; when calling to mind, that some Animals are sometimes directed by what they call Instinct to proper Remedies, he rode back to the same Place, where the Horse again refused the Grass, and fell aboard the Hemlock, greedily eating it up. On which within Three or Four Days his Sores dried up and he recovered very fast. From whence it appears that the Leaves at least of Hemlock are not noxious to some Animals, but rather salutary. The Seeds also some Birds, as in our Observations Bustards, will greedily eat.

Tours, &c.