

*An Account of some Books.*

I. Of the USEFULNESS of EXPERIMENTAL NATURAL PHILOSOPHY, the Second Tome; by the Honourable Robert Boyle Esq; Fellow of the R. Society. Oxford 1671. in 4°.

**T**HIS Illustrious Author, in pursuance of his design, begun in the *First Tome* of this Work (published many years since) which is to manifest, that Experimental Philosophy is conducive to improve the Understanding and to increase the Power of Man, proceeds in this *Second Tome* to deliver Six very Instructive and Useful *Essays*.

The *First* of which contains some General Considerations about the Means, whereby Experimental Philosophy may become Advantagious to *Human Life*; not only by bringing improvements both to the *Trades* that minister to the Necessities of Mankind, and to those that serve for Mans Accommodation and Delight; but also by introducing *New* ones, partly such as are altogether *newly invented*, and partly such as are *unknown* in the place, where the Naturalist brings them in request. And not only so, but it shews further, that there is not any one Profession or Condition of Men, (perhaps not any single person of Mankind) that may not be some way or other advantaged or accommodated, if all the Truths discoverable by Natural Philosophy, and the Applications that might be made of them, were known to the Persons concerned in them: Intimating withall the Causes of Barrenness, that have hitherto kept Physicks from being considerably Useful; such as are, *Many* false and fruitless Doctrines of the Schools; *the* Prejudices, by which men have been hitherto impos'd on about Substantial Forms, and the Essential difference betwixt Natural and Artificial things, &c; a too plausible despondency; a want of belief that Physicks much concern'd Mens Interests; *want* of encouragement, of Curiosity, of a Method of enquiring and Experimenting; of Mathematicks and Mechanicks; of associated endeavours, and the like.

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The *Second* Essay treats of the Usefulness of *Mathematicks* to Natural Philosophy; shewing, that the Empire of Man may be considerably promoted by the *Naturalists* skill in *those* Sciences, as well Pure as Mixt.

The *Third* proveth the Usefulness of *Mechanical* Disciplines to Natural Philosophy, shewing, that the Power of man may be much increased by the *Naturalists* skill in *Mechanicks*; forasmuch as Nature does play the Mechanitian, not only in Plants and Animals and their parts, but in many other curiously contrived Bodies.

The *Fourth* manifests, That the *Good* of Mankind may be much increased by the *Naturalists* Insight into *Trades*: for the making out of which, the Author endeavors to shew two things; the *one*, that an Insight into *Trades* may improve the *Naturalists* knowledge; the *other*, that the *Natural* Philosopher, as well by the skill thus obtained, as by the other parts of his knowledge, may be enabled to improve *Trades*; and this *partly* by increasing the number of *Trades* and adding *New* ones; *partly*, by uniting the *Observations* and *Practises* of differing *Trades* into one Body of *Collecti- ons*; *partly*, by suggesting improvements in some kind or other of the particular *Trades*. And here we cannot but observe, that our Noble Author taketh particular care in the *Preamble* to this Book, very fully to answer the objection, clamorously pressed by some, as if *Tradesmen* were injured by discovering those things, which are called the *Mysteries* of their *Arts*.

The *Fifth* maketh it out, That that may be done by *Physi- cal* knowledge, what is wont to require *Manual* skill, or, that the knowledge of peculiar *Qualities*, or *Uses* of *Physical* things, may enable a man to perform those things *Physical- ly*, that seem to require *Tools* and *Dexterity* of *Hand*, proper to *Artificers*.

The *Sixth* and last represents Mens great *Ignorance* of the *Uses* of *Natural* things; or, that there is scarce any one thing in *Nature*, whereof the *Uses* to humane *Life* are yet throughly understood; which is done, *both* to rouze up  
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the Curiosity of Men by shewing how much it hath been defective, and to encourage it also, by shewing how much of Nature there remains yet undiscover'd, to recompense as well as to exercise our Industry.

From the whole, the Attentive Reader will, besides the advantages that are *common* to it with the formerly published *Tom*e, easily gather these *peculiar* uses: *First*, that it may afford many Materials for the History of Nature; which that it might the more plentifully do, the Author hath purposely on several occasions added a greater number of *Instances*, than were absolutely necessary for the making out of what he intended to declare or prove. *Secondly*, it may afford some Instructions, Advices and Intimations to promote the Practical or Operative part of Natural Philosophy in divers particulars, wherein Men have been either not able, or not solicitous to assist the Curious. *Thirdly*, it may enable Gentlemen and Schollars to converse with Tradesmen, and benefit themselves (and perhaps the Tradesmen too) by that Conversation; or at least, it will qualify them to ask questions of Men that converse with things; and sometimes to exchange Experiments with them. *Fourthly*, it may serve to beget a confederacy and an Union between parts of Learning, whose Possessors have hitherto kept their respective skills strangers to one another; and by that means bring great Variety of Observations and Experiments of differing kinds into the Notice of one man, or of the same persons; a thing that may prove very advantageous towards the increase of knowledge. *Fifthly*, it may contribute to the rescuing of Natural Philosophy from that unhappy Impuration of Barrenness, which it hath so long lain under, and which hath been, and still is, so prejudicial to it. And *Lastly* and principally, it may serve by Positive Considerations and Directions, to awaken the Generality of those that are any thing inquisitive, and both loudly excite and somewhat assist the Curiosity of Mankind; from which alone may be expected a greater progress in Useful Learning, and consequently greater advantages to men, than in the present State of Humane affairs will be easily imagined.

II. *Enchiridion METAPHYSICUM, sive de REBUS INCORPOREIS* Dissertatio, per H. M. Cantabrigiensem. Londini 1671. in 4<sup>o</sup>.

**T**Hough this Treatise at the first aspect may seem not to be suitable to make an Ingredient of these *Treats*, whose design and business it is to give an account of what is transacting among Learned and Ingenious Men in *Physical*, *Mathematical* and *Mechanical* matters; yet, after it shall have been made to appear, how great a number of *Corporeal* Phænomena of the world and how many *Physical* Experiments are made use of and examined in this Book, in order to the attainment of the End proposed by the Author, it will then, 'tis presumed, be thought proper enough to be taken notice of in these Papers; it being so complicate with what Philosophers look upon as the very Principles of the Effects of Nature, *Matter* and *Motion*.

The Learned Author then, worthily designing in this *First part* to evince the *Existence* of *Incorporeal* Beings, and to explain the *Nature* of them, thinks fit, for the compassing of that design, to consider and examine divers of the chief *Phænomena* of the World, which have been by *Des-Cartes* and other noted Philosophers refer'd to meer *Mechanical* Causes; and upon examination to represent, that they are in vain and falsely adscribed to such Principles, and that consequently *Immaterial* Beings must needs be acknowledged to be the Causes of them. Which how successfully it is by him perform'd, we must leave to Perspicacious and Candid Readers to Judge: Our part only being to deliver here some of the principal Heads of this Treatise, and thereby to invite Judicious men to weigh the whole matter.

Passing by therefore that part of this Dissertation, which is meerly *Metaphysical*, we shall observe, *First*, that our Author chargeth the famous *Des-Cartes* to have deliver'd a precarious and a very unphilosophical definition of *Motion*,  
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such an one as is repugnant to Sense and all the Rational faculties, and to have introduced such Principles, whereby he might assert a *Necessity* of Existence in Matter.

*Next* he maketh it his business to demonstrate, that there is some Extended immoveable, not imaginary, but real, Being, distinct from moveable Matter; which thing he maketh Spiritual and Immaterial, pervading the whole Universe and penetrating all Matter, and that which hath ever been and will be for ever (independently from our cogitation) and is something Divine. Where it may be observed, that, whereas *Des-Cartes* will have that Space, which is called *Vacuum*, to be that Corporeal substance, called *Matter*, he (our Author) labours to shew, that that Space or Internal Place is really distinct from Matter, and an Incorporeal Spirit; affirming thereupon, that by the same door, by which the *Cartesian* Philosophy seems to have endeavour'd to exclude God out of the World, he hath again introduced him, and attributing the same Titles to this Internal Place, that are ascribed to God, and making the Existence of this Space as eternal and necessary, as that of a Deity. See p. 63. 64. 66. 69. 71. 72!

From this Extended Immoveable Substance he deduceth, that all Spirit, contradiſtinct to Matter, is extended or hath an Amplitude, yet not Physically, though mentally, divisible into parts; and would have us consider this immense and immaterial space and substance as some Representation of the Divine Essence, yet with a precision from the Life and Operations of the same.

Then proceeding to the *First Matter*, as tis in it self, he defineth it to be an Homogeneous Congeries of Physical Monads or minute particles, that are not any more divisible, and that are impenetrable, and incapable to cohere and move of themselves, though capable to be united and mov'd; whence he esteems, that the Existence of an Incorporeal substance can be sufficiently demonstrated, forasmuch as those minute particles cannot coalesce nor move of themselves.

Another argument to demonstrate the Existence of Incorporeal Beings; he deduceth from the Successive Duration of the World. And then passeth on to prove the same (which doubtless the Reader will be surpris'd at) from divers *Phenomena* of Nature; by him conceived not explicable by meer *Mechanical* causes; as from those of Gravity; from some Experiments performed in the *Machina Boyleana*, as that of the Suckers ascent with a great weight hung to it, and that of the firm Cohæzion of the two Marbles; as also from those *Hydrostatical* Experiments, concerning the Gravitation of water upon water; and concerning ponderous Bodies not sinking at a competent depth, and the Body of a *Diver* not sensible of pain: To which he adds those proofs, which he thinks may be taken, for the same purpose, from the Flux and Reflux of the Sea; from Magnetism; from the Bigness and Figure of the Sun and Stars; from the immense Celerity of the Globuls in the upper part of the Vortex, and the Motion of Comets; from the nature of Light and Colours; from the generation of the Clouds and the roundness of Rain-drops, and the Rain-bow; from the Winds, Thunder and Lightning; from the Structure of Plants and Animals; from the Operations of the Soul; and from all those *Phenomena* that are above and besides Nature. After all which he giveth us his Definition of a *Spirit* in general, together with its Explication; where he undertaketh both to make it out, Why an extended *Spirit* is more capable of Perception, than extended *Matter*? And, to shew, How a Spirit, so subtle and penetrative, that it seems not capable of adhering to *Matter*, may yet be conceived able to move and impell *Matter*? And that the cohæzion of a Spirit with *Matter* is as intelligible, as the Union of one part of *Matter* with another.

III. *DIOPHANT' Alexandrini ARITHMETICORUM Libri sex, & de NUMERIS MULTANGELIS Liber unus; cum Commentariis C. G. Bacheti, & Observationibus D. P. de Fermat Senatoris Tholosani: Cui accessit Doctrinæ Analyticæ Inventum Novum: Tolosæ, 1670. in Folio.*

**B**Eing inform'd, that there is an Able Mathematician here, that intends to publish in due time his considerations touching what is said to be New in this Edition, we shall here only intimate, That in this Book, the Works of *Diophantus Alexandrinus* (concerning Numeral Algebra or Analyticks, and Figurate Numbers) as they were formerly published in *Greek* and *Latin* by *Gasper Bachet*, with his Commentaries thereon, and some Treatises of his own, prefixed and subjoynd thereto; are now printed anew with the Annotations of that Excellent Senator of the Parliament of *Tholouze*, *Monsieur Fermat*; together with some New Inventions of His in Numeral Algebra, and the Solution of divers Numeral Problems, omitted by others: Collected out of his private Letters by *R. P. Jacobus de Billy S. I.* All published by *Monsieur Fermat*, P. Fil.

IV. *ROSETUM GEOMETRICUM, cum Censura brevi Doctrinæ Wallisianæ de Motu, Auth. Thomæ Hobbes Mallesburiensi. Londini apud Guil. Crook, ad sign. Draconis viridis without Temple-bar. 1671. in 4<sup>o</sup>.*

**T**He Author of this Tract tells his Algebrist Reader in his *Preface* to him, that he will end the Controversie he hath with him (if he pleaseth) in this manner. *First* he would have him inquire, Whether a *series* of equal quantities, or of such as encrease in a certain ration, as duplicat, or triplicat, &c. be a *finis* or *infinit* quantity. If he finds it to be *Infinit*; he would then have him inquire, Whether that can have any proportion to a *Finis* quantity. Thirdly, he would have him inquire, Whether a *Line* or any other *Magnitude* be not divisible *in infinitum*; or, whether there can be a quantity infinitely small? If he finds, that all quan-

city is ever divisible, and that a *series* of equal quantities, or of such as do increase equally, or in a *duplicat* or *triplicat* ration, is an *Infinite* quantity, and holds no proportion to a *Finite*; and that there is no quantity infinitely small; then he would have him grant, that the Doctrine of Dr. Wallis in his *Arithmetica Infinitorum*, and in his Book of *Motion* lately publish'd, is vain and false as founded on them; but if other wise, he will yield the victory.

The Book it self treateth first of 21 *Propositions*, said by the Author to have been attempted hitherto in vain: adding a Censure concerning Dr. Wallis's two first parts Of *Motion* and *Mechanicks*, which hath some strictures accusing those Treatises of Obscurity and vitious Definitions; which how justly 'tis done, I leave to the Readers Judgment, or to the Answer that may be expected from the Person concerned.

V. *The Prodromus of a Dissertation concerning a SOLID CONTAINED IN A SOLID*, by Nicolaus Steno. *English't out of Latin.* London 1671. by Moses Pitt in Little Britain, in 8°.

THE Author of this Curious and Learned *Prodromus* apprehending, that he might be diverted for a great while from finishing his intended main Dissertation touching the *Frame* and *Changes* of the *Earth*, and the *Manner* of the *Productions* made therein; thought fit to deliver in this Tract both a Scheme and a Breviate of the same; forasmuch as he doth not only delineate the Method, he hath therein observed, but also sums up the most considerable particulars of his whole Design.

He saith then, that he hath divided that Dissertation of his into *Four* parts. The *First*, by way of Introduction, is to shew, that the Question about *Marine substances*, found at a great distance from the Sea, is ancient, pleasant and useful, and that, though the Solution thereof have been hitherto very uncertain, yet he hopeth he shall be able to bring it to a certainty. The *Second*, resolveth this General Problem (whence he conceiveth that the Explication



of all the difficulties about this Subject depends,) viz. *A Natural Body of a certain Figure being given, to find arguments and marks in the Body itself, whereby to detect the Place and Manner of its Production*: Which Problem he affirms to have so resolved, that no Set of Philosophers shall find just cause to except against the Principles and Notions by him supposed for its Explication. The *Third* is design'd to examine the Particular Solids included in a Solid, according to the Laws discover'd in the Resolution of the General Problem. The *Fourth* is to represent, the different States or Constitutions of *Toscany* (for Instance) and propoundeth a way of Explicating the *Phænomena* of the *General Deluge*, not contradicting the Laws of Natural Motions:

And so much for his designed *Method*. As to the *Summ* of the most remarkable particulars of the whole work, it may be reduced to this.

*First*, he comprehends, what he hath to offer about his above-mentioned General Problem, in *three* Propositions: *One* is, that if a Solid Body be every way encompass'd with another Solid Body, that of the two was first hardned; which by the mutual contact expresseth on its surface the proprieties of the surface of the other. The *Second* is, that if a Solid Body be every way like another Solid Body; not only as to the condition of its surface, but also as to the inward frame and texture of its parts, it is also like to it as to the Manner and Place of its production; excepting only those qualities of Place, which are often found in it, and are not any advantage or disadvantage to the production of the Body there lodged. The *Third* is, that a Body produced according to the Laws of Nature, is produced out of a *Fluid*. Where yet he waveth the first Delineations in the production of Solid Bodys, but delivers several positions about their Increase.

Having thus generally consider'd a *Solid contain'd within a Solid*; he proceeds to a Particular examination of those various Solids, that are digg'd out of several parts of the Earth, as *Incrustations*, *Sediments*, or *Beds*, *Angular Bodies*,

*shels of Sea-fishes, the shapes of Cockles and Plants, &c.*

From the *Change* of the *scite* of *Beds* he giveth an Account; 1. Of the Principal Origin of *Mountains, Hillocks and Valleys*, and their various Constitution, Matter, Shape, &c. 2. Of the Passages for *Springs* and *Winds* rushing out of *Mountains*, foetid Exhalations, hot Ebullitions; as also of the Changes of *Hot Springs* into *Cold*, and the Turning of the Course of *Rivers* another way; of *Rivers*, running in one place under ground, and rising again in another; of whole Countries being swallow'd up with their Houses and Trees; of great *Lakes* now appearing where *Towns* stood formerly, &c. 3. Of the many kinds of *variegated Stones*, as also of the Receptacles of *Minerals*; where do occur very good Observations.

In his discourse about *Angular Bodies*, he delivers many considerable things about the Production of *Chrystals* in the Cavities of *Stones*, about their first Concretion between two Fluids, or between a Fluid and a Solid, or *in* a Fluid; as also about the *Motion* of the *Chrystal* in matter, whereby it is determin'd to the Planes of the all-ready form'd *Chrystal*: Concluding from his Observations, that extrem Cold is not the Efficient cause of *Chrystals*; nor that 'tis the Ashes alone burnt by fire that turn into *Glass*; nor the force of the Fire alone that produceth *Glass*; and that 'tis not beyond the power of Man, to discover a production of *Glass* without the violence of Fire: Where, by the by, he intimates what it is, whence depends the main cause of the difference of *Chrystal* from *Glass*, both as to *Refraction* and other Operations.

From *Chrystals* he passeth on to consider the *Angular Bodies* of *Iron* and *Copper*; and sheweth, how the production of them agreeth in some things with that of *Chrystals*, and how it differs from them.

Thence he goes on to *Diamonds*, and observeth, how they also are produced in a Fluid inclosed in the Cavities of *Stones*, together with the variety of their Figure. Next, he discourseth of *Marcasites*, and delivers also several Observations

servations about the *Selenites*, and of *Talc*, and affirms in particular, that the Solid body of *Talc* may be *dissolv'd* into a Fluid, as being *coagulated* from a Fluid, though that dissolution cannot at all be perform'd by Fire, forasmuch as that part of it, which is able to dissolve it, flies away by the torture of the Fire.

After this he proceeds to *Shells*, both taken out of the Sea, and found in Mountains; shewing, of what and how they are produced, and whence proceeds the variety of colours seen in them; and explaining particularly, how *Pearls* are produced, as well those, that being fastn'd to the Shells are not so very round, as those which by reason of the obstruction of the pores in the Animals surface acquire a round figure within the pores themselves: where occur many (in my opinion) very curious and uncommon Observations of the Coats of Pearls and the Shells of Pearl-bearing Fishes, and their difference; as also of the cause of the different Colours in Pearls; making it manifest, that though globuls made up of various coats may be contriv'd by Art, in imitation of Nature; yet to dispose their tunicles out of a series of threds by an apposition of one to another, whence depends the native splendor of Pearls, will be very hard to effect.

Next, he giveth an account of *Shells lying under-ground*, affirming, that they were once the parts of Animals living in Water, and proving it by the sole inspection and consideration of those Shells themselves. Which done, he maketh out the particular *Phænomena* of divers of them found in *Toscany*. And what he hath said of Shells, he affirms also of other parts of Animals, and of the Animals themselves buried in the Earth, such as are the Teeth of Sea dogs, the Back-bones of Fishes, various sorts of whole Fishes, Skuls, Horns, Teeth, Shanks and other Bones of Terrestrial Animals; where he informs us particularly, what to judge not only of the great number of Teeth brought away every year from *Malta*; but also of the huge Thigh-bones, Skuls, Teeth, and other Bones digg'd out of the Earth.

Which

Which done, he labours to evince by a notable Instance, that the production of many Shells found in these times is to be refer'd to the times coincident with the General Deluge. And what he hath prov'd of Animals and their parts, he extends to *Vegetables* found under ground; shewing withal, what may be conceived of the *Figures* of Plants appearing on Stones.

He concludeth this *Prodromus* with a remarkable Information, shewing, How we may from the present Face of the Earth, by an attentive view, discover the former state of it. Which he endeavours to make out by an Example taken from *Toscany*; in the present Face of which he conceiveth, that the obvious Inequalities proclaim to an heedful Observer manifest arguments and signs of Six different Changes happen'd therein; the face of it having been, by his Observations, twice fluid, twice plane and dry, and twice uneven; which as he attempts to demonstrate by an Induction of many places in *Toscany* view'd by himself, so he confirms it of the Whole Earth by the Descriptions of various parts of the World made by several Authors; obviating the chief difficulties, that may occur about each Face and particular Constitution of the Earth.

*An Advertisement.*

It is supposed, the Ingenious Reader will not be displeas'd to be inform'd, That *Vitruvius* is done into *English*; Containing the whole Body of *Architecture*, under which are comprehended the Elements of *Musick*, *Picture in Fresco*, *Water-levelling* or *Hydrostatics*; *Water-Organs* or *Hydraulics*; *Astronomy* and *Dialing*; *Mechanical Powers* and *Engins*. To which are to be added Illustrations by proper Cuts and Diagrams; with some Comparison of Antient and Modern Architecture; and with cert. in other necessary Notes, compiled partly from the extant Comments, and partly by the help of other Able persons.

The Cuts and Diagrams will be many and costly; so that the Learn'd Interpreter, *Mr. Christoph. Wasse*, will have need of the aid of such as are freely dispos'd to encourage the Work, that the Book may come forth with the more exquisite Ornaments within a Twelve-month. Of this design a fuller account may be had from *Mr. Benj. Toob* Stationer, at the *Ship* in *Pauls Churchyard*.

E R R A T A.

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L O N D O N,

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