

ON THE

## A T R A B I L I S.

THE ancients, as appears from Galen, supposed the *atrabilis* to be derived either from the dregs of the blood, or from yellow bile torrefied and highly concocted. A celebrated modern anatomist is of opinion that it is blood, which having lodged some time in the intestinal canal, has acquired a blackness and putridity. But is it not more probable that in general it is no other than gall, become acrid by stagnation in the *vesica fellea*, and rendered viscid by the absorption of its fluid parts? When discharged into the *duodenum* in this state, it occasions universal disturb-

disturbance and disorder, till evacuated either by vomiting or purging. I have lately had under my care a young gentleman, labouring under a *marasmus*, produced by excessive intemperance. During the course of his disorder, which at last proved fatal, he several times voided both by stool and vomiting, a considerable quantity of black, tenacious, and most offensive bile. The symptoms preceding the discharge, and which ceased soon afterwards, were a quick pulse, head-ach, delirium, hiccup, intense thirst, inward heat, and an uncommon foetor in his breath. A lady aged thirty, unhappily addicted to habits which have a peculiarly pernicious effect upon the liver, after a constipation of the belly during six days, was seized with a violent and incessant vomiting of black and viscid bile. The *infusum sence limoniatum*, warmed with the tincture of Columbo soon checked her reachings, and operating by stool prevented the return of her vomiting. The matter

ter discharged in both these cases bore not the least resemblance to grumous blood. I have several times observed the febrile symptoms in children, which are ascribed to dentition, relieved by these pitchy stools. And I recollect three cases of the *acute asthma*, as Dr. Millar terms it, the paroxysms of which seemed to be critically terminated by a similar evacuation. Whether in these instances the black bile was the cause or the effect of the disease, cannot with certainty be determined; but the former appears to be the more probable opinion.

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SEPTIC QUALITY

OF

S E A S A L T,

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SIR JOHN PRINGLE observes that one drachm of sea salt preserves two drachms of fresh beef, in two ounces of water, above thirty hours uncorrupted, in a heat equal to that of the human body, that is twenty hours longer than water alone; but that half a drachm of salt does not preserve it above two hours longer than pure water; that twenty-five grains have little or no antiseptic virtue; and that ten

I grains