

VI. *A Narration of the Experiments made June 1, 1734. before several Members of the Royal Society, and others, on a Man, who suffer'd himself to be bit by a Viper, or common Adder; and on other Animals likewise bitten by the same, and other Vipers. Drawn up by Cromwell Mortimer, M. D. Secr. R. S. With some Remarks on the Cure of the Bite of a Mad Dog.*

**W**illiam Oliver and his Wife, from *Bath*, who follow the Business of catching and selling *Vipers*, offered themselves to be bit by any *Viper* that should be procured, trusting to the Virtue of a Remedy they had lighted on by chance in trying Variety of Things, when the Woman was once accidentally bitten, and the usual known Medicines, even the *Oil of Vipers*, had no Effect in asswaging her Pains, especially of her Breast of the same Side as the Hand in which she had received the Wound. This Remedy, which is only common OIL of OLIVES, and, from its Use with *Sallad*, is vulgarly known by the Name of *Sallad-Oil*, recommends itself not only for its Efficacy, but likewise on account of its being readily to be come at, when Accidents happen, there being no Town, or even Gentleman's House in the Country, where *Sallad-Oil* is not at hand; whereas the *Oil of Vipers* is never to be had, but at *Apothecaries*,

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*caries*, and not one in an Hundred of them keep it by them.

On the first of *June* 1734, in the Presence of a great Number of Persons, the said *William Oliver* was bit by an old black *Viper*, or *Adder*, brought by one of the Company, upon the Wrist and Joint of the Thumb of the Right Hand, so that Drops of Blood came out of the Wounds. He said that he immediately felt a violent Pain and shooting from the Wounds, both to the Top of his Thumb and up his Arm, even before the *Viper* was loosen'd from his Hand; soon after he felt a Pain, resembling that of burning, trickle up his Arm; in a few Minutes his Eyes began to look red and fiery, and to water much: In less than half an Hour, he perceived the Venom seize his Heart, with a pricking Pain, which was attended with Faintness and Shortness of Breath, whereupon he fell into violent cold Sweats: In a few Minutes after this, his Belly began to swell, with great Gripings, and Pains in his Back, which were attended with violent Vomitings and Purgings. He told me, that, during the Violence of these Symptoms, his Sight was gone twice for several Minutes at a Time, but that he could hear all the while. He said, that in his former Experiments he had never deferr'd making use of his Remedy longer than when he perceived the Effects of the Venom reaching his Heart; but this Time, being willing to satisfy the Company thoroughly, and trusting to the speedy Effects of the *Oil*, which had never failed him, when used in Time, he forbore to apply any thing, till he found himself exceeding ill, and quite giddy.

About an Hour and Quarter after the first of his being bit, a Chafing-dish of glowing Charcoal was brought in, and his Arm, the Cloaths being stript off of it, was held over it as near, as he could bear it, while his Wife rubb'd in with her Hand the *Sallad-Oil*, (which I had procured and kept myself in my Pocket, lest they should privately add any Thing to it; I bought it by the Name of *Lucca-Oil*) turning his Arm continually round, as if she would have roasted it over the Coals: He said that the Pain soon abated, but the Swelling did not diminish much; most violent Vomitings and Purgings soon ensued, and his Pulse became so low, and so often interrupted, that it was thought proper by the Physicians present, to give him the following Cordial Draughts, at about a quarter of an Hour's Distance between each.

1. ℞. *Aq. Lact. Pæon. comp. aa.* ℥iij. *Sp. Lavendula* ℥i. *m. pro duobus Haustibus.*
2. ℞. *Confect. Raleigh.* ℥ss. *Aq. Theriacal.* ℥iss. *Sp. C. C. g<sup>ss</sup>. x. m. f. Haustus.*
3. ℞. *Confect. Raleigh. Theriac. Andromach. aa.* ℥ss. *Sal. C. C. gr. v. Aq. Theriacal.* ℥ij. *pro duobus Haustibus.*

He said he was not sensible of any great Relief from these Cordials; but that a Glass or two of *Olive-Oil* drank down, seemed to give him some Ease.

Continuing in this dangerous Condition, he was put to Bed as soon, as one could be got ready for him, where his Arm was again bathed with his Remedy over a Pan of Charcoal set by the Bed-side: But continuing to complain much of his Back and Belly, I

advised his Wife to rub them likewise with *Sallad-Oil*, heated in a Ladle over the Charcoal; which she did accordingly: whereupon he declared he found immediate Ease, as tho' by some Charm; and he had not above two or three Reachings to vomit and Stools afterwards, but made Water plentifully, which was not discolour'd: Then he soon fell into a sound Sleep, only was often interrupted by Persons coming to see and inquire after him, till near Twelve o'Clock, from which Time he slept continually to Five or Six next Morning, when he awaked, and found himself very well: But in the Afternoon, on drinking some Rum and strong Beer, so as to be almost fuddled, the Swelling returned, with much Pain, and cold Sweats; which abated soon, on bathing the Arm as before, and wrapping it up in brown Paper soaked with *Oil*.

Two *Pidgeons* were bit by the same *Viper* immediately after the Man: They soon sicken'd, and seem'd giddy. Nothing being applied, the one died in about an Hour's Time, the other half an Hour after. The Flesh of both was turn'd quite black, as if mortified; the Blood was coagulated, and looked black.

On the 3<sup>d</sup> of *June*, the Man's Arm remain'd swelled, looked red, marbled with Spots of Yellow, but felt soft; and he had the perfect Use of it, and even of his Fingers, no Pain or Stiffness being left. He then caused a small *Spaniel Dog* to be bit on the Nose by a fresh *Viper*: Some *Oil* was immediately applied hot, and rubbed well in, till all the Hair of his Nose was thoroughly wet: The *Dog* did not seem very uneasy; his Nose only swelled a little; he eat soon after; his Nose was bathed once more that Evening; he was found very well next Morning; but his Nose

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was bathed again, to make sure of his Cure : He remain'd perfectly well without any Symptoms ensuing, and was alive and well a Year after. Another *Pidgeon* was likewise bit under the Wing at the same Time as the *Dog*, but by a fresh *Viper* ; the *Oil* was immediately applied hot, and rubbed well in, and the Feathers of the Wing were thoroughly wetted with it. This Bird did not seem at all disordered with the Venom, but eat soon after, and was found well the next Morning, without any remarkable Inflammation or Swelling about the Part. The hot *Oil* was rubbed in again for two or three Days, twice a Day, and the Bird continued well, so that the *Viper-catchers* carried it with them out of Town in Triumph, having never before experienced the Efficacy of their Remedy on so small an Animal ; which, as it receives the same Quantity of Venom by a Bite as a larger one doth, is more liable to die under it ; and they kept it alive above three Months, when they killed it and eat it. They said that they had experienced their Remedy to take Effect on *Cows*, *Horses*, and *Dogs*, ten Hours after being bit ; but that for themselves, who are frequently bit in the Fields, as they catch the *Vipers*, they always carry a Vial of *Sallad-Oil* along with them, that, as soon as they perceive themselves wounded, they without any Loss of Time bathe the Part with it ; and if it be the Heel, they wet the Stocking thoroughly with it ; if the Finger, which happens ofteneft, they pour some of it into that Finger of their Glove, which they immediately put on again, and thus never feel any farther Inconvenience from the Accident, not even so much as from the Sting of a common *Bee*. Perhaps it may  
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be found of Use for the Bite of *Rattle-Snakes*, and other venomous Animals; especially if we consider, that in the Fields a Man seldom or never receives more than one Bite at a Time, which doth not infect him with so much Venom, as was instilled into the Man's Blood, when in these voluntary Experiments he suffer'd himself to be bitten twice together; and had likewise been bitten three times but about a Week or ten Days before; some Remains of which Venom, it is highly reasonable to imagine, might still infect his Blood at the Time he repeated the Experiments, so as to make a fresh Quantity of the Venom operate with greater Violence upon his Body, than if he had been quite a fresh Man, never infected with the like Poison before, or at least at so great an Interval of Time, that his Blood might have been intirely free from all Remains of such an acrid Infection. From these Experiments is it not reasonable to imagine, that the *Oil* by itself may be as efficacious against the Sting of a *Scorpion*, as if *Scorpions* were infused in it?

I should not have forborn so long imparting the Knowledge of so useful a Remedy to the Publick, had not the poor People injoined every one present at the Experiments not to divulge, what their Remedy was, till they should give me Leave to make it publick in these Papers, which they have now done. The Reason of their keeping it a Secret, was the Hopes of obtaining an handsome Reward from generous and charitable People; but now having lost all Prospect of any considerable Recompense, they were unwilling that the Means of immediate Relief to those, who should have the Misfortune of  
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being bit by an *Adder*, should any longer be withheld from them ; and they are desirous, that this their REMEDY against the BITE of the VIPER may be as publickly known as the famous DAMPIER'S POWDER against the BITE of a MAD DOG, first published by Sir *Hans Sloane*, Bart. when *Secr. R. S.* in Numb. 237. of these *Transactions*, Anno 1698. \* which afterwards, when he was President of the Royal College of Physicians *London*, by his Proposal, was introduced into the *London Pharmacopœia*, under the Name of *Pulvis Antilyssus*, Anno 1720. The Composition of which is, *Ash-colour'd Grouna Liver-wort* and *black Pepper* : The Manner of giving it, not only to Men, but to Dogs and Cattle, being accurately set down in the above-mentioned Number 237. of these *Transactions*, in a Letter from Mr. *George Dampier*, dated *Exmouth*, Nov. 10, 1697. to his Brother Capt. *William Dampier*, the famous Sailor, I must refer such as have Occasion to give it, to that Paper. Thus I hope, that *certain Cures* are discovered for the only two Sorts of *venomous Bites* of Animals, to which the happy Soil of *Great Britain* exposes its Inhabitants.

I shall only beg Leave to add a Proposal of my own, which I made in my *Thes. Inaugur. de Ingressu Humorum in Corpus Humanum*, *Ludg. Bat.* 1724. That the Use of the hot Bath, for Persons bit

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\* The *Lichen cinereus terrestris* is mentioned as being said to be exceedingly efficacious in curing Dogs bitten by Mad Dogs ; in a Letter of Mr. *Oldenburg's*, *Secr. R. S. Lond.* July 6, 1672. See *Derham's* Collection of *Philosop. Letters* between Mr. *Ray* and his *Correspondents*, p. 110. printed at *London*, 1718. 8vo.

by a *Mad Dog*, or hot Fomentations, might be of greater Service than cold Applications: For a cold Bath shuts the Pores, as a warm one opens them; therefore the Blood being allowed to be greatly inflamed in this Case, and *Dampier's Powder* being a very hot Medicine, it is reasonable to think, that when a Patient takes it, the setting him up to the Chin in hot Water for some Hours, would help the Operation of the *Powders*, by diluting the Blood, and relaxing the Pores.

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VII. *A brief Account by Mr. John Eames, F. R. S. of a Work entitled, The Method of Fluxions and Infinite Series, with its Application to the Geometry of Curve Lines, by the Inventor Sir Isaac Newton, Kt. &c. Translated from the Author's Latin Original not yet made publick. To which is subjoin'd a perpetual Comment upon the whole, &c. by John Colson, M. A. and F. R. S.*

**T**HIS Posthumous Work of our late excellent President, a Translation of which we have now received from the Hand of the learned and ingenious Mr. *Colson*, has been long and impatiently expected by the curious in these Matters; and now it appears, I believe it will fully answer, if not exceed, those Expectations, as well as confirm the Reputation the Author



*Addend. to the Note at p. 319.*

I thought it proper to add the following Passage taken out of the Journal-Book of the *Royal Society*, supposing it to be what Mr. *Oldenburgh* hints at in his Letter.

“ Nov. 16, 1671. [Sir Robert Moray] exhibited a certain Plant, (which was by Mr. *Wray* called *Lichen terrestris cinereus*) said by Sir Robert Moray to be very good to cure *Dogs bitten by mad Dogs*: His Royal Highness having caused it to be given to a whole Kennel of Dogs, bitten by a mad one, which were all cured, except one of them, to whom none of it was given.”

The Specimen was kept in the Repository.

The same Virtue is likewise ascribed to this Plant, in the *Third Part of Morison's Plantar. Histor. Oxon.* published at Oxford Anno 1699. in Folio, p. 632. where the Author, speaking of the *Lichen terrestris cinereus*, *Raii Hist. & Synopf.* says, *Adversus morsum canis rabidi egregium est Medicamentum.*

*Dampier*, and the College of Physicians, in their *Pulv. Antilyssus*, prescribe equal Quantities of the *Lichen* and *Pepper*: But Dr. *Mead*, in a single *Quarto Leaf* published by him Anno 1735. hath alter'd the Proportions of the Composition, prescribing double the Quantity of *Lichen* to that of the *Pepper*. This difference in the Proportions must be left to the Judgment of Practitioners; but upon the Authority of another Minute in the Society's Journal-Books, it may not be improper to make an Addition to the above-mention'd *Dampier's Powder*.

“ March 7, 1671-2. Sir Robert Moray mention'd, that a whole Kennel of Dogs, belonging to his Royal Highness, were bitten by a mad Dog, and had been lately cured by a certain Herb called *Stellaria*, or *Star of the Earth*.”

This Plant is the *Lychnis viscosa, flore muscoso Casp. Baubin.* in English, *Spanish Catch-fly*: See these *Transactions*, N<sup>o</sup> 187. where is a Receipt to cure mad Dogs, &c. wherein this Plant is a principal Ingredient; which Receipt, communicated by Sir Robert Gourdon, was there published by his MAJESTY'S [special] Command, Anno 1687.

Wherefore, suppose the Composition were to be thus:

*Take* Ash-colour'd Ground-Liver-wort, black Pepper, and the Herb Spanish Catch-fly, all finely powder'd, of each two Drachms, for four Doses, to be taken as *Dampier* prescribes in his Letter in these *Transactions*, N<sup>o</sup> 237.

#### ERRATUM.

P. 336. & alibi, for *Ilion*, r. *Ilium*.