



***NICHOLAS  
CULPEPER***

***THE COMPLETE  
HERBAL***

**Nicholas Culpeper**

# **The Complete Herbal**

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# CULPEPER'S ORIGINAL EPISTLE TO THE READER.

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TAKE Notice, That in this Edition I have made very many Additions to every sheet in the book: and, also, that those books of mine that are printed of that Letter the small Bibles are printed with, are very falsely printed: there being twenty or thirty gross mistakes in every sheet, many of them such as are exceedingly dangerous to such as shall venture to use them: And therefore I do warn the Public of them: I can do no more at present; only take notice of these Directions by which you shall be sure to know the *True one* from the *False*.

*The first Direction.*—The true one hath this Title over the head of every Book, THE COMPLETE HERBAL AND ENGLISH PHYSICIAN ENLARGED. The small Counterfeit ones have only this Title, THE ENGLISH PHYSICIAN.

*The second Direction.*—The true one hath these words, GOVERNMENT AND VIRTUES, following the time of the Plants flowering, &c. The counterfeit small ones have these words, VIRTUES AND USE, following the time of the Plants flowering.

*The third Direction.*—The true one is of a larger Letter than the counterfeit ones, which are in *Twelves*, &c., of the Letter small Bibles used to be printed on. I shall now speak something of the book itself.

All other Authors that have written of the nature of Herbs, give not a bit of reason why such an Herb was appropriated to such a part of the body, nor why it cured such a disease. Truly my own body being sickly, brought me easily into a capacity, to know that health was the greatest of all earthly

blessings, and truly he was never sick that doth not believe it. Then I considered that all medicines were compounded of Herbs, Roots, Flowers, Seeds, &c., and this first set me to work in studying the nature of simples, most of which I knew by sight before; and indeed all the Authors I could read gave me but little satisfaction in this particular, or none at all. I cannot build my faith upon Authors' words, nor believe a thing because they say it, and could wish every body were of my mind in this—to labour to be able to give a reason for every thing they say or do. They say Reason makes a man differ from a Beast; if that be true, pray what are they that, instead of reason for their judgment, quote old Authors? Perhaps their authors knew a reason for what they wrote, perhaps they did not; what is that to us? Do we know it? Truly in writing this work first, to satisfy myself, I drew out all the virtues of the vulgar or common Herbs, Plants, and Trees, &c., out of the best or most approved authors I had, or could get; and having done so, I set myself to study the reason of them. I knew well enough the whole world, and every thing in it, was formed of a composition of contrary elements, and in such a harmony as must needs show the wisdom and power of a great God. I knew as well this Creation, though thus composed of contraries, was one united body, and man an epitome of it: I knew those various affections in man, in respect of sickness and health, were caused naturally (though God may have other ends best known to himself) by the various operations of the Microcosm; and I could not be ignorant, that as the cause is, so must the cure be; and therefore he that would know the reason of the operation of the Herbs, must look up as high as the Stars, astrologically. I always found the disease vary according to the various motions of the Stars; and this is enough, one would think, to teach a man by the effect where the cause lies. Then to find out the reason of the operation of Herbs, Plants, &c., by the Stars went I; and herein I could find but few authors, but those as full of

nonsense and contradiction as an egg is full of meat. This not being pleasing, and less profitable to me, I consulted with my two brothers, DR. REASON and DR. EXPERIENCE, and took a voyage to visit my mother NATURE, by whose advice, together with the help of DR. DILIGENCE, I at last obtained my desire; and, being warned by MR. HONESTY, a stranger in our days, to publish it to the world, I have done it.

But you will say, *What need I have written on this Subject, seeing so many famous and learned men have written so much of it in the English Tongue, much more than I have done?*

To this I answer, neither GERRARD nor PARKINSON, or any that ever wrote in the like nature, ever gave one wise reason for what they wrote, and so did nothing else but train up young novices in Physic in the School of tradition, and teach them just as a parrot is taught to speak; an Author says so, therefore it is true; and if all that Authors say be true, why do they contradict one another? But in mine, if you view it with the eye of reason, you shall see a reason for everything that is written, whereby you may find the very ground and foundation of Physic; you may know what you do, and wherefore you do it; and this shall call me Father, it being (that I know of) never done in the world before.

I have now but two things to write, and then I have done.

1. *What the profit and benefit of this Work is.*
2. *Instructions in the use of it.*

1. The profit and benefit arising from it, or that may occur to a wise man from it are many; so many that should I sum up all the particulars, my Epistle would be as big as my Book; I shall quote some few general heads.

First. The admirable Harmony of the Creation is herein seen, in the influence of Stars upon Herbs and the Body of Man, how one part of the Creation is subservient to another, and all for the use of Man, whereby the infinite power and wisdom of God in the creation appear; and if I do not admire at the simplicity of the Ranters, never trust me; who but viewing the Creation can hold such a sottish opinion, as that it was from eternity, when the mysteries of it are so clear to every eye? but that Scripture shall be verified to them, *Rom. i. 20: "The invisible things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."*—And a Poet could teach them a better lesson;

*"Because out of thy thoughts God shall not pass,  
"His image stamped is on every grass."*

This indeed is true, God has stamped his image on every creature, and therefore the abuse of the creature is a great sin; but how much the more do the wisdom and excellency of God appear, if we consider the harmony of the Creation in the virtue and operation of every Herb!

Secondly, Hereby you may know what infinite knowledge *Adam* had in his innocence, that by looking upon a creature, he was able to give it a name according to its nature; and by knowing that, thou mayest know how great thy fall was and be humbled for it even in this respect, because hereby thou art so ignorant.

Thirdly, Here is the right way for thee to begin at the study of Physic, if thou art minded to begin at the right end, for here thou hast the reason of the whole art. I wrote before in certain Astrological Lectures, which I read, and printed, intituled, *Astrological Judgment of Diseases*, what planet caused (as a second cause) every disease, how it might be

found out what planet caused it; here thou hast what planet cures it by *Sympathy* and *Antipathy*; and this brings me to my last promise, *viz.*

## ***Instructions for the right use of the book.***

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And herein let me premise a word or two. The Herbs, Plants, &c. are now in the book appropriated to their proper planets. Therefore,

First, Consider what planet causeth the disease; that thou mayest find it in my aforesaid Judgment of Diseases.

Secondly, Consider what part of the body is afflicted by the disease, and whether it lies in the flesh, or blood, or bones, or ventricles.

Thirdly, Consider by what planet the afflicted part of the body is governed: that my Judgment of Diseases will inform you also.

Fourthly, You may oppose diseases by Herbs of the planet, opposite to the planet that causes them: as diseases of *Jupiter* by herbs of *Mercury*, and the contrary; diseases of the *Luminaries* by the herbs of *Saturn*, and the contrary; diseases of *Mars* by herbs of *Venus*, and the contrary.

Fifthly, There is a way to cure diseases sometimes by *Sympathy*, and so every planet cures his own disease; as the *Sun* and *Moon* by their Herbs cure the Eyes, *Saturn* the Spleen, *Jupiter* the liver, *Mars* the Gall and diseases of choler, and *Venus* diseases in the instruments of Generation.

NICH. CULPEPER.



From my House in Spitalfields,  
next door to the Red Lion,  
*September 5, 1653.*

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# TO HIS DEAREST CONSORT MRS. ALICE CULPEPER.

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MY DEAREST,

THE works that I have published to the world (though envied by some illiterate physicians) have merited such just applause, that thou mayest be confident in proceeding to publish anything I leave thee, especially this master-piece: assuring my friends and countrymen, that they will receive as much benefit by this, as by my *Dispensatory*, and that incomparable piece called, *Semiotica Uranica* enlarged, and *English Physician*.

These are the choicest secrets, which I have had many years locked up in my own breast. I gained them by my constant practice, and by them I maintained a continual reputation in the world, and I doubt not but the world will honour thee for divulging them; and my fame shall continue and increase thereby, though the period of my Life and Studies be at hand, and I must now bid all things under the sun farewell. Farewell, my dear wife and child; farewell, Arts and Sciences, which I so dearly loved; farewell, all worldly glories; adieu, readers,

NICHOLAS CULPEPER.

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NICHOLAS CULPEPER, the Author of this Work, was son of Nicholas Culpeper, a Clergyman, and grandson of Sir Thomas Culpeper, Bart. He was some time a student in the university of Cambridge, and soon after was bound apprentice to an Apothecary. He employed all his leisure hours in the study of Physic and Astrology, which he

afterwards professed, and set up business in Spitalfields, next door to the Red Lion, (formerly known as the Half-way House between Islington and Stepney, an exact representation of which we have given under our Author's Portrait), where he had considerable practice, and was much resorted to for his advice, which he gave to the poor gratis. Astrological Doctors have always been highly respected; and those celebrated Physicians of the early times, whom our Author seems to have particularly studied, Hippocrates, Galen, and Avicen, regarded those as homicides who were ignorant of Astrology. Paracelsus, indeed, went farther; he declared, a Physician should be predestinated to the cure of his patient; and the horoscope should be inspected, the plants gathered at the critical moment, &c.

Culpeper was a writer and translator of several Works, the most celebrated of which is his Herbal, "being an astrologo-physical discourse of the common herbs of the nation; containing a complete Method or Practice of Physic, whereby a Man may preserve his Body in Health, or cure himself when sick, with such things only as grow in England, they being most fit for English Constitutions."

This celebrated, and useful Physician died at his house in Spitalfields, in the year 1654. This Book will remain as a lasting monument of his skill and industry.

"Culpeper, the man that first ranged the woods and climbed the mountains in search of medicinal and salutary herbs, has undoubtedly merited the gratitude of posterity."—DR. JOHNSON.

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# THE ENGLISH PHYSICIAN ENLARGED.

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## AMARA DULCIS.

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CONSIDERING divers shires in this nation give divers names to one and the same herb, and that the common name which it bears in one county, is not known in another; I shall take the pains to set down all the names that I know of each herb: pardon me for setting that name first, which is most common to myself. Besides Amara Dulcis, some call it Mortal, others Bitter-sweet; some Woody Night-shade, and others Felon-wort.

*Descript.*] It grows up with woody stalks even to a man's height, and sometimes higher. The leaves fall off at the approach of winter, and spring out of the same stalk at spring-time: the branch is compassed about with a whitish bark, and has a pith in the middle of it: the main branch branches itself into many small ones with claspers, laying hold on what is next to them, as vines do: it bears many leaves, they grow in no order at all, at least in no regular order; the leaves are longish, though somewhat broad, and pointed at the ends: many of them have two little leaves growing at the end of their foot-stalk; some have but one, and some none. The leaves are of a pale green colour; the flowers are of a purple colour, or of a perfect blue, like to violets, and they stand many of them together in knots: the berries are green at first, but when they are ripe they are