

PREFACE:

WRITTEN BY A FRIEND.

There is no subject in which the great family of mankind have a deeper interest, than that of medicine; to lessen the sum of human suffering by alleviating pain, and removing those diseases that all are subject to, is a duty of the greatest importance of any undertaking that man can engage in. Health is the greatest blessing that can be enjoyed in this life; and to be deprived of it, takes away all our pleasures and comforts, and makes every thing in this world appear a dreary waste. This will readily be admitted by every one; but in what manner disorder can best be removed or prevented, is a subject that has engaged the attention of many wise men, who have existed in different ages, from the earliest times to the present day, without, as we humbly conceive, very much benefitting mankind by their labors. Their inquiries, it would seem, have been directed to the investigation of visionary theories, of the form and curious construction of the body and members, upon mechanical principles; to the neglect of what is of the greatest importance, a correct and useful practice by a direct application to the cause of disease. This is like pursuing a shadow, and losing sight of the substance; for there are certain causes and effects in the works of creation, that are beyond the comprehension of man, and the general principles of animated nature are as correctly known by the whole human family, as by the most wise and learned.

In the different ages of the world, the medical faculty have been very prolific in forming systems of the theory and practice of medicine. One man builds up a system