



March the 14th 1645.

I Have perused these Learned Animadversions upon the Common Tenets and Opinions of men in former and in these present times, Entitled Pseudodoxia Epidemica; and finding them much transcending vulgar conceits, and adorned with great variety of matter, and multiplicity of reading, I approve them as very worthy to be Printed and Published.

JOHN DOVNAME.



Pseudodoxia Epidemica:
OR,
ENQUIRIES
INTO
Very many received
TENENTS,
And commonly presumed
TRUTHS.

By **THOMAS BROVNE** Dr. of Physick.

IUL. SCALIG.

*Ex Libris colligere quæ prodiderunt Auctores longe est
periculosissimum; Rerum ipsarum cognitio verè à rebus ipsis est.*

LONDON,

Printed by **T. H.** for **Edward Dod**, and are
to be sold in **Isle Lane.** 1646.

7. Julius Solinus, who lived also about his time: He left a work entitled Polyhistor, containing great variety of matter, and is with most in good request at this day: but to speak freely what cannot be concealed, it is but Plinie varied, or a transcription of his naturall historie, not is it without all wonder it hath continued so long, but is now likely, and deserves indeed to live for ever, not so much for the elegancy of the text, as the excellency of the comment, lately performed by Salmasius, under the name of Plinian excursions.

8. Athenæus a delectable Author, and very various, and as Comfalone in his Epistle styles him *Græcorum Plinius*: There is extant of his, a famous piece under the name of Deipnosophists, or *cena sapientum*, containing the discourse of many learned men, at a feast provided by Laurencius. It is a laborious collection out of many Authors, and some whereof are mentioned no where else. It containeth strange and singular relations, not without some spice or sprinkling of all learning. The Author was probably a better Grammarian than Philosopher, dealing but hardly with Aristotle and Plato, and betrayeth himselfe much in his Chapter *de curiositate Aristotelis*. In briefe, he is an Author of excellent use, and may with discretion, be read unto great advantage: and hath therefore well deserved, the Comments of Comfalone and Dalecampius: but being miscellaneous in many things, he is to be received with suspition, for such as amasse all relations, must erre in summe, and may without offence be unbeliev'd in many.

9. Wee will not omit the workes of Nicander, a Poet of good Antiquity, that is, his Theriaca, and Alexipharmaca, translated and commented by Gervius: for therein are contained severall traditions, and popular conceits, of venomous beasts, which only deducted the worke is never to be embraced, as containing the first description of poisons, and their Antidotes, whereof Dioscorides, Pliny, and Galen, have made especiall use in elder times: and Andronicus, Grevinus and others, in times more neere our owne. Wee might perhaps let passe Oppianus, that famous Cilician Poet. There are extant of his in Greeke, foure bookes of Cynegeticks or venation, five of Halieuticks or piscation, commented and published by Riveriusius, wherein describing beasts of venerie, and fishes, hee hath indeed but sparingly inserted the vulgar conceptions thereof: so that abating onely the annual mutation of Sexes in the Hyena, the single Sex of the Rhinoceros, the antipathy betwene two dummes, of a Lambe and a Wolfes skinned, the informity of Cubbes, the venation of Centaures, the copulation of the Murena and the Viper, with some few others, hee may be read with great delight and profit. It is not without some wonder, his elegant lines are so neglected. Surely hereby wee reject one of the best Epick Poets, and much condemn the judgement of Antoninus, whose apprehensions so honoured his Poems, that as some report, for every verse, hee assigned him a Stater of gold.

10. More

10. More warily are we to receive the relations of Philes, who in Greeke Tambacks delivered the proprieties of Animals, for herein hee hath amass'd the vulgar accounts recorded by the Ancients, and hath therein especially followed Aelian, and likewise Johannes Tzetzes, a Grammarian, who besides a Comment upon Hesiod and Homer, hath left us Chiliads *de varia Historia*, wherein delivering the accounts of Croesus, Herodotus, and most of the Ancients, he is to be embraced with caution, and as a transcriptive relator.

11. Wee cannot without partialitie omit all mention even of holy Writers, and such whose names are venerable unto all posterity, not to meddle at all with miraculous Authours, or any Legendary relations: Wee are not without circumspection to receive some bookes even of Authentick and renowned Fathers. So are we to read the leaves of Basil and Ambrose in their bookes, entitled *Hexameron*, or *The description of the Creation*; wherein delivering particular accounts of all the Creatures, they have left us relations suitable to those of Aelian, Plinie and other naturall Writers; whose authorities herein they followed, and from whom most probably, they desisted their Narrations. And the like hath been committed by Epiphanius, in his *Philosophie*, that is, a booke he hath left concerning the nature of Animals. With no lesse caution must we looke on Isidor, Bishop of Sewill, who having left in 25. bookes, an accurate worke *de Originibus*, both to the Etymologie of words, supersadd'd their received natures, wherein most generally hee consents with common opinions and Authors which have delivered them.

12. Albertus Bishop of Ratisbone, for his great learning and latitude of knowledge surnamed Magnus, besides divinitie, he hath written many Tracts in Philosophie; what we are chiefly to receive with caution, are his naturall Tractates, more especially those of Minerals, Vegetables, and Animals, which are indeed chiefly Collections out of Aristotle, Aelian, and Plinie, and respectively containe many of our popular errors. A man who hath much advanced these opinions by the authority of his name, and delivered most conceits, with strickt enquiry into few. In the same classis, may well be placed Vincentius Bellincensis, or rather he from whom he collected his *Speculum naturæ*, that is, *Galienus de Conchyis*, as also *Herms Sanitatis*, and *Bambolament Glæwold*, surnamed *Anglicus*, who writ *de Proprietatibus rerum*. Either also may be referred Kiranides, which is a collection of Harpocration the Greeke, and sundry Arabick writers, delivering not onely the Naturall but Magicall propheetie of things, a worke as full of variety, as variety, containing many relations, whose invention is as difficult as their beliefs, and their experiments sometime as hard as either.

13. We had almost forgot *Jeronymus Cardanus* that famous Physi-

11

tion

a peculiar virtue for the eyes, then that of Herodotus and Pliny drawn from the urine of this animal, let them determine who can swallow so strange a transmutation of qualities, or believe that any Bird or flying animal doth urinate beside the Bat.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of Unicorns horns.

Great account and much profit is made of Unicornes horns, at least of that which beareth the name thereof, wherein notwithstanding, many I perceive suspect an Imposture, and some conceive there is no such animal extant: herein therefore to draw up our determinations, beside the severall places of Scripture mentioning this animal (which some perhaps may contend to be onely meant of the Rhinoceros) wee are loe faine from denying there is any Unicorn at all, that wee affirme there are many kinds thereof, in the number of Quadrupedes, wee will concede no lesse then five; that is, the Indian Ox, the Indian Ass, the Rhinoceros, the Onyx, and that which is more enigmatically termed *Mauoceros*, or *Paleoceros*: Some in the list of fishes, as that described by Olaus, Albinus, and many other: and some Unicorns wee will allow even among insects, as those foure kinds of malicious Beetles described by Mussetus.

Secondly, although we concede there be many Unicorns, yet are we still to seeke, for whereunto to affixe this name in question, or to determine from which thereof we receive this magnified medicine, we have no assurance, or any satisfactory decision: for although we single out one, and Anatomically thereto assigne the name of the Unicorn, yet can we not be secure what creature is meant thereby, what constant shape it holdeth, or in what number to be received: For as far as our endeavours discover, this animal is not uniformly described, but differently set forth by those that undertake it: Pliny affirmeth it is a fierce and terrible creature, *Fortissimus* a tame and mansuet animal: those which *Gardar ab Herto* described about the cape of good hope, were beheld with heads like horses; those which *Vastomannus* beheld, he described with the head of a Deere; Pliny, *Alian Solinus*, and after these from ocular assurance *Paulus Fennius* affirmeth the feet of the Unicornes are undivided, and like the Elephants: But those two which *Vastomannus* beheld at Mecht, were as he described footed like a Goose: As *Alian* describeth, it is in the bignesse of an horse, as *Vastomannus* of a Cole, That which *Thevet* speaketh of was not so big as an Heifer, But *Paulus Fennius* affirmeth, they are but little lesse then Elephants; which are discriminations very materiall, and plainly declare, that under the same name *Aviators* describe not the

same

same animal: So that the Unicornes borne of the one, is not that of another, although we proclaim an equall vertue in either.

Thirdly, although we were agreed what animal this was, or differed not in its description, yet would this also afford but little satisfaction, for the horne we commonly extoll, is not the same with that of the Ancients; For that in the description of *Alian* and *Pliny* was blacke, this which is shewed amongst us is commonly white, none black; and of those five which *Scaliger* beheld, though one *spadicus*, or of a light red, and two inclining to red, yet was there not any of this complexion amongst them.

Fourthly, what horns soever they be which passe amongst us, they are not surely the horns of any one kinde of animal, but must proceed from severall sorts of Unicornes; for some are wreathed, some not: That famous one which is preserved at *S. Dennis neere Paris*, hath awfull and horrid spikes, and choicely turnings about it, which agreeeth with the description of the Unicornes horne in *Alian*: Those two in the measure of *S. Mark* are plaine, and best accord with those of the Indian Ass, or the descriptions of other Unicornes: *Albinus Magnus* describeth one ten foote long, and at the base about thirteene inches compass: And that of *Antwerpe* which *Corneius Becanus* describeth, is not much inferiour unto it; which best agree unto the descriptions of the Sea Unicorns, for these, as *Olaus* affirmeth, are of that strength and bignesse, as able to penetrate the ribs of ships; the same is more probable, in that it was brought from Island, from whence, as *Becanus* affirmeth, three other were brought in his dayes: And we have heard of some which have bene found by the sea side, and brought unto us from America: So that while we commend the Unicornes horne, and conceive it peculiar but unto one animal, under apprehension of the same vertue, wee use very many, and commend that effect from all, which every one confineth unto some one, hee hath either scene or described.

Fifthly, although there be many Unicorns, and consequently many horns, yet many there are which beare that name, and currently passe amongst us, which are no horns at all; and such are those fragments, and pieces of *Lapis Cerastes*, commonly termed *Cornu aspidis*, wherof *Bartholomaeus* had no lesse then twenty severall sorts prelemed him for Unicornes horns: hereof in *subterraneous* cavities, &c. under the earth there are many to be found in severall parts of Germany, which are but the Lapidescentes, and petrificative insinuations of hard bodies, sometime of bone, of teeth, of bones, and branches of trees, wherof there are some so imperfectly converted, as to retain the odor and qualities of their originals, as he relateth of pieces of Asie and Wallnut. Again, in most if not all which passe amongst us, and are extolled for precious horns, wee discover not one affection common unto other horns.

humes, that is, they mollifie not with fire, they loose not upon decoction, or infusion, nor will they afford a jelly, or mucilaginous concretion in either; which notwithstanding wee may effect in Goats humes, Sheepes, Cows, and Harts hume, in the horne of the Illino-ceros, the hune of the Pristis or Sword-fish. Briefly that which is commonly received, and whereof there be so many fragments preserved in England, is not oonly no horne, but a substance harder then a bone, that is, the tooth of a Moose or Sea-horse, in the middle of the slender part containing a corded graine, which is not to be found in Ivory; this in Northern regions is of frequent use for hafts of knives, or blades of swords, and being burnt becomes a good remedy for shoves: but accidentally used, and exposed for Unicomes horne, it is an insufferable delusion, and with more variable deceit, it might have beene prescribed in Harts hume.

Sixty, although we were satisfied we had the Unicomes horne, yet wee it no injury unto reason to question the efficacy thereof, or whether those virtues which are pretended do properly belong unto it; for what we observe (and it escaped not the observation of *Pausanias* many years past) none of the Ancients ascribed any medicinall or antidottall virtue unto the Unicomes horne; and that which *Aelian* extolbeth, who was the last and only man of the Ancients who spoke of the medicall virtue of any Unicome, was the horne of the Indian Asie, whereof, saith he, the Princes of those parts make bowles and drinke therein, as preservatives against poyson, Convulsions, and the Falling-sicknelle; Now the description of that horne is not agreeable unto that we commend; for that (saith he) is red above, white below, and black in the middle, which is very different from ours, or any to be seen amongst us. And thus, though the description of the Unicome be very ancient, yet was there of old no virtue ascribed unto it, and although this amongst us receive the opinion of the same virtue, yet is it not the same horne whereunto the Ancients ascribed it.

Lastly, although we allow it an Antidottall efficacy, and such as the Ancients commended, yet are there some virtues ascribed thereto by Modernes not easily to be received; and it hath surely some not in this as other magnified medicines, whose operations effectually in some diseases, are presently extended unto all: That some antidottall quality it may have wee have no reason to deny; for since like hordes and humors are magnified for Epilepsies, since not oonly the hune in the heant, but the hune of a Deere is Alexipharmacall, and ingredient into the confection of Hyacinth, and the Electuary of Maximilian, wee cannot without prejudice except against the efficacy of this: But when wee assume it is not oonly Antidottall to proper venomes, and loofhunes destructive by qualities, we cannot expresse; but that it is itselfe also Sublimare, Astentick, and poyson which kill by second qualities, that

is,

is, by corrosion of parts, I doubt we exceed the properties of its nature, and the promises of experiment will not secure the adventure: And therefore in such extremities, whether there be not more probable reliefe from fat and oylie substances, which are the open tyrans of salt and corrosive bodies, then peccious and cordiall medicines which operate by secret and disputable properties; or whether he that swallowed Lime, and dranke downe Mercury water, did not more reasonably place his cure in milke, butter, or oyle, then if he had recurred unto Pearle and Bezoar, common reason at all times, and necessity in the like case would easily determine.

Since therefore there be many Unicomes, since that whereto wee appropriate a horne is so variously described, that it seemeth either never to have beene seen by two persons, or not to have beene one animal, Since though they agreed in the description of the animal, yet is not the horne wee extoll the same with that of the Ancients, Since what humes soever they be that passe amongst us, they are not the humes of one but severall animals: Since many in common use and high esteeme are no humes at all: Since if they were true humes, yet might their virtues be questioned: Since though we allowed some virtues, yet were not others to be received, with what security a man may rely on this remedy, the mistress of foolles hath already instructed some, and to wisdom (which is never too wise to leame) it is not too late to consider.

CHAP. XXIV.

That all Animals of the Land, are in their kind in the Sea.

THAT all Animals of the Land, are in their kind in the Sea, although received as a principle, is a tenet very questionable, and will admit of restraint; for some in the Sea are not to be matcht by any enquiry at Land, and hold those shapes which terrestrial formes approach not, as may be observed in the Moone fish, or *Ostragoriscus*, the severall sorts of Raie's, Torpedo's, Oysters, and many more; and somewhere are in the Land which were never maintained to be in the Sea, as Panthers, Hyena's, Camels, Sheep, Molls, and others which carry no name in Ichthyologic, nor are to be found in the exact descriptions of *Rondeletius*, *Gesner*, or *Aldrovandus*.

Again, though many there be which make out their nominations, as the Hedge-hog, Sea-serpents, and others; yet are there also very many that beare the name of animals at Land, which hold no resemblance in corporall configuration; in which account we compute *Fal-pesale*, *Cann*, *Rane*, *Puffer*, *Coccolus*, *Asellus*, *Turdus*, *Lepus* &c. where in while some are called the Fox, the Dog, the Sparrow, or Frog-fish,

Y

and