

N<sup>o</sup> 1 1

Bath August 26 1789

Before me, kind sir, is your very obliging letter in which your politeness has induced you to overrate my abilities, and to apply to me encomiums which justly belong to my late illustrious and ever to be revered namesake,<sup>1</sup> whose character you wish to emulate—and a better model I am certain you could not have chosen in the whole catalogue of medical worthies.

Tho' much pressed for time with a large packet of letters and pending engagements before me, yet I cannot defer testifying my warmest approbation of that generous zeal and enthusiasm which you express for medical science. From this I dare, almost, venture to prognosticate your future excellence, and that you will probably one day prove an ornament to the profession you have chosen.

If any hint of mine towards regulating the objects of your studies can prove conducive to your success, or expedite your progress, be assured, it will afford me much pleasure.

If you will lay before me a list of your books, marking those you have read, and can determine at present whether you intend to qualify yourself for a physician, surgeon or apothecary, I will communicate such observations as may occur to me on the subject.

If you have had a good classical education, this will be a good foundation for any of the three branches and greatly facilitate your future studies. If you mean to be a physician, and your income will permit, I should advise you to have a very complete education on the most liberal plan and to complete it by foreign travel, attending the most eminent professors at Leyden and Paris, after you have graduated at Edinburgh. Meanwhile I must caution you against indiscriminate reading which, as you justly observe, bewilders young students and leads to confusion. Nor is this all; erroneous ideas are often thus imbibed at an early period, and it requires no small trouble and mortification afterwards to “unlearn what has been learnt amiss.”

Whatever may be your destination, a proper plan and method of study is indispensably necessary, hence the great advantage of a regular education over the vague and undigested notions obtained from desultory reading. With comp<sup>ts</sup> to Mess<sup>rs</sup> Palmer and Silvester.<sup>2</sup> I am Sir, yours very sincerely. A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> John Fothergill (1712–1780), MD, FRS, Quaker, London practitioner, philanthropist and botanist.

<sup>2</sup> William Palmer (1710–1792) and Joseph Sylvester (1730–1798), apothecary-surgeons of Trowbridge, Wiltshire. James Woodford (no e) was apprenticed to them 11 May 1786. See P. J. and R. V. Wallis, *Eighteenth century medics*, Newcastle upon Tyne, Project for Historical Biobibliography, 1988, p. 449.

N<sup>o</sup> 2 2

Bath 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1789

Kind Sir,

As you place so much confidence in my opinion, I will endeavour as far as my time will

*Anthony Fothergill*

allow, to answer the most material passages in your last obliging letter relative to the course of your studies.

Considering you as the youngest of seven children and the disadvantages under which you have laboured in being deprived of the opportunity of acquiring a proper classical education, I cannot but admire the progress you have already made by mere dint of genius and unwearied application. I am pleased to find so very few slips of the pen in your letters, making allowance for these (and great allowance ought certainly to be made), you express yourself, on the whole, with much force, and propriety

“Ubi plurima nitent  
Non ego paucis offendar maculis.”<sup>1</sup>

and for your consolation I must further add that I have known surgeons and apothecaries of considerable note express themselves with much less correctness and perspicuity. But such are by no means patterns for you who will, I dare say, study to avoid their inaccuracies and strive to imitate the correctness and precision of Dr J. Fothergill and other excellent authors. Tho' it may not be easy, or even necessary to obtain their elegance of style and composition, yet grammatical accuracy seems indispensable. If you read over once or twice with attention Lowth's English Grammar<sup>2</sup> you will find your labour not ill bestowed; and as a tolerable knowledge of Latin is highly requisite and perhaps, I may add, the rudiments of the Greek tongue, without which it is almost impossible to understand a variety of anatomical, medical and botanical terms immediately derived from these languages, you will do well to set apart some portion of your time in acquiring at least the elements. You may think this retrograde plan rather mortifying but, be assured, it will be more agreeable and satisfactory in the end, than to leave it to begin at a more advanced period of life. After the English grammar it will be right to reperuse the Latin one and accompany it with some easy school book, as Erasmus, Cornelius Nepos, Terence and others, and to try your proficiency by translating Latin into English, and vice versa. This with your other indispensable avocations will not leave much time for promiscuous reading and the less perhaps the better, tho' I am far from thinking that the labour you have already bestowed in this way is wholly thrown away, only misplaced. Whoever means to acquire useful medical knowledge must be content to learn it methodically and begin with languages, the A.B.C. of this, and every other science. A good foundation thus laid, the superstructure will follow in good order. As your destination is surgery, pharmacy and perhaps midwifery, your next object of attention ought to be anatomy beginning with osteology, the basis of anatomy. The best book in this subject is Monro's Osteology<sup>3</sup> which should be carefully compared with the different parts of the skeleton beginning with the cranium. After this treatise on the muscles with Albinus's tables,<sup>4</sup> next Winslow.<sup>5</sup> Further you cannot proceed with advantage till you attend a regular course of anatomy, or even two, which with dissection will complete your inquiries on that important branch of study. It will be best to avoid all miscellaneous reading for the present, till you are well grounded in the elements of medicine, a course of natural philosophy would be an excellent introduction. Would your time allow of it, I should recommend a previous perusal of Gravesande's,<sup>6</sup> Nicholson's,<sup>7</sup> or Enfield's<sup>8</sup> experimental philosophy. This by unfolding general principles enlarges the ideas, and is intimately connected with every branch of medicine. Wishing you success in all your undertakings, I remain, Sir, yours very sincerely

A. Fothergill

## Letters

<sup>1</sup> “Where most things are brilliant, I shall not be worried by a few blemishes”, Horace, *Art of poetry*, 351–2.

<sup>2</sup> One of the many editions of Robert Lowth (1710–1787), bishop of London, *A short introduction to English grammar; with critical notes*, London, A. Millar and R. & J. Dodsley, 1762. New editions published in 1764, 1769, 1771, 1775, 1781, 1783, 1786 and 1787.

<sup>3</sup> One of the editions of Alexander Monro, *primus* (1697–1767), *The anatomy of the humane bones*, Edinburgh, T. Ruddiman for W. Munro, 1726. Many subsequent editions. See K. F. Russell, *British anatomy, 1525–1800*, 2nd ed., Winchester, St. Paul’s Bibliographies, 1987.

<sup>4</sup> Bernhard Siegfried Albinus (1697–1770), *Tables of the skeleton and muscles of the human body*. . . Translated from the Latin, London, H. Woodfall, for J. & P. Knapton, 1749. Another edition, Edinburgh, 1777–8.

<sup>5</sup> Jacques Bénigne Winslow (1669–1760), *An anatomical exposition of the structure of the human body*. . . Translated . . . by G. Douglas, 2 vols., London, Printed for N. Prevost, 1723. “The fifth edition”, London, 1776. See Russell, this letter, note 3.

<sup>6</sup> Presumably one of the many editions of Willem Jakob Storm van ’sGravesande (1688–1742), *Mathematical elements of natural philosophy, confirmed by experiments, or, an introduction to Sir Isaac Newton’s philosophy, written in Latin by William James ’sGravesande*. . . Translated into English by J. T. Desaguliers, 2 vols., London, J. Senex & W. Taylor, 1720. Sixth edition, 1747.

<sup>7</sup> William Nicholson (1753–1815), *An introduction to natural philosophy*, 2 vols., London, n.p., 1782. Second edition, London, J. Johnson, 1787.

<sup>8</sup> William Enfield (1741–1797), *Institutes of natural philosophy, theoretical and experimental*, London, J. Johnson, 1785.

N<sup>o</sup> 3 3

Bath October 18<sup>th</sup> 1789

Dear Sir,

I was favoured with your kind letter of the 12<sup>th</sup> and am pleased to find that you can so readily reconcile yourself to the humiliating task of refreshing your memory concerning the elements of the English and Latin tongues. But although this at first view may appear a retrograde method of study, be assured you will find it hereafter very beneficial, and as you proceed will, I make no doubt, be more and more convinced of its propriety. For without solid foundation, no permanent superstructure can ever be raised. Therefore I think it will be very proper to peruse Lowth once more with attention and to try other English books and your own letters by his rules. After you have done this go through the Latin grammar leisurely, making yourself master of the rules by translating and retranslating as I mentioned before. Cornelius Nepos or Erasmus may assist you in these exercises, Rowning’s philosophy<sup>1</sup> tho’ deficient as to aer<sup>1</sup> fluids yet may do very well to give you the elements of natural philosophy on which you may also consult Pemberton<sup>2</sup> or M<sup>c</sup>laurin<sup>3</sup> on the Newtonian philosophy or even Martin.<sup>4</sup> But be not in too great haste as to the particular qualities of bodies. This is the business of chemistry, the elements of which must be regularly studied before you can profit by reading Priestley<sup>5</sup> or other writers on the abstruse parts of chemical science. Be content to learn the outlines and elements before you wade into the depths of philosophy and be careful as you proceed to digest the principles so as to fix them in your memory for on these the whole system depends. If you make yourself master of these you will then be well prepared to attend lectures in the different branches, and fully to comprehend the rationale of the experiments brought by the professor to illustrate each proposition. As natural philosophy unfolds the general properties of bodies, so chemistry explains the particular properties of bodies, and each mutually illustrates the other, and the method requires that we begin with the generals and gradually descend to

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particulars. Medicine embraces all the sciences and presupposes a general knowledge of each.

Hence the time, labour, and expense necessary to acquire a complete medical education!!  
"Ubi desinit philosophus, incipit medicus."<sup>6</sup>

At some leisure time it may not be improper to read Dr Gregory's Duties and Offices of a Physician,<sup>7</sup> notwithstanding your destination for surgery, because many of his excellent precepts apply equally to both physic and surgery. Tho' I applaud your ardour and enthusiasm for science yet let me give you one caution. Let not your zeal for study break in upon your hours of rest and necessary bodily exercise. For knowledge, however desirable, is too dearly purchased at the expense of health. This is not meant to damp your ardour, but to regulate it by the bounds of prudence. With best wishes for your success I remain,

Dear Sir much yours

A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> Presumably one of the many editions of John Rowning (1701?–1771), *A compendious system of natural philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, 1734. Sixth edition, 1767. This work was superseded by William Nicholson's, *Introduction to natural philosophy* (letter 2, note 7), as an elementary class-book.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably, Henry Pemberton (1694–1771), *A view of Sir Isaac Newton's philosophy*, London, S. Palmer, 1728.

<sup>3</sup> One of the editions of Colin Maclaurin (1698–1746), *An account of Sir Isaac Newton's philosophical discoveries*, London, P. Murdoch, 1748.

<sup>4</sup> Possibly one of the editions of Benjamin Martin (1705–82), *A course of lectures in natural and experimental philosophy, geography and astronomy: in which the properties, affections, and phaenomena of natural bodies . . . are exhibited and explain'd on the principles of the Newtonian philosophy*, Reading, J. Newbery & C. Micklewright, 1743; or, *Philosophia Britannica; or, a new . . . system of the Newtonian philosophy, astronomy and geography*, 2 vols., Reading, C. Micklewright & Co., 1747; or, *The young gentleman and lady's philosophy, in a continued survey of the works of nature and art; by way of a dialogue*, 2 vols., London, W. Owen [& the author], 1755–63.

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Priestley (1733–1804), LL.D. (Edinburgh 1762), FRS, theologian and chemist, and member of the Birmingham Lunar Society.

<sup>6</sup> "Where the philosopher stops, the physician begins". Although an ancient conception, this dictum was a Renaissance coining. There are many variants and its origins are obscure. See C. B. Schmitt, 'Aristotle among the physicians', in A. Wear, R. K. French and I. M. Lonie (eds.), *The medical renaissance of the sixteenth century*, Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 1–15.

<sup>7</sup> John Gregory (1724–1773) [Anon], *Observations on the duties and offices of a physician; and on the method of prosecuting enquiries in philosophy*, London, W. Strahan & T. Cadell, 1770. This was an unauthorized edition, published from notes taken at Gregory's lectures in Edinburgh. Gregory then published an edition under his own name, *Lectures on the duties and qualifications of a physician, a new edition . . . enlarged*, London, W. Strahan & T. Cadell, 1772.

N<sup>o</sup> 5 4

Bath Jan<sup>ry</sup> 13<sup>th</sup> 1790

Before me, kind sir, is your very obliging letter, which a variety of professional and other letters have obliged me to postpone till now. It is with pleasure I observe a very visible improvement in your style and orthography which strongly evinces that you have already availed yourself of the authors recommended to your perusal, and have profited not a little by their instructions. In your last I only observe two little slips of the pen which, for your

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satisfaction, I shall point out: “fell a victim to them very frequent” instead of “those very frequent”, again “nervous complaints which seems” instead of “seem”.

Remember a noun of the plural number requires a verb of the plural number and *vice versa*. Please to go thro’ Lowth once more and examine yourself on each rule and example. But first of all let me entreat you to take more care of your health, and to set apart at least 1 hour for bodily exercise; and not to suffer study to encroach on this, or the hours of rest. As your habit is constitutionally delicate this precaution will be the more necessary. If you drive off natural sleep by intense application, a habit of watching will certainly ensue. Resolve therefore to make study rather a pleasing amusement than a severe labour.

Close the book an hour before bedtime and banish all concern about it till the morning following, and if the watching still continues take before you go to rest of Syrupi Papaveris Albi 3 to 4 drachms<sup>1</sup> and if you use exercise in the open air every day, you’ll soon find your natural rest will be restored without any opiate. — “In which engaged in” — delete the last “in”, which is tautology. You may spare the expense of buying the rules of health falsely attributed to D<sup>r</sup> J[ohn]F[othergill].<sup>2</sup> He assured me the work was spurious, and felt himself so much hurt by the imputation of such a catch-penny performance that he advertised his total [word missing] of the shameless author. In the next number of the Literary Magazine will appear a portrait of this excellent man whose conduct was so truly amiable that, as Shakespeare expresses it, “we scarcely shall see his like again.”<sup>3</sup> From your account you have, I find, dipped deeper into anatomy than could reasonably be expected in so short a time, and by which you will find yourself well prepared for an anatomical course, and be able sometimes to anticipate the professor in his demonstrations. Suppose you take a little time to breathe before you engage in any fresh study, and at leisure times take a retrospect of what you have already read, and examine yourself as you go along not only in grammar but also anatomy. There was lately published a very useful book for the rudiments of anatomy and physiology called a Breviary of Anatomy in Form of Dialogue,<sup>4</sup> which is of all others the best plan of fixing in the mind the first principles. When you have carefully perused it, you may examine yourself by the book which perfectly agrees with what I have been recommending. I hear a good account of the work but have not seen it. The above, together with the Latin grammar and Latin exercises, will be more than sufficient to occupy your leisure hours (and these only can be properly spared from the duties of your profession for some time to come) even without natural philosophy of which ’sGravesande’s Introduction to the Newtonian Philosophy is a short useful compendium of the first principles and not high priced. But beware of too many irons in the fire at once, and take care of your health, without which, science will but little avail you. I have barely room to add my best wishes for your prosperity and success. A. Fothergill.

P.S. After you are well grounded in your present studies (a work of much time and patience) it will be then time enough to proceed to practical authors in medicine, which properly come last of all and indeed cannot be well understood until principles are unfolded. When you are master of these, I may perhaps lend you the journals and commentaries. A.F.

<sup>1</sup> Syrup of white poppy, containing opium. Fothergill gives the quantities in the signs for Apothecary measures.

<sup>2</sup> The spuriously attributed, *Rules for the preservation of health*, London, J. Pridden, 1762, which went through several editions.

<sup>3</sup> Hamlet, of his father, “I shall not look upon his like again”. *Hamlet*, I, 2, 188.

<sup>4</sup> Probably, *Anatomical dialogues; or, a breviary of anatomy . . . Chiefly compiled for the use of the young*

*Anthony Fothergill*

*gentlemen in the Navy and Army. By a gentleman of the faculty, London, printed for G. Robinson, 1778; second edition, 1785.*

N<sup>o</sup> 4 5

Bath April 1790

Dear Sir,

Before me is your last long and very obliging letter, which with many others I have been obliged, thro' extreme hurry, to postpone till now, and shall consider them in their order so far as my time will allow. But my kind correspondents must not expect adequate returns for their esteemed favours, but content themselves with receiving short answers.

In the first place, I am much pleased to hear so favorable an account of your health, and that your natural rest is returned, and with it your former alacrity of mind and body which enables you to prosecute your studies with pleasure and success. Your duty and affection for your mother affords me peculiar satisfaction, in which, I hope, you will ever continue to imitate the amiable Atticus, as this was perhaps one of the most engaging traits in the character of that most accomplished Roman. I hope your dear mother is perfectly recovered and that you will not forget in your next letter to return my best acknowledgements for her kind expressions of gratitude.

Your motive for beginning early with practical writers, contrary to the rules of right order, was a venial, nay, an amiable fault, and carries with it more than an apology. It was making a virtue of necessity which could not be properly resisted. There can be no fear of your acquiring a competent knowledge of Latin by setting apart an hour every day for that purpose. The professors at Edinburgh formerly lectured in Latin chiefly, now all in English. For the Scotch pronunciation of Latin is uncouth to an English ear. But could wish you to take a few instructions on your setting out, from some eminent grammarian as to the improved methods of obtaining the rudiments with ease and expedition, otherwise some time may be lost. Perhaps the Reverend M<sup>r</sup> Batchelor (a worthy, which is in your favour, teacher at Freshford)<sup>1</sup> might condescend to give you the outlines much better than I can pretend to do, as he doubtless has considered the different methods and can point out the best.

You must not at present attempt minutiae of anatomy; gain but a tolerable knowledge of the principal parts and leave the rest till you can see them demonstrated in a course of lectures.

D<sup>r</sup> Cleghorn's<sup>2</sup> death which happened lately in Ireland is a real loss to science. I have read his excellent observations on the diseases of Minorca<sup>3</sup> but never saw his anatomical dialogues,<sup>4</sup> and may perhaps accept your kind offer when leisure shall permit.

If you can spare one hour for Latin, one for anatomy, and another for natural philosophy daily, it will, with your necessary business, occupy the chief part of your time, and I hope very usefully. Besides 'sGravesande there is Ferguson's Introduction,<sup>5</sup> Martin's Dialogues for Young Gentlemen in Philosophy, later works, and perhaps less dry, but I've not seen them. Also Nicholson's, still later, and well spoken of. The first was the textbook used at Edinburgh by professor Ferguson,<sup>6</sup> since professor of moral philosophy. Euclid's Elements

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ought properly to precede every other, being the basis of the science of mathematical knowledge but it wou'd take up too much time and require a master often at your elbow. In short, you may gain a tolerable knowledge of the subject without it, which is all you can expect at present, or is indeed essential. As to your important question concerning Edinburgh, as you have the concurrence of your friends, I cannot hesitate in warmly recommending so desirable a scheme. The lectures there only commence on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October and the first week is taken up with the history of the different branches of physic, which is, however entertaining, if not essential. Whatever may be your future destination, your motives are laudable, and your reasoning concerning the weighty trust that daily devolves on apothecaries, perfectly just. When I left Edinburgh in 1764 young gentlemen boarded and lodged from 16<sup>s</sup> to 1 G per week which saved much trouble and was nearly as cheap as finding provisions oneself. To each of the professors about 3 Guineas a course, Infirmary 3 Guin<sup>s</sup>, clinical lectures 2 G<sup>s</sup>, botany 2 G<sup>s</sup>. Perhaps board is now higher from the advanced rates of provisions but still doubtless cheaper than London. A new College is now erecting<sup>7</sup> and this may add something, also 1 G. to the Lib<sup>y</sup> and admission into the Medical Society, of which if you can get admitted soon, it will be a great acquisition. But more of this before you start. In your long letter I observe but a single slip and that a slight one “acquiesce to it”, pro “in” it. I cannot conclude without expressing my warmest satisfaction in observing that your improvement keeps pace with your diligence. “Nil tam difficile est quod non solertia vincat.”<sup>8</sup> That your health may permit you to proceed in your career with alacrity is the sincere wish of, D<sup>r</sup> Sir, yours

A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> Reverend Batchelor of Freshford, Somerset. A number of candidates suggest themselves, notably Joseph Batchelor (matriculated Pembroke College, Oxford, 1773) or his brother William (BA Oxon 1780), sons of William, clerk, of Trowbridge, Wiltshire, or John Batchelor (matriculated St Edmund Hall, Oxford, 1783) (possibly another brother) son of William, clerk, of Tellisford, Somerset. See J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, Part II, of 4 vols., Cambridge University Press, 1940–51, vol. 1 p. 181, and Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxoniensis*, Series 2, 2 vols., Nendeln/Liechtenstein, Klaus Reprint Limited, 1968, vol. 1, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> George Cleghorn (1716–1789), MD (Edinburgh 1779), settled in Dublin in 1751, later became professor of anatomy in the university.

<sup>3</sup> Idem, *Observations on the epidemical diseases in Minorca. From the year 1744 to 1749. To which is prefixed, a short account of the climate, productions, inhabitants, and endemial distempers of that island*, London, D. Wilson, 1751. Four editions were published in Cleghorn's lifetime.

<sup>4</sup> Unclear reference, perhaps, George Cleghorn, *Index of an annual course of lectures*, Dublin, printed by William Sleater, printer to the University, 1756; another edition, 1757.

<sup>5</sup> James Ferguson (1710–1776), *Lectures on select subjects in mechanics, hydrostatics, pneumatics, and optics*, London, A. Millar, 1760; seventh edition, 1790; or *An introduction to electricity*, London, W. Strahan & T. Cadell, 1770; or, *The young gentleman and lady's astronomy. Familiarly explained in ten dialogues*, London, A. Millar & T. Cadell, 1768, all later English editions (except 1815) entitled *An easy introduction to astronomy, for young gentlemen and ladies*; second edition, 1769.

<sup>6</sup> Adam Ferguson (1723–1816), LL.D., appointed professor of natural philosophy in the university of Edinburgh in 1759, and appointed professor of moral philosophy in 1764.

<sup>7</sup> New university buildings had been approved by the Senate in 1768. The cost was to be raised by subscription. The plan failed for financial reasons. In 1789 the town council again tried to raise money for new buildings for which the architect Robert Adam had already circulated designs. Demolition and rebuilding began in early 1790 as Fothergill's letter records. Financial problems and differences between Adam and the builders dogged the project. Adam died in 1792. Early in 1794 the work came to a halt, only a small number of buildings being completed. Others were left quite unfinished. See A. J. Youngson, *The making of classical Edinburgh, 1750–1840*, Edinburgh University Press, 1966, pp. 123–32.

<sup>8</sup> “There is no difficulty so great that ingenuity does not overcome it”. Proverb.

Bath June 19<sup>th</sup> 1790

Dear Sir

During my absence in London on indispensable business your letter arrived, since which my numerous engagements have left me no time to answer it till this moment. I have, however, run over the principal parts of the second vol. you sent, and now return them with thanks. Both appear to me very useful compendiums, written in a easy, clear and agreeable manner, and every way worthy of the idea I had formed of them. The form of dialogue engages attention, assists the memory, and enables the reader to exercise his abilities in anticipating the answer. Such works are useful not only to those who are beginning the study, but also to those who have completed it, by recalling many things to mind which had been once learnt, but since wholly lost. Before you attend a course of lectures on natural philosophy and anatomy, it will be advisable to give the volumes a 2<sup>nd</sup> perusal, examining yourself as you proceed on the several questions.

Some few errors will occur, but the general tenor will be found incontrovertible.

I have not seen Martin's other vol<sup>s</sup> nor Nicholson's Phil<sup>y</sup> but from the character I have heard of them I hope they will ans<sup>r</sup> y<sup>r</sup> expectation and supersede the necess<sup>y</sup> of purchasing any more books on the subject. When you have carefully read these, you may begin Haller's *Prima Lineae* as physiol<sup>y</sup> naturally succeeds anat<sup>y</sup>, beautifully illustrating the functions of the animated machine, and explaining the several parts you have been contemplating in the dead subject. If you have not D<sup>r</sup> Cullen's Edit<sup>n</sup> and notes on Haller's *Prima Lineae*<sup>1</sup> I can lend it you and also Haller's *Prelections or Comment<sup>y</sup> on his First Lines*,<sup>2</sup> a large and important work, but in Latin, and therefore must be postponed till you have learnt the language. Towards which the books recommended by M<sup>r</sup> B[atachelor?] seem extremely well adapted, now that you are master of Lowth's *English Grammar* which you'll find will facilitate your progress not a little. I attended D<sup>r</sup> Blair's *Belles Lettres*<sup>3</sup> as a delightful relaxation for some severer studies, but this must be postponed. For the present, an hour sh<sup>d</sup> be spent daily on the rudiments of Latin, another in tracing the blood vessels and afterwards the nerves, if you have any tolerable good plates. This will be a good preparative for a course of anat<sup>y</sup> and the physiol<sup>y</sup> will illustrate and impress it on your memory. If you have no anatomical plates I can lend you the 5<sup>th</sup> vol of the new *Cyclopædia* which contains the plates of y<sup>e</sup> whole work on all the sciences.<sup>4</sup> I meet with two or three little inaccuracies in y<sup>r</sup> lett<sup>r</sup>, but too slight to require animadversion.

"Non ego paucis offendar maculis" Horace<sup>5</sup>

Your remarks on the absurd variety of weights and measures are very just. This subject is now before both the British and French Parlim<sup>ts</sup>, a subject in which all Europe is concerned and w<sup>h</sup>, it is hoped, will be thoroughly discussed, and grievance removed. Y<sup>r</sup> strictures on bell-metal mortars are also proper. As you express a wish to see my new tract; y<sup>e</sup> *Poison of Lead and Copper*, I have herewith sent you a copy, tho' it is not yet published.<sup>6</sup> You may look it over, and circulate it among y<sup>r</sup> friends to guard them against an evil of which few except the faculty are suffic<sup>y</sup> aware. Nor are these at all times so attentive as might be wished, or indeed expected. This tract with a copy of D<sup>r</sup> Hawes's address,<sup>7</sup> and my *Hints on Animation* are much at y<sup>r</sup> service.<sup>8</sup> But I must once more caution you not to have "too



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many irons in the fire” — nor suffer even y<sup>e</sup> best practical or miscell<sup>s</sup> writers to interfere with y<sup>r</sup> preliminary studies. First make yourself master of those, and these will afterwards follow in due course.

My respects to y<sup>r</sup> mother, and believe me, D<sup>r</sup> Sir  
much y<sup>rs</sup> A. Fothergill

P.S. You have already read my 2<sup>nd</sup> ed<sup>n</sup> on Cheltenham Waters.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> William Cullen (1710–1790), professor of the practice of physic in the university of Edinburgh, *First lines of physiology. Translated from the correct Latin edition printed under the inspection of William Cullen*, Edinburgh, C. Elliot, 1779.

<sup>2</sup> Cullen’s English edition was a complete translation of Albrecht von Haller (1708–1777), *Præmiæ lineæ physiologiae in usum praelectionum academicarum*, 3rd ed., Edinburgh, G. Drummond & Kincaid & Bell, 1767 (first edition, 1747). Fothergill’s “commentary” was probably Haller’s *Elementa physiologiae corporis humani*, 8 vols., Lausanne, M. M. Bousquet, S. d’Arnay, F. Grasset, Leyden, C. Haak, 1757–66.

<sup>3</sup> Hugh Blair (1718–1800), D.D., since 1762 Regius professor of rhetoric and belles lettres in the university of Edinburgh.

<sup>4</sup> Presumably, *Cyclopædia: or, an universal dictionary of arts and sciences . . . With the supplement and modern improvements, incorporated in one alphabet*, by A. Rees, 5 vols., London, W. Strahan & T. Cadell, 1778–88.

<sup>5</sup> “I shall not be worried by a few blemishes”. Horace, *Art of poetry*, 351–2. See also letter 2.

<sup>6</sup> Anthony Fothergill, *Cautions to the heads of families in three essays: (I.) On cyder-wine . . . (II.) On the poison of lead . . . (III.) On the poison of copper . . .* Bath, R. Cruttwell, 1790.

<sup>7</sup> William Hawes (1736–1808), MD, founder of the Royal Humane Society and physician to the London Dispensary. Presumably, one of several possible addresses: (1) *An address on premature death and premature interment*, 1777; (2) *An address to the public on the dangerous custom of laying out persons as soon as respiration ceases, with a reply by W. Renwick, and observations on that reply*, 1778; (3) *An address to the legislature on the importance of a Humane Society*, 1781; or (4) *An address to the King and Parliament of Great Britain on the important subject of preserving the lives of its inhabitants*, 1782; third edition, to which are now added observations on the general bills of mortality, 1783.

<sup>8</sup> Anthony Fothergill, *Hints for improving the art of restoring suspended animation*, London, 1782, first appeared subjoined to Hawes’s address of that year, *ibid*.

<sup>9</sup> *Idem, A new experimental inquiry into the nature and qualities of the Cheltenham water*, 2nd ed., Bath, R. Cruttwell, 1788 (first edition, 1785).

N<sup>o</sup> 6 7

Bath July 5<sup>th</sup> 1790

Dear Sir,

About a week ago I returned your books by M<sup>r</sup> Batchelor Jun<sup>r</sup> accompanied with others, and a letter in answer to your last which you will find on your return, together with this, in which I have barely time to acknowledge your kind mother’s very obliging, tho’ totally unexpected present. But remember my wish to assist you in a method of study was never meant to become burthensome to her, my sole object was to direct your inquiries and expedite your improvement without any return on your part except now and then a letter to afford me an opportunity to judge concerning your progress. However as nothing short of this will, I see, satisfy grateful and susceptible minds, I accept the kind present with due acknowledgements. When you have perused Nicholson’s Philosophy with care, you may send it, when opportunity offers, with the sequel of Martin’s Philosophy and then I will

*Anthony Fothergill*

acquaint you more how far these books answer, in my idea, the encomiums I have heard concerning them. But before you purchase any other books, I should wish to know whether they are to be found in my collection, that I may, if possible, spare you unnecessary expense on that head.

The unavoidable expense of a tolerably complete education, you will find sufficiently great. Therefore we must consider how every unnecessary expense may be properly avoided.

Your reflection of the importance of your time at this juncture, in order to insure a valuable reversion in future, is pointedly just, and merits remembrance in the prosecution of your studies. When you arrive at Edinburgh you will meet with many dissipated sons of fortune who will strive to throw every serious and laudable pursuit into ridicule and render you as ignorant and profligate as themselves.

I have already answered your question on Blair's Rhetoric.<sup>1</sup> The rudiments of Latin and anatomy are more than sufficient to employ your leisure hours at present. If you are impatient to run over my little tracts, they are short, and will not lose you much time, tho' I cannot tell how you can fully comprehend them at present.<sup>2</sup> When you have attended a course of chemistry you will then be prepared to give them a second perusal. I observe what you say concerning M<sup>r</sup> Long and am sensible of your goodwill, but I fear M<sup>r</sup> Long has not resolution to go thro' a course of medicine necessary to his complete recovery. I wish for his own sake, that he may, with best wishes to your affectionate mother. I am D<sup>r</sup> Sir yours assuredly. A. Fothergill.

N.B. you say my mother and self sends &c. instead of send, a noun of the plural with a verb of the singular—see Lowth's Grammar.

<sup>1</sup> Hugh Blair, *Lectures on rhetoric and belles lettres*, 2 vols., London, W. Strahan & T. Cadell, 1783; second edition, 1785; third, 1787; fourth, 1790; or, *Essays on rhetoric: abridged chiefly from Dr. Blair's lectures on that science*, London, J. Murray, 1785; second edition, 1785; third, 1787.

<sup>2</sup> See letter 6, notes 6, 7, 8 and 9.

N<sup>o</sup> 8     8

Bath August 18<sup>th</sup> 1790

Dear Sir

I have barely time to acknowledge the favour of your very obliging letter accomp<sup>d</sup> by Martin and Nicholson both which shall be glanced over as oppor<sup>t</sup> may offer, and returned safely. I observe with pleasure your progress in y<sup>r</sup> studies and see nothing to correct in your letters, tho' very long, except in certain passages where you continue as usual greatly to overrate the supposed merit and abilities of y<sup>r</sup> instructor who daily finds sufficient reason to think very humbly of both, and to lament that his progress in science has been so very disproportionate to his years and opportunities of improvement. Herewith you'll receive Haller's Physiol<sup>y</sup> by Cullen 2 vol<sup>s</sup> in 1, with Wrisberg's notes,<sup>1</sup> which must be perused with attention, looking back to the references. It contains the 1<sup>st</sup> elem<sup>ts</sup> of the science in a condensed form and is a work of immense labour and must have cost long and laborious

## Letters

reading as you'll find when you come afterwards to read Haller's large work in 8 vol. 4<sup>to</sup>;<sup>2</sup> an excellent commentary on these first lines. But the Latin is crabbed and obscure and will require further grammatical knowledge preparatory to its being read with facility, for we have no English translation. I am glad friend Stonhouse, who was my very eminent predecessor at North<sup>n</sup>, has presented you with C. Nepos and that his son Timothy has written you a polite letter.<sup>3</sup> When you have finished 'sGraves<sup>de</sup> and Rowning you may be supposed to have laid a good foundation in the rudiments of exper<sup>l</sup> philosophy which a single course of lectures, when you can spare time, will complete. On looking over the plates of the Cyclopædia, I find all the anatomical figures crowded into one plate and so miserably deficient that they wou'd rather lead you into error, or wou'd have sent the volume. Nor have I any on the nerves or blood vessels that I can recommend. Haller's will cost 5 G<sup>s</sup> merely for the blood vessels; you'll see it and Meckel[?]<sup>4</sup> at Edin<sup>r</sup> in the Lib<sup>y</sup> and what is better, the real subject accurately dissected and demonstrated. As to the lymphat<sup>s</sup>, when you have gone thro' Haller's Elem<sup>s</sup> I can lend you Hewson's 3 vol<sup>s</sup>;<sup>5</sup> an excellent work, but I have not Cruikshank's<sup>6</sup> or Sheldon.<sup>7</sup> I think the application of spirits with a suitable bandage likely to answer in checking superfluous osseous matter, as you rightly conjecture. But Bell in his Surgery<sup>8</sup> may perhaps suggest more approved means. The softness of bones arises from a defect of ossification and cannot be remedied but by invigorating the habit and that, I fear, but in a very imperfect degree.

In digestion the gastric juice possesses a real solvent power and perhaps approaches nearer to an universal menstruum than any boasted of by the chemists, but whether a peculiar fermentation may not be also requisite to assimilate the various aliments into one homogeneous chyle and complete the process of digestion, I am not without some doubts. It yet remains sub judice whether the principle of irritability is wholly independent of the nerves as Haller asserts from direct exper<sup>ts</sup>.<sup>9</sup> But exper<sup>ts</sup> of this nature are liable to fallacy, and I think this principle is materially if not wholly connected with nervous energy, and that this energy depends on a very subtle fluid, the nature of which is wholly unknown.<sup>10</sup> Omit Bell's anatomical plates<sup>11</sup> till we hear more of their merit. The Scotch plates are generally very coarse and slovenly executed as appears from some specimens I saw some time ago, Monro on the nerves and fishes &c &c.<sup>12</sup> If I should hear of any plates that may assist you I will let you know. You may take time with Moore<sup>13</sup> and Haller and proceed with your present important course, in wh<sup>h</sup> I wish you all imaginable success and am, Dear Sir, much yours

A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> Albrecht von Haller, *First lines of physiology translated from the correct Latin edition. Printed under the inspection of William Cullen, and compared with the edition published by H. A. Wrisberg*, 2 vols in 1 vol., Edinburgh, Elliot, 1786. The edition of Heinrich August Wrisberg (1739–1808) was *Prima lineae physiologiae auctae ab H. A. Wrisberg*, Göttingen, 1780.

<sup>2</sup> See letter 6, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> Sir James Stonhouse (1716–1795), baronet, physician and divine. MD (Oxon Jan. 1745–6), between 1743 and 1763 practised in Northampton. In May 1764 he moved to the rectory of Little Cheverell, near Devizes, Wiltshire.

<sup>4</sup> Possibly, Johann Friedrich Meckel (1724–1774), *Tractatus anatomico physiologicus de quinto pare nervorum cerebri*, Göttingen, A. Vandenhoeck, 1748.

<sup>5</sup> William Hewson (1739–1774), *Experimental inquiries: Part the first. Containing an inquiry into the properties of the blood. With remarks on some of its morbid appearances: and an appendix relating to the discovery of the lymphatic system in birds, fish and animals called amphibious. Part the second. Containing a description of the lymphatic system in the human subject and in other animals. . . . Together with observations*

## Anthony Fothergill

on the lymph, and the changes which it undergoes in some diseases. Part the third. Containing a description of the red particles of the blood in the human subject and in other animals; with an account of the structure and offices of the lymphatic glands, of the thymus gland, and of the spleen: being the remaining part of the observations and experiments of the late Mr. William Hewson. . . . [Edited] by Magnus Falconar, London, T. Longman, 1772–77.

<sup>6</sup> William Cumberland Cruikshank (1745–1800), *The anatomy of the absorbing vessels of the human body*, London, G. Nicol, 1786.

<sup>7</sup> John Sheldon (1752–1808), *The history of the absorbent system. Part the first. Containing the chylography*. . . . London, printed for the author, 1784.

<sup>8</sup> Benjamin Bell (1749–1806), *A system of surgery*, 6 vols., Edinburgh, C. Elliot, 1783–88.

<sup>9</sup> Albrecht von Haller, *A dissertation on the sensible and irritable parts of animals*, London, J. Nourse, 1755.

<sup>10</sup> Fothergill is demonstrating his allegiance to William Cullen's teaching here as he does in many other places. Cullen (along with other Edinburgh teachers) contested Haller's view that irritability was an autonomous property of muscle, teaching that it was dependent on nervous energy, which in turn, he speculated, was produced by an aerial fluid. See Christopher Lawrence, 'The nervous system and society in the Scottish Enlightenment', in Barry Barnes and Steven Shapin (eds.), *Natural order: historical studies of scientific culture*, Beverly Hills, Sage Publications, 1979, pp. 19–40; J. R. R. Christie, 'Ether and the science of chemistry', in G. N. Cantor and M. J. S. Hodge (eds.), *Conceptions of ether: studies in the history of ether theories 1740–1900*, Cambridge University Press, 1981, pp. 85–110.

<sup>11</sup> Bernhard Siegfried Albinus, *Tables of the skeleton and muscles of the human body*. . . . Translated from the Latin, Edinburgh, printed by Balfour and Smellie, for Andrew Bell, engraver, 1777. The subtitle for the second part is dated 1778. Andrew Bell (1726–1809) was an Edinburgh engraver. This edition was reissued as part of Andrew Bell, *Anatomia Britannica: a system of anatomy. Comprising the whole of Albinus's Tables, with selections from Cowper, and other eminent anatomists; illustrated by 109 copper plates*. . . . In three parts, 2 vols. in 1, Edinburgh, A. Bell, 1798.

<sup>12</sup> Alexander Monro, *secundus* (1733–1817), *Observations on the structure and functions of the nervous system*, Edinburgh, William Creech and T. Cadell, 1783; idem, *The structure and physiology of fishes explained and compared with those of man and other animals*, Edinburgh, C. Elliot, 1785.

<sup>13</sup> John Moore (1729–1802), physician and author, MD (Glasgow 1770), *Medical sketches*, London, A. Strahan & T. Cadell, 1786. See next letter.

N<sup>o</sup> 9 9

Bath Oct<sup>r</sup> 13<sup>th</sup> 1790

Many thanks, kind sir, for your very polite and obliging letter, replete with shrewd observ<sup>s</sup> on a variety of subjects, w<sup>h</sup> at present I can only acknowledge, not answer by entering into particulars, as I cou'd wish. Your progress in y<sup>r</sup> studies affords me the highest satisfaction, but let not your ardour exceed the rules of discretion or interfere with the necess<sup>y</sup> hours of sleep and bodily exercise. The mental complacency and even delight which you experience in the prosecution of your studies augurs well and doubtless renders you more able to pursue your inquiries with perseverance and alacrity, but yet still the human machine demands due intervals of rest and relaxation without which all y<sup>e</sup> mental and corporeal functions languish and disease follows. "Neque semper arcum tendit Apollo."<sup>1</sup> Please to give Moore's Sketches another perusal before you return the book, and as you have read y<sup>e</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> vol. Mem<sup>s</sup> of London Medical Soc<sup>y</sup><sup>2</sup> you shou'd, methinks, tho' somewhat prematurely, read y<sup>e</sup> first now sent with this and a huge catalogue of Lackington's,<sup>3</sup> w<sup>h</sup> I have borrowed at Ball's Lib<sup>y</sup><sup>4</sup> till next week, that you may run over and mark out such books as you may soon want, but without ordering them till I see whether they are not some of them in my collections. The books in general are cheaper than in any wholesale catalogue I know, but whether he is the cheapest bookseller in Europe I must leave the literati to judge.

## Letters

I have only the first edit<sup>n</sup> of Cullen's Physiolog<sup>y</sup><sup>5</sup> or would send it with this, as you are now well prepared for it. Books in many vols. are perhaps best bo<sup>t</sup> in sheets or boards, as 2 vol<sup>s</sup> may often be thrown into one. When you have finished y<sup>r</sup> pres<sup>t</sup> reading you may have Hewson. Your letter tho' very long contains no mater<sup>l</sup> slips worth noticing, except the want of note of interrogation (?) when you ask the question, and the omission of a letter now and then—thro' hurry. Nauseating med<sup>s</sup> as ipecacuanha, in small doses excite absorption, the digitalis possesses this power in common with the rest, but has also a deleterious quality w<sup>h</sup> affects the whole genus nervosum in a superior degree, and therefore requires no small caution. D<sup>r</sup> Withering<sup>6</sup> asserts that it answers best when given so as to occasion sickness, if so, the above idea is erroneous what you say of its modus operandi. But this requires further observ<sup>n</sup> and inquiry. Many things he seems to have advanced too hastily and too preemptorily. I am sorry I have got but one of your books looked over, but will glance over the rest as opport<sup>s</sup> offer. I wish this may be in time for carrier, Dear Sir, y<sup>rs</sup> assuredly  
A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> "Nor does Apollo always bend his bow". Horace, *Odes*, 2.10.19–20.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs of the Medical Society of London instituted in the year 1773*, vols. 1–6, London, 1787–1805.

<sup>3</sup> Lackington, Allen & Company of London, purported to be the largest and most inexpensive second-hand booksellers in the country. Founded by James Lackington (1746–1815).

<sup>4</sup> Ball or Bull equally likely.

<sup>5</sup> William Cullen, *Institutions of medicine. Part 1. Physiology*, Edinburgh, 1772. Fourth edition, 1788.

<sup>6</sup> William Withering (1741–1799), MD (Edinburgh 1766), practised in Birmingham, member of the Lunar Society, and author of *Account of the Fox-glove, and some of its medical uses: with practical remarks on dropsy and other diseases*, Birmingham, G. G. J. and J. Robinson, 1785.

N<sup>o</sup> 10 10

Bath Nov<sup>r</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> 1790

Dear Sir,

Various engagements obliged me to postpone answering your last very obliging letter till now, and even now I am pressed for time too much to notice all y<sup>e</sup> particulars in it, and also in your former letter. Suffice it to say that some extracts from your letters were conveyed to my friend D<sup>r</sup> Hawes in London who approved of them so much as to read them to the Med<sup>l</sup> Soc<sup>y</sup>,<sup>1</sup> consisting of many able judges and that they were very graciously received and met with merited approbation. The gum kino<sup>2</sup> is a powerful antiseptic, at least out of the body, but I have no experience of it in putrid fevers or sore throats. The digitalis I conceive does not act first on the sensorium, but on the nerves of the stomach from whence its action is propag<sup>d</sup> to the sensorium and from thence to y<sup>e</sup> rest of the nervous system. In ecchymoses from violent contusions, red blood is undoubtedly extravasated but by suitable discutient applications may be reabsorbed by the adjacent lymphatics. Preparations of lead are powerful remedies to alloy inflammation and pain in recent injuries, but beware of their use where the skin is stripped off; see my Cautions on Lead.<sup>3</sup> Perfectly just is y<sup>r</sup> observ<sup>n</sup>—“that an early and guarded education is the bes<sup>t</sup> security of virtue” etc., and I

trust you will experience this in every future stage of your life in the amplest manner. D<sup>r</sup> Stonhouse, I have the pleasure to assure you is so much recovered as to be able to preach. He was formerly as eminent in physic as latterly in pulpit eloquence.

No med<sup>l</sup> books of D<sup>r</sup> Moore have come to my knowledge but the Sketches. His tours in France, Italy and Switzerland are well written and his Obser<sup>s</sup> on men and manners, in general very just, as well as entertaining.<sup>4</sup> I have seen none of the authors on the lymph<sup>s</sup> you mention. Cruikshank's new edit<sup>n</sup> is the latest and I imagine the best in the English language, as he had before him my friend Hewson's excellent work in 3 Vol<sup>s</sup> containing many discoveries w<sup>h</sup> you are now able to enter upon, and which I send for your perusal and am sorry I have not Cruikshank's to accompany or follow it, nor the new edit<sup>n</sup> of Cullen's Physiology which will next come in play. But meddle not yet with the materia medica. Remember too many irons in the fire etc. You know the rest. Revise and digest what you have already read, and then I can furnish you in due time with almost the whole of the books you have remarked in Lackington's catalogue, except Hunter<sup>5</sup> and Ferguson<sup>6</sup> neither of which are wanted at present. Gregory<sup>7</sup> and van Swieten<sup>8</sup> tho excellent are premature. Begin not the column of science at the apex, but at the base. Slight serous discharges from the ears are only increased secretion and want of absorption—but real abscesses occur and where the member tympanic is ulcerated then an incurable deafness commonly succeeds. Your mother's I hope is not of this kind but more of this when I next see you. Meanwhile accept my thanks for y<sup>e</sup> 6 vol<sup>s</sup> of books herewith returned and w<sup>h</sup> I have dipped into in various places with satisfaction. Knox<sup>9</sup> seems to merit a place on the same shelf with y<sup>e</sup> World, the Adventurer and y<sup>e</sup> Observer, tho' inferior to y<sup>e</sup> Spectator, Tatler and Guardian. Martin is clear plain and perspicuous. Nicholson is deep in the latest discoveries, a masterly compendium but too abstruse for a beginner, and too superficial for an adept. Simmons<sup>10</sup> seems tolerably accurate, but little more than a large syllabus for lectures, too short as a compendium. Sea bathing by no means to be depended on against canine madness.<sup>11</sup> Aitkin's book<sup>12</sup> will not be necessary. Having thus noticed the principal parts of your last letters, I have but just room to add a nod of hearty approbation on y<sup>r</sup> rapid progress and to wish you health to proceed. Vale!

A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> The Medical Society of London, founded by John Coakley Lettsom (1744–1815) in 1773.

<sup>2</sup> A resin from the Gambia, gum kino, gumm Gambiense, see Royal College of Physicians of London, *The new pharmacopoeia . . . translated . . . by Thomas Healde*, 2nd ed., London, J. W. Galabin, 1788, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Fothergill, letter 6, note 6.

<sup>4</sup> John Moore, *A view of society and manners in France, Switzerland, and Germany . . . By a gentleman who resided several years in those countries*, London, 1779, seventh edition, 1789; and, idem, *A view of society and manners in Italy: with anecdotes relating to some eminent characters*, 2 vols., London, W. Strahan & T. Cadell, 1781. Both books went through numerous editions. Moore graduated MD at Glasgow in 1770.

<sup>5</sup> Presumably a work by either William Hunter (1718–1783) or John Hunter (1728–1793). Probably John. See letter 15.

<sup>6</sup> Presumably one of the works of James Ferguson, see letter 5, note 5.

<sup>7</sup> Presumably one of the many editions of James Gregory (1753–1821), *Conspectus medicinae theoreticae*, Edinburgh, Balfour & Smellie, 1780.

<sup>8</sup> Possibly, Gerhard van Swieten (1700–1772), *Commentaria in Hermanni Boerhaave aphorismos de cognoscendis et curandis morbis*, 10 vols., Naples, J. Ponzellius & Manfredi, 1745–1772. Many subsequent editions and English translations.

<sup>9</sup> Unclear reference. Possibly, William Knox (1732–1810), pamphleteer and loyalist during the American Revolution. Under-secretary of state for America 1770–1782.

## Letters

<sup>10</sup> Samuel Foart Simmons (1750–1813), physician (doctor of physic, Leyden 1776), FRS, author of *Anatomy of the human body*, vol. 1, London, printed for J. Murray, 1780. Simmons translated and edited Claude Person (d. 1758), *Elements of anatomy*, London, 1775; second edition, London, printed for J. Wilkie, 1781.

<sup>11</sup> For an example of the use of sea bathing for rabies see R. James, *A treatise on canine madness*, London, printed for J. Newbery, 1760.

<sup>12</sup> Probably, John Aitkin (d. 1790), *Principles of anatomy and physiology*, 2 vols., London, J. Murray, 1786. Also the author of *Systematic elements of the theory and practice of surgery*, Edinburgh, W. Gordon & W. Creech, 1779. It was no doubt the former work to which Fothergill referred.

## N<sup>o</sup> 12 11

Bath Dec<sup>r</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> 1790

Yesterday, Kind Sir, I was favoured with your good mother's very obliging present of a fine turkey accompanied by your polite letter, for both of which I take the earliest opportunity of returning my sincere thanks. But with all I must request you to convince your dear mother that this kind work is to me a work of supererogation and that this tribute of gratitude was not meant to be exacted at her hands. All your letters breathe the language of a heart overflowing with grateful sensibility, therefore no other visible pledge of your gratitude was necessary. For this with me surpasses every other. But this it seems does not come up to your kind mother's ideas, therefore she must be allowed to go on in her own way as I find nothing short of that will satisfy her. The passages selected from your letter are marked out by Dr Hawes which on looking them over again I find needed no correction, and were such as cou'd only confer credit on the writer. My time at present will but just allow me to notice a few of the principal parts of your present letter now before me. Respiration, tho' of late explained with much ingenuity, does not yet seem to be completely understood. Tho' nitre itself is not present in the atmosphere, yet dephlog<sup>d</sup> air, one at least of the constituent principles of the nitrous acid, is always present, and this I take to be quite sufficient to give a florid redness to the blood. As to the phlogis<sup>n</sup> so much spoken of, its very existence is called into question by some of the most expert chemists abroad, and all the phenomena are well explained without it. Therefore till its identity is better established Dr Priestley's conclusions concerning respiration etc. must remain sub judice. Nor can animal heat be truly explained on attrition of the principles of the blood or between the blood and the sides of y<sup>e</sup> arteries. No attrition of fluid parts or of fluids against solids is capable of generating a heat of 96° or 97°, the animal heat. Nor can I allow that the heat of the body always keeps pace with the velocity of the circulation or the vicinity of the heart. Examine by the thermometer the heat of a child whose pulse beats 120 in a minute, and that of an elderly person whose pulse does not exceed 60 or half the above, and I fancy you'll find the temperature in both pretty nearly alike. The same I apprehend wou'd be observed were the instrument placed in the cavity of the heart of an animal and afterwards in the trunk of any large vessel remote from the heart, as the vena porta or iliac vessels, tho' I cannot say I have actually tried the experiment. No sensible or absolute heat or flame can exist, I believe, in nature without dephlogisticated air. By the attraction of this to latent heat a chemical union takes place, and the result is sensible heat, and this I conceive to be the true cause of the heat of animal bodies. But this is connected with some of the most

Anthony Fothergill

difficult problems in philosophy, and the deepest researches in chemistry, therefore to enter any further into it at present wou'd be premature. Be content at present to investigate the more obvious parts of the animal oeconomy, and leave these subtleties to adepts who, I can assure you, are by no means yet agreed as to the cause of animal heat or of respiration, or even the figure of the red portion of the blood. The tabes mesenterica.<sup>1</sup> when you come to practical authors, you'll find described by Boerhaave,<sup>2</sup> Hoffmann<sup>3</sup> and others; a complaint I believe often fatal to children, and not to be cured unless in the early stage of the disease and before schirrosity or suppuration of the glands takes place. D<sup>r</sup> Moore<sup>4</sup> (like many eminent practitioners) who in compliance with popular prejudice, prescribes James's powder, prefers it to emetic tartar as being less emetic, and as more satisfactory to the family, without considering that this is (as you well observe) giving a sanction to empiricism.

Tho' some men of extensive knowledge have become deists, yet none but shallow minute philosophers have ever become atheists, and these I believe very rare, and only so by fits and starts. The most profound philosophers of this or any other country have been Christians by conviction, such as Bacon, Boyle, Locke, Clarke, Newton, Addison, characters not to be equaled among all the host of modern infidels.

Your retrospective view of books already read will be not only useful but pleasing. It is thus after traveling over variegated landscape, that you place yourself on an eminence and retrace all the principal objects, distinguish the several parts with more accuracy and more fully comprehend the beauties of the whole. Instead of saying I am engaged "with going", it would be more correct to say in going through etc., and instead of "imbues the mind with the noblest conceptions" read impresses — and ideas. My tract on lead and copper is not yet published separately and I am sorry.<sup>5</sup> I have not another copy to send you, however I hope M<sup>r</sup> Batchelor will recover the one in question for your use. But don't think of buying one. My own copy I expect from Frome in a day or two. You may detain Moore till you have got thro' Hewson, Cruikshank and Cullen. The two former I know are standing pieces. The two latter I expect you'll find so, but can form no judgment till I see them. Wishing you success in all your literary pursuits, I remain,

Dear Sir, with true  
regard, sincerely yours  
A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> Characterised by fever, emaciation and, at post-mortem, enlarged mesenteric lymph glands. Today most cases would be diagnosed as intestinal tuberculosis.

<sup>2</sup> Hermann Boerhaave (1668–1738), chemist and medical teacher at Leyden. Possibly, one of the many editions of Boerhaave, *Aphorismi de cognoscendis et curandis morbis*, Leyden, J. vander Linden, 1709. Later editions contained extensive commentaries by Gerhard van Swieten See letter 10, note 8. There were many English editions.

<sup>3</sup> Friedrich Hoffmann (1660–1742), *Medicinae rationalis systematicae*, Halle, 1718–40. An English edition appeared in 1783.

<sup>4</sup> Presumably John Moore. See letter 10, note 4.

<sup>5</sup> Fothergill, letter 6, note 6.



Letters

N<sup>o</sup> 13 12

[Jan. 1791?]<sup>1</sup>

Dear Sir,

On my return just now I have met with 2 discourses written for the Humane Society<sup>2</sup> which perhaps you may want to see and if you have not already read my Hints on Animation, the present copy bound with D<sup>r</sup> Hawes's address<sup>3</sup> is much at your service. D<sup>r</sup> Cullen's<sup>4</sup> being a facsimile of my own is returned with the above wishing you, D<sup>r</sup> Sir, a happy new year.

I am much yours A. Fothergill

Walcot Parade, Tuesday Evening

P.S. Wed. noon— The enclosed has waited till now that I forward it by my patient M<sup>r</sup> Jenkins of Farleigh Castle, whose wife was no sooner cured of a confirmed dropsy, than the poor man fell into the same deplorable disease accompanied by asthma. This singularly curious explanation of Virgil's Eclogues has just cast up among my books, and as it may be of use to you in your grammatical pursuits it is much at your service. As soon as you can find a leisure day, and can be spared from home come over and breakfast with me at 9 or dine at three. In the interim drop me a line and believe me, D<sup>r</sup> Sir, yours assuredly

A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> Undated, but the reference to *Hints* (sent June 1790, see letter 6), the original numbering and "happy new year" suggest early 1791.

<sup>2</sup> Not identified.

<sup>3</sup> See letter 6, note 7.

<sup>4</sup> The reference is unclear. William Cullen did publish *A letter to Lord Cathcart . . . concerning the recovery of persons drowned and seemingly dead*, London, J. Murray, 1776.

N<sup>o</sup> 11 13

Bath April 9<sup>th</sup> 1791

My Dear Sir,

Various engag<sup>ts</sup> which would be too tedious to enumerate have obliged me to defer writing, till now that I find myself at length indebted to you for two very kind and very elaborate letters. In both of which I observe with pleasure very evident marks of improvement, and that the outlines of study which at different times I have endeav<sup>d</sup> to sketch out to you have been observed with no small attention. You have already obtained a just idea of the structure and organization of y<sup>r</sup> vernacular language, and have not studied Lowth in vain. The elegancies and final polish will be acquired in due time from Sheridan on Elocution<sup>1</sup> Professor Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric and a perusal of the best English writers, as the Spectator, Tatler, Guardian, Adventurer, Rambler, etc. all which may be considered as classical writers. But these must only be dipped into occasionally as a relief to y<sup>e</sup> mind

*Anthony Fothergill*

from severer studies. Please to attend to punctuation, and y<sup>e</sup> proper use of capitals, circumstances too much neglected by many writers, and yet highly necessary to perspicuity and precision. As to emphasis and pronunciation, I take Sheridan's Dict<sup>y</sup><sup>2</sup> to be the best guide. Walker's Dict<sup>y</sup>,<sup>3</sup> price 1 G. just published, is, however, highly extolled in the last Critical Review and may possibly be an improvement on Sheridan. But these in reversion— at present you must complete yourself in the elem<sup>ts</sup> of medical science. Ornamental accomplishments will afterwards follow in due course. As to anatomy and natural phil<sup>y</sup> I question whether you can proceed much further till you attend demonstrations and exp<sup>s</sup>— then Pemberton and Mac<sup>cl</sup>aurin on Sir I. Newton's Phil<sup>y</sup> will come in play. At present you must strive to obtain y<sup>e</sup> first rudiments of chemistry and y<sup>e</sup> materia medica. As to y<sup>e</sup> former there are many elem<sup>y</sup> books, but I know none more clear and perspicuous for a learner than Mac<sup>quer</sup>'s Elem<sup>ts</sup> in 2 vol<sup>s</sup><sup>4</sup> and also Pemberton's Chemistry<sup>5</sup> both which I can lend you, together with Professor Bergman's Chemical Essays,<sup>6</sup> tho' I have not his work on elective attractions. In the materia medica D<sup>r</sup> Cullen's is the best English system but the new edit<sup>n</sup> is augmented to 2 vol<sup>s</sup> 4<sup>to</sup>.<sup>7</sup> Cartheuser,<sup>8</sup> Bergius<sup>9</sup> and Murray<sup>10</sup> on materia medica being in Latin you cannot meddle with these, nor sundry other late valuable authors in different branches without further progress in that language. Therefore if you spare only a single hour a day in the Latin grammar and translating etc. y<sup>e</sup> time wou'd be well employed.

But I fear too much work is cut out for you already, considering that your master's business must be first attended to. However by oeconomy of time and method in study you'll be advancing by degrees, and when you have once got over the thorny brakes and rugged cliffs w<sup>h</sup> lead to the hill of licence you'll find the path more smooth and easy, and new, and delightful prospects will begin to open on all hands. Meanwhile you'll keep a steady eye on the motto, "Nil tam difficile est quod non solertia vincat."<sup>11</sup> I shall exercise you a little in Latin by adding a scrap from D<sup>r</sup> Hewson's late letter<sup>12</sup> concerning a certain medical élève, whose name I leave you to guess. "Legi maxima voluptate observationes optimi juvenis (de quo omnia sperare licet) acumine et notitia insignitas."<sup>13</sup>

I have glanced over Simmons's and Cruikshank's publications and think both may be useful in your anatomical inquiries, particularly the latter which contains some beautiful (and I believe accurate delineations) of the absorbent vessels, a very important part of anatomy. These with the books above mentioned shall be delivered to your order. Monro's Works, I have not yet got looked over; but hope to do so soon. My respects to your kind mother and acquaint her, and M<sup>r</sup> Batchelor, that I hope nothing will prevent the pleasure w<sup>h</sup> I promise myself from your proposed visit on Thursday next at 3 o'clock over a joint of meat and pudding. As I have not time or room to advert to all particulars in your two long letters, please to note down any inquiries you wish me to reply to against that day and remind me also of the books above mentioned. In the interim I remain, D<sup>r</sup> Sir, much y<sup>rs</sup>

A. Fothergill

P.S. My respects to M<sup>r</sup> Palmer am glad to hear he is better, but he must pursue the antiseptic plan longer and be circumspect in his regimen. If he can make it convenient to accompany you on Thursday I shall be glad to see him.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Sheridan (1719–1788), *A course of lectures on elocution: together with two dissertations on language and some other tracts relative to those subjects*, London, 1762.

<sup>2</sup> Idem, *A general dictionary of the English language*, 2 vols., London, 1780; or the revised and enlarged

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edition, *A complete dictionary of the English language, both with regard to sound and meaning*, London, 1789.

<sup>3</sup> John Walker (1732–1807), *A critical pronouncing dictionary and expositor of the English language*, London, 1791.

<sup>4</sup> Pierre Joseph Macquer (1718–1784), *Elements of the theory and practice of chymistry*. Translated [by Andrew Reid], 2 vols., London, A. Millar & J. Nourse, 1758.

<sup>5</sup> Henry Pemberton, *A course of chemistry, divided into twenty-four lectures, formerly given by . . . Doctor Henry Pemberton, . . . now first published from the author's manuscript*, by James Wilson, London, J. Nourse, 1771.

<sup>6</sup> Torbern Olaf Bergman (1735–1784), *Physical and chemical essays: translated from the original Latin . . . by Edmund Cullen. . . . To which are added notes and illustrations, by the translator [and Thomas Beddoes]*, 2 vols., London, J. Murray, 1784; or, 3 vols., London, J. Murray, 1788–91. Fothergill was referring to the latter edition, see letter 15.

<sup>7</sup> William Cullen, *Lectures on the materia medica*, London, T. Lowndes, 1773; and *A Treatise of the materia medica*, 2 vols., Edinburgh, C. Elliot, London, C. Elliot & T. Kay, 1789.

<sup>8</sup> One of the many editions of Johann Friedrich Cartheuser (1704–1777), *Fundamenta materiae medicae, tam generalis quam specialis in usum academicum conscripta*, 2 vols. in 1, Frankfurt-on-Oder, J. C. Kleyb, 1749–50.

<sup>9</sup> One of the many editions of Peter Jonas Bergius (1730–1790), *Materia medica e regno vegetabili, sistens simplicia officinalia, pariter atque culinaria. Secundum systema sexuale, ex autopsia et experientia*, 2 vols., Stockholm, P. Hesselberg, 1778.

<sup>10</sup> Johan Anders Murray (1740–1791), *Apparatus medicaminum tam simplicium quam praeparatorum et compositorum in praxeos adjumentum consideratus*, Göttingen, J. C. Dieterich, 1776–92.

<sup>11</sup> There is no difficulty so great that ingenuity does not overcome it". Known proverb. See letter 5.

<sup>12</sup> Unclear reference.

<sup>13</sup> "I have read with the greatest pleasure the observations of the excellent young man (concerning whom we may hope for everything). Observations which are distinguished by their acuity and insight".

<sup>14</sup> Presumably Alexander Monro, *primus, The works of Alexander Monro published by his son, Alexander Monro. . . . To which is prefixed, the life of the author [by D. Monro]*, Edinburgh, C. Elliot, 1781.

## N<sup>o</sup> 14 14

Bath June 10<sup>th</sup> 1791

Dear Sir,

Your kind letter together with the books and your mother's obliging present all arrived safe, for which please to accept my best thanks. But why continue to put yourselves to this unnecessary expense and trouble in accomplishing works of supererogation? Your former excellent letter ought not to have remained so long unanswered, for notwithstanding the manifold interruptions I meet with, yet I cannot wholly absolve myself of remissness when I look back to the date, and reflect on the pains such an elaborate letter must have cost you! However tho' time, I am sensible, can be but ill-spared from your other unavoidable occupations, and the more profitable pursuit of your studies, yet the labour I see with pleasure is far from being lost. On the contrary it affords a most useful exercise in improving your style, and enabling you to write with elegance and facility, an accomplishment aimed at by many but attained by few. In short I find much to commend and but little to blame. Sometimes thro' haste a note of interrogation or a note of admiration is omitted. Sometimes the style rather too diffuse, but little more practice will lead to conciseness and precision. In medical correspondence it is often desirable to say a great deal in a small compass, but while we attempt to condense our ideas we must beware of obscurity. For perspicuity must never be sacrificed to a mistaken brevity, or like him who attempted to enclose Homer's

Anthony Fothergill

Iliad in a nutshell, we shall be obliged to confess “Brevis esse laboro—obscurus fio.”<sup>1</sup>

I cannot resist sporting now and then a scrap of Latin by way of exercise—wishing you could spare (tho’ I fear you cannot) half an hour in a day for the Latin classics. If the method proposed for your mother on the acoustic instrument enables her to hear better, I shall be much pleased. Her hearing more distinctly in a carriage etc. confirms my idea of the deafness being nearly connected with nervous debility and relaxation of the chorda tympani,<sup>2</sup> and you have explained the reason exactly as I conceive it to be. Has she given electricity a fair trial? The case of catalepsy you mention being very uncommon, were it carefully described at large wou’d merit a place in some periodical work of note. As to luxations,<sup>3</sup> Monro and the last anatomists seem to agree in thinking the ligament is lacerated when the luxation is complete. The treatment as you well observe demands saturnine applications and sometimes venesection and other evacuations. The buffy appearance of the blood too often regulates venesection tho’ properly speaking it is by no means a just criterion either as to quantity to be taken, or whether venesection be at all requisite. I cou’d say much on this subject but have not leisure now. Tho’ the enamel of teeth seems not to be vascular, yet the bony part is. The portrait of Cullen<sup>4</sup> exhibits something of the contours of the features but wants animation and gives a wrong idea. Have heard nothing of Bell’s plates.<sup>5</sup> I have more than once seen milky blood but incline to attribute it to unassimilated chyle, not fat with Hewson. The delicate texture of the lungs and the quantity of blood rapidly conveyed thro’ that organ demands uncommon discernment in treating pulmonary diseases. I have wrote for young Whittington and he is somewhat better. Notwithstanding some engagements Tuesday, yet I shall be happy to see you and y<sup>r</sup> brother between 5 and 6 over a cup of tea. Till then I must reserve the sequel of the letters and book affairs etc. I have at length glanced over y<sup>r</sup> volumes and will pack ’em up with some of Bergman’s works against you come. Meanwhile, remain

D<sup>r</sup> Sir much y<sup>rs</sup>

A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> “I labour to be brief, and make myself obscure”. Horace, *Art of poetry*, 25–6.

<sup>2</sup> The chorda tympani which crosses the tympanic cavity was described by eighteenth-century anatomists as a branch of the fifth cranial nerve. See Alexander Monro, ‘Remarks on the articulation, muscles, and luxation of the lower jaw’, in Monro, letter 13, note 14, pp. 231–80, especially pp. 244–8. It is currently regarded as a branch of the seventh or facial nerve.

<sup>3</sup> A luxation is a dislocation. The jaw was probably being discussed. See *ibid.*, although there is no mention of a lacerated ligament, only a wounded tendon, p. 243.

<sup>4</sup> Not identified.

<sup>5</sup> Bell, letter 8, note 11.

N<sup>o</sup> 15 15

Bath June 15<sup>th</sup> 1791

Dear Sir,

Herewith I forward your books viz. Monro’s works and portrait with Hunter’s *Animal Oeconomy*<sup>1</sup> with thanks, and with the above Bergman’s 3 vols. all which I hope you’ll receive safe and may keep mine till you start for Edinburgh and also D<sup>r</sup> Hawes’s new

## Letters

reports of the Humane Society,<sup>2</sup> Scheele<sup>3</sup> and the Annals of Chemistry,<sup>4</sup> a new periodical work you'll see at Edinburgh. You need not carry many books with you, the carriage of which is very expensive to and fro, and they are generally injured. When you take notes at lectures write in large open lines to fill up in a legible way when you return. This will spare transcribing which is loss of time. Avoid all public amusements and dissipated company which will rob you of that time which may be better employed and lead you into unnecessary expense. Once or twice to the theatre or a concert will be sufficient to gratify your curiosity. Rise early and take time by the forelock, and be early at lectures to get a good place especially at the anatomical theatre, or operations at the Infirmary, or in chemistry. But I need not enlarge on these topics which your good sense and discretion will, I am persuaded, point out to you. But amidst the allurements that will surround, it will require no small resolution to be sufficiently on your guard, and to withstand temptation.

“Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit.”<sup>5</sup>

Be firm in resolution but without austerity or incivility. “Suaviter in modo sed fortiter in re.”<sup>6</sup>

Cultivate acquaintance with senior students of a sedate cast, and gain if possible the favour of the professors, and perhaps they may at last recommend you by letter to some leading men of the faculty in London which may be of real service to you hereafter. Theses are given away at graduations, collect as many as you can—the author is flattered by a polite card requesting one tho' no acquaintance. Strive to get to be a member of the medical societies as soon as you can, by being first a visitor, and attend closely to their debates and note down every new and valuable observation. Preserve this letter as a memento from, Dear Sir, your sincere well-wisher.

### A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> Monro, letter 13, note 14, did include a portrait. John Hunter, *Observations on certain parts of the animal oeconomy*, London, [The author], 1786.

<sup>2</sup> William Hawes, *Reports of the [Royal Humane] Society for the recovery of persons apparently drowned*, London, 1779–1789.

<sup>3</sup> Carl Wilhelm Scheele (1742–1786), *The chemical essays of C. W. Scheele, translated from the Transactions of the Academy of Sciences at Stockholm, with additions*. [By Thomas Beddoes], London, 1786.

<sup>4</sup> Possibly, *Annales de chimie*, 36 vols. in 18, Paris, 1789–1800.

<sup>5</sup> “No mortal shows good sense on all occasions”. Known saying.

<sup>6</sup> “Gentle in manner, but resolute in deed”. Not attributable.

N<sup>o</sup> 16 16

Bath July 7<sup>th</sup> 1791

Dear Sir,

At length having obtained a little respite, I hasten to answer the most important parts of your last obliging letter fraught with various observations, and queries on various subjects. Having lately heard that M<sup>r</sup> Seagram<sup>1</sup> of Warminster wants an assistant, I have written to the friend of the young man in Northhamptonshire to treat on that subject, but have not heard the result. Shou'd they not agree, I shall advise them to apply (as you properly

observe) to some of the capital druggists in London, y<sup>e</sup> centre of intelligence. Your own destination more immediately demands our consideration at present. If your mind is made up on the subject, and views limited to chirurgery, pharmacy, and midwifery, it will reduce your plan of study very considerably, tho' I still think it was right to lay the foundation on an enlarged comprehensive basis. You may now construct it suitably to your intended superstructure, and accommodate it to your finances. I have duly weighed your open candid acc<sup>t</sup> of your domestic affairs, the difficulties you have had to struggle with, the circumscribed state of your fortune, your future expectancies, and above all your delicate sense of filial duty so properly discharged and so justly due to a tender and affectionate mother. All these considerations unite in convincing me that you have displayed no small share of prudence, good sense, and moderation in your choice, and that by uniting these 3 branches (as you must do if you fix in the country) you will more speedily and more certainly succeed than if you aspired to a doctor's degree. The success of a physic<sup>n</sup>, as physic is now conducted, is like a lottery where there are almost innumerable blanks to a prize. Medical merit has but small share in securing success and the disappointment falls much heavier than where the candidate sets out in a humbler station. The trappings and accoutrements of the physician at his first setting out are expensive and yet must be supported at all events, because both the great and small vulgar are dazzled with these far more than by his professional abilities, and if the former are wanting or any wanting or any defect in either dress or address visible, they are sure to draw very unfavorable inferences as to all the rest. Men of discernment see the matter in a different light, but these are few, alas too few in number!

“Rari nantes in gurgite vasto.” Virgil<sup>2</sup>

With the foundation you have already laid, and with your diligence and application, as the matter now stands, I persuade myself that a single year at Edinburgh will be sufficient to equip you for surgery, pharmacy, and midwifery. The principal objects of your studies will be anatomy and if you can at easy expense get to be a dissecting pupil so much the better, but subjects are scarce, and dear at Edinburgh, much easier had in London. You should attend the Infirmary closely, much cheaper than a London hospital, as 3 G to 20 G!<sup>3</sup> You must attend a course of chemistry and materia medica and the clinical lectures. These will I think be sufficient. For if you attempt to add the theory and practice of physic you will have too many irons in the fire, and they will clash with one another, and the former you'll find enough to occupy your whole time. Should you protract your stay part of the summer you may attend midwifery and perhaps botany at leisure. Obtain a list of the Medical Society and get acquainted with the leading members who will introduce you as a visitor, and perhaps put you in the way of being elected. Strive to conciliate their favour over a dish of tea now and then. To be elected wou'd be a great acquisition, and you wou'd profit by their debates, and acquire a facility of speaking in public. A few words more in answer to some of your queries and then I must hasten to conclusion being now past midnight and the eyelids drowsy. 1 Sweat, I consider as an increased perspiration discharged by the same vessels, but more impregnated with saline acrimony as happens when any discharge is considerably increased. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lentor and viscosity as a cause of disease is an hypothesis nearly out of date.<sup>4</sup> The state of fluids keep pace with the tone of the solids and their deviations are rather consequences than causes of disease. 3<sup>rd</sup> The brain is the seat of sense, and intellect, but sensibility or sensation is diffused thro' every ramification of the nervous system. 4<sup>th</sup> Mineral acids in a dilute state, there is reason to believe, enter the blood as well

## Letters

as vegetables. Alkalis enter beyond a doubt. 5<sup>th</sup> Epilepsy—your remarks correspond with my own observations in general both as to diet and medicine, on the whole mineral tonics seem preferable, the cortex<sup>5</sup> rarely succeeds. Nor can anything else in certain cases—such as that of poor Miss Edwards. Milk is good but sometimes disposes too much to plethora unless diluted. B. Robinson is an ingenious writer,<sup>6</sup> but fanciful, and too fond of theory, bold in hazarding doubtful remedies, as emetics in hæmoptoe etc. I am glad the books reached you safe. I ordered my servant to pay y<sup>e</sup> carrier, but not finding him, the shopman also not seeing him, sent the parcel by chaiseman who erased (for prudential reasons) “carriage paid” which ought not to have been done. I am glad cousin B[ainbridge] is better—my respects when you see him, and in the interim forward the enclosed. Take your own time with Bergman, and I can supply you with Lavoisier’s Chemistry by Henry<sup>7</sup> and D<sup>r</sup> Percival’s<sup>8</sup> works etc. Dear Sir,

much yours,  
A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> Possibly one of two surgeons practising in Warminster, Wiltshire, John Seagram (*fl.* 1760–1800) or Thomas Seagram (1720–1805?). See Wallis and Wallis, letter 1, note 2, p. 531.

<sup>2</sup> “A few swimmers here and there in the vast sea”. Virgil, *Aeneid*, 1.118.

<sup>3</sup> Fothergill was correct. On Edinburgh Infirmary “tickets” see A. Logan Turner, *Story of a great hospital: the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh*, Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1937, ch. 9. On London prices see Susan C. Lawrence, *Charitable knowledge: hospital pupils and practitioners in eighteenth-century London*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 108.

<sup>4</sup> Fothergill was again being faithful to Cullen, who had rejected Boerhaave’s theory of “lensor”. See William Cullen, *The works of William Cullen, M.D.*, 2 vols., Edinburgh, William Blackwood, 1827, vol. 2, p. 491.

<sup>5</sup> Cortex Peruvianus, cinchona or Peruvian bark.

<sup>6</sup> Bryan Robinson (1680–1754), physician and mathematical writer, MD (Trinity College, Dublin), after 1745 professor of physic, member of the Irish Royal College of Surgeons, and three times president of the King and Queen’s College of Physicians in Ireland.

<sup>7</sup> Antoine Laurent Lavoisier (1743–1794), *Essays on the effects produced by various processes on atmospheric air; with a particular view to an investigation of the constitution of the acids, . . . translated from the French by Thomas Henry*, Warrington, 1783.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Percival (1740–1804), *Essays, medical, philosophical, and experimental*, London, 1767. Fourth edition, 1788–89.

N<sup>o</sup> 17 17

Bath August 6<sup>th</sup> 1791

Accept, my dear sir, in answer to your long and very obliging letter a short hasty reply which is all that time will allow at present. My design was to have called on you and also my cousin Bainbridge in the course of this week, but some new arrivals, and other indispensable engagements have defeated my purpose. However as you promise me a visit on Monday he will probably accompany you if you let him know tomorrow (Sunday).<sup>1</sup> If the day is favourable I shall hope to see you here by two o’clock to partake of a joint of mutton. If you ride, order my servant to put your horses in my stable and enter no inn but mine at the sign of 107 miles from London w<sup>h</sup> you’ll find engraven on stone near my lower door.

Anthony Fothergill

D<sup>r</sup> Gregory's Duties of a Physician merits your reperusal again and again whether you put on the Togam medicam or not.

"Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna" Hor<sup>2</sup>

After a regular course you'll comprehend Bergman tho' the new nomenclature renders it a puzzle till the terms become familiar.<sup>3</sup> Angiology and neurology can only be acquired by demonstration on the recent subject, and by proper preparations, all w<sup>h</sup> you'll see in abundance at Profess<sup>r</sup> Monro's theatre, and afterwards at D<sup>r</sup> Hunter's excellent Museum in Windmill Street, w<sup>h</sup> is perhaps the first collection of anatomical preparations in Europe.<sup>4</sup> That of y<sup>e</sup> present John Hunter is, I am informed, the next.<sup>5</sup> Now a word or 2 in ans<sup>r</sup> to y<sup>r</sup> queries and then conclude. 1 Notwithstanding the vain boasting of quacks concerning their infallible solvents, I believe no such thing as a safe and certain solvent of y<sup>e</sup> stone in y<sup>e</sup> bladder is yet known. The mephitic water is perfectly safe, affords relief and prevents accretion and perhaps approaches nearer to the grand desideratum than anything yet discovered. But I cannot presume to call it a certain solvent. Those who pretend it does not act as a diuretic, are deceived, and their writings mislead the public as I can prove from long and attentive observation. 2<sup>d</sup> Emetics in the phthisis pulmonalis are strongly insisted on by my friend D<sup>r</sup> Reid whose book<sup>6</sup> I will lend you on y<sup>r</sup> return, but tho' the practice in certain cases is doubtless beneficial yet in others it is doubtful, if not injurious, especially where there is hæmoptysis. 3<sup>rd</sup> Some attribute the vermifuge power of [?] Stan[. . .] to an arsen[ical]<sup>7</sup> principle, but so volatile a substance as arsenic if present must be dissipated by the melting [of] the tin. I conclude its action is mechanical, and that the filings are the best pp<sup>n</sup>. 4 If the headache proceeds from sympathy with the stomach in consequence of vit<sup>d</sup> bile or indigestion, the speediest remedy is an emetic followed by repeated doses of calcined magnesia and copious dilution. To prevent a return, tonics, bitters and aromatics will succeed, if temperance be observed, otherwise not. Coffee affords temp<sup>y</sup> relief.

5 The modus operandi of medicine is still imperfectly understood. Their act<sup>n</sup> on y<sup>e</sup> blood is I think evidently in a secondary way.

The chief action is on the nerves of the stomach and intestines. No direct proof that bark or steel enter proprio Marte<sup>8</sup> the lacteals, yet the chyle imbued with virtues probably finds entrance in a superior degree to what modern physiologists are disposed to allow. Besides the ærial fluids evolved may produce new combinations at present little dreamt of even by our most enlightened pneumatic philosophers. More when we meet. Thanks for Cullen's M.S.[?] which shall be taken care of till your return. I hope you'll receive this today, and am, Dear Sir, yours assuredly

A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> The date of the letter is probably correct. Sunday was the 7th in 1791.

<sup>2</sup> "Thumb their pages by night, thumb them by day". Horace, *Art of poetry*, 269.

<sup>3</sup> I.e. Lavoisier's new chemical nomenclature.

<sup>4</sup> William Hunter's museum was in Great Windmill Street, London.

<sup>5</sup> John Hunter's museum was in Castle Street, London.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Reid (1739–1802), *An essay on the nature and cure of phthisis pulmonalis*, London, 1782; idem, *The second edition enlarged. To which is added an appendix on the use and effects of frequent vomits*, London, T. Cadell [sic], 1785.

<sup>7</sup> Not all decipherable but the context indicates powdered tin—Stanni pulvis—which was used as a vermifuge.

<sup>8</sup> "By his own courage," or, as here, "by its own powers". Ovid, *Letters from Pontus*, 4.7.14.



Bath August 10<sup>th</sup>/91

My Dear Sir,

On reconsideration, Blanchard's *Lexicon Technicum*<sup>1</sup> being in Latin and that not very perspicuous, I fear it wou'd not answer so well as Motherby's *Dictionary*<sup>2</sup> therefore have not sent it but you shall have it if you choose. If you cannot get books regul<sup>y</sup> f<sup>m</sup> the College Lib<sup>y</sup>, by subscribing to some medical circulating Lib<sup>y</sup> you'll get supplied so as to avoid the carriage of many books backwards and forwards w<sup>h</sup> is very expensive. The enclosed introductory letters require only a wafer<sup>3</sup> before you deliver them. I hope they may in some measure answer the intentions for which they are intended, tho' you'll find the professors at first a little reserved, as it becomes them to avoid showing open partiality to any one, however warmly recommended. Old Monro<sup>4</sup> and Cullen alas are gone, with them I had interest, tho' little with the present set. They were the open patrons of rising merit. I know Duncan<sup>5</sup> but little, Hamilton<sup>6</sup> still less. Shou'd they prove very civil and attentive to my request drop them a short polite note of acknowledgement. This will conciliate favour and enable you to ask a question when at a loss and they will like you the better for it. As to dress—let it be plain neat and becoming a student—black used to be a favourite and fashionable dress and at the same time frugal. Any thing tawdry or coxcombical disgusts the professors. Snuff taking is but too fashionable. I found it contagious and contracted a bad habit which I have never been able to leave off—you may take a pinch if asked but never carry a box—if you do, you deserve to be boxed. Choose an airy light room with few students in the house. If good Mr Mosman in the Lawn Market be living, call on him with my best respects and grateful remembrance, a worthy obliging man free from pride or ceremony. He may assist you in recommending proper lodgings and prevent imposition. Also M<sup>r</sup> and M<sup>rs</sup> Hart, High Street, my other acquaintance. Except the Miss Crows (Cowgate), to whom my respects, are dead or removed. Be home at your lodgings before 10 at night or you may receive unsavoury offerings from Cloacina f<sup>m</sup> every lofty building.<sup>7</sup> The caddies or ticketed porters<sup>8</sup> are faithful creatures bound to good behaviour and you may send my book or parcel or trunk very safely by them if they wear the ticket. Carry only 30<sup>s</sup> or 40<sup>s</sup> in your pocket, conceal the rest, if in notes, under your garter. Deposit spare cash at some bank where perhaps you may have small interest as 2 or 3 percent as at Bath, rather than keep it in their bureaus<sup>9</sup> to w<sup>h</sup> they may have more than one key. Let not the smiling Scotch lassies inveigle you into intrigue much less matrimony which they are ever on the watch to do and may easily bring about as in joke with unwary youths—but sometimes. "Hæ nugæ seria ducent in mala."<sup>10</sup> I remember 2 or 3 such matches. Keep a little journal of occurrences, and a regular account of disbursements, and if you should fall short of a little cash now, or hereafter, and your poor mother be straitened as to a remittance, let me know. The above hints tho' seemingly trivial may prove of material use to you, and had I been thus admonished beforehand some money and much time would have been saved. Before you return, and after the lectures are over, it may not be amiss to make a short excursion of 2 days to see Stirling, Glasgow etc. I cannot recollect anything material further at present, but let me hear from you at least once more before you start for the land

Anthony Fothergill

of cakes, where as Virgil observes on another occasion!!

“Infelix lolium et steriles dominantur avenae.”<sup>11</sup>

But respects to your worthy mother.

Dear Sir, adieu!

A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> Probably, Steven Blankaart (Stephanus Blancardus) (1650–1702), *Lexicon medicum renovatum, in quo totius artis medicae termini. . . . exponuntur. . . . Hisce adjungitur Graecarum vocum etymologia; tum earum Belgica, Germanica, Gallica, Anglica &c. interpretatio; cum indicibus. Ed. novissima*, Leyden, S. Luchtman, 1735.

<sup>2</sup> George Motherby (1732–1793), *A new medical dictionary; or, general repository of physic*, London, J. Johnson, 1775.

<sup>3</sup> A flour and gum mixture used to seal letters.

<sup>4</sup> Alexander Monro, *primus*, professor of anatomy in the university of Edinburgh.

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Duncan, the elder (1744–1828), since 1790 professor of the theory or institutes of medicine in the university of Edinburgh.

<sup>6</sup> Alexander Hamilton (1739–1802), since 1780 professor of midwifery in the university of Edinburgh.

<sup>7</sup> At ten o'clock each evening the day's “domestic abominations” (the “flowers of Edinburgh”) were flung into the street. Henry Grey Graham, *The social life of Scotland in the eighteenth century*, 5th ed., London, Adam and Charles Black, 1969, p. 83.

<sup>8</sup> Caddies carried messages and parcels around Edinburgh for a penny. In spite of their poverty they had a reputation for honesty. See Graham, *ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>9</sup> I.e. at his lodgings.

<sup>10</sup> “These frivolities will lead to serious evils”. Horace, *Art of poetry*, 451.

<sup>11</sup> “The unfruitful darnel and barren wild oats prevail”. Virgil, *Georgics*, 1.154.

N<sup>o</sup> 19 19

Bath Aug<sup>t</sup> 27<sup>th</sup> 1791

Accept, D<sup>r</sup> Sir, my best thanks for your kind present of a live turkey which struts about my garden and expands its tail with great majesty, unconscious, poor animal, of its impending fate! Reluctant to destroy these poor innocent unoffending creatures, I forbear to pronounce its doom from day to day and to avoid which shall, at last, probably send it to some friend at a distance. Your obliging letter tho' “too civil by half” in overrating my endeavours to serve your interest, yet as it bespeaks a mind overflowing with gratitude, it does no small honour to the head, and heart of the writer, whose language glows with sensibility and is expressed with energy. What I have said in your favour to the professors was not meant as a flattering eulogy, but my real sentiments of your merit, concerning which I am convinced they will not find me mistaken or guilty of drawing an overstrained panegyric, which, I well know, often defeats the author's intention. If D<sup>r</sup> Duncan is now President of the College,<sup>1</sup> as I have since heard, you will alter the direction of my letter accordingly. Since my good neighbour M<sup>r</sup> Dawson<sup>2</sup> returned from Edin<sup>f</sup> I have made particular enquiry as to some points that concern you, and have requested his sentiments in writing, which he has kindly put down at large and which I here enclose. If the weather proves even tolerable, I think you may save much expense in traveling by observing his directions and see the country to great advantage by sitting with the coachman on the box, but on the roof is much easier taking with you a stout great coat to have in readiness in case no room can be had

## Letters

within, in case of rain. Be sure to travel in boots at all events, and when coaches are changed see your luggage replaced yourself. If you have not a leathern portmanteau with lock and key, I can lend you mine, as I don't want it, or saddle bags, both w<sup>h</sup> lie idle. Mr D[awson] cou'd learn nothing of M<sup>r</sup> Hart or M<sup>r</sup> Mosman at Edin<sup>r</sup> so I fear they are no more, but Mrs Morison will I trust supply the defect. If they are dead of w<sup>h</sup> she will also inform you, as perhaps they have only removed to another quarter. The books you propose are very proper to be reperused before you start. You may omit going further in nat<sup>l</sup> philosophy till some short course occurs hereafter from some of the traveling lecturers, which added to your reading will be quite sufficient. Shou'd you have leisure you may now properly look over my namesake's works, which I can lend you. But never more compare to Anthony F<sup>l</sup> who shrinks from every comparison of this nature, and who must be content to contemplate his character in awful silence and admiration, and to follow with humble step! — “non passibus æquis.”<sup>3</sup> Shou'd you find a want of D<sup>r</sup> Cullen's works or any others in your possession or mine you can have them sent by the wagon, but till you find what books are now used in the preliminary way, it will be best to take a few, especially as you have carefully gone thro' them already. Being called to M<sup>r</sup> Halliday at Bradford the morning of the thunder storm, I passed thro' Trowbridge, and calling at Mr P[almer] found you was gone as I expected, so passed on to see Bainbridge and being weatherbound at Freshford and Stoke did not reach home till half past 10 in the evening. The flashes of lightning from various parts of the heavens were uncommonly vivid and awfully sublime particularly as I passed over Claverton Down. My Servant who was much frightened kept close behind me, and we fortunately escaped the danger of that tremendous night, w<sup>h</sup> spread horror over the greatest part of this island, and much damage in some places I am sorry to find has accrued. Keep a little journal of remarkables in your journey, and afterwards at Edin<sup>r</sup>, if your poor mother finds any difficulty in raising the necessary supplies and a small sum will prove agreeable, I hope you will make free in mentioning it. To the instructions already offered I see nothing at present to add but what your own good sense will readily suggest. “Nullum numen abest, si sit Prudentia”<sup>4</sup>

Dear Sir, much yours

A. Fothergill

P.S. But respects to y<sup>r</sup> D<sup>r</sup> mother with many thanks. At my request M<sup>r</sup> Dawson will spare you his Edin<sup>r</sup> guide till you set out which will give you much information. No such guide in my time. Tempora mutantur<sup>5</sup> apropos. I have just rec<sup>d</sup> 2 copies of a new book on animation<sup>6</sup> from D<sup>r</sup> Hawes who requests your acceptance of one of them. If you write to him by private hand or under cover to me, he lives in Spital Square now not Bury St. A spare copy of my thesis<sup>7</sup> is just cast up among my Lawtonian collection, and is at y<sup>r</sup> service. When y<sup>r</sup> classes are over you may by way of exercise in y<sup>r</sup> Latinity translate it into English if you should find leisure.

As soon as you can make acquaintance with any of the members of the Royal Society [of Edinburgh] or Royal Medical Society get introduced as a visitor, and you may then present these copies of my tracts to the secretary, and this may tend to increase your acquaintance and render you more welcome at a future visit. In spring you'll learn who are the intended graduates, and by getting acquainted you'll obtain their theses  
Vale!

Anthony Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Duncan, the elder, became President of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh in 1790.

<sup>2</sup> Probably Benjamin Dawson (1750–?), Bath apothecary. See Wallis and Wallis, letter 1, note 2, p.158. He seemingly lived, as Fothergill did, in Walcot Parade. See letter 53.

<sup>3</sup> “Not with equal steps”, i.e smaller. Virgil, *Aeneid*, 2.724.

<sup>4</sup> “No deity is absent, if there be prudence”. Juvenal, *Satires*, 10.365.

<sup>5</sup> “The times are changing”. Attributed to Kaiser Lothar I (795–855).

<sup>6</sup> Not identified.

<sup>7</sup> Anthony Fothergill, *De febre intermittente*, Edinburgh, A. Donaldson & J. Reid, 1763.

N<sup>o</sup> 20 20

Bath Oct. 14<sup>th</sup> 1791

Dear Sir, Yesterday I was fav<sup>d</sup> with your obliging letter and am glad you had an agreeable journey, arrived safe and met with so favorable a reception from professors to whom my letters were addressed. My wish was that you should be respectfully received at first setting out and have the satisfaction to find this accomplished beyond my expectation. It now remains with you by assiduity and attention, to confirm the favourable impressions, and secure, if possible, their future friendship. From the circumstances you mention and the defalcation already made in y<sup>r</sup> present cash (w<sup>h</sup> I make no doubt your poor mother thought a very considerable sum) I foresee you will find some difficulty in raising the necess<sup>y</sup> supplies, and that it will therefore be absolutely necess<sup>y</sup> for you to exercise the most rigid oeconomy. However as your views are limited to surgery, pharm<sup>y</sup> and midwifery, there can be no occasion for y<sup>r</sup> branching into any material expense beyond that in w<sup>h</sup> you have already embarked. Indeed the advanced rate of a student’s establishment, even in this circumscribed path, forbids all thoughts of it. Your Infir<sup>y</sup> Ticket extends instead of next Novem<sup>r</sup> to Nov<sup>r</sup> 1792, or else there is some mistake. Instead of 1 G the even<sup>g</sup> anatomical demonstr<sup>n</sup> used only to be 5<sup>s</sup>.<sup>1</sup> The lectures you mention, with the Infirmary and clinical lectures are abundantly sufficient, and more, I fear, than you can find time to digest. The theory of medicine you’ll learn from authors, and will have the indic<sup>ns</sup> and outlines sufficiently delineated from the practical chair. The anatomical professor will give you the basis and principles of surgery, the rest you’ll find in practical writers at the Infirmary. Your notes should be full, but rather a neat abridgement than an attempt to grasp at the whole, you may correct and expand on return home, observing to leave sufficient room for interlineations, a good fountain pen may greatly expedite your labour, and save time in taking notes, espec<sup>y</sup> as you are unacquainted with shorthand. [?] G on introd<sup>n</sup> to y<sup>e</sup> Medical Society!<sup>2</sup>— This is a new and heavy import unknown in my time. Your time I fear will not admit of entering, not to mention y<sup>r</sup> finances. If you can obtain admission about once a month as visitor, as seems probable, it may fully answer your purpose as you stay but one session, you must judge for yourself in this matter. One copy of the tract being intended for the Royal Soc<sup>y</sup> of Edin<sup>r</sup> and the other for the Royal Medical Soc<sup>y</sup> you have by mistake given a duplicate to the latter. The Secretary will be so kind as to allow you to rectify this mistake. I called on your brother lately at Bristol and have seen since at Bath, your and all well. Your letters rec<sup>d</sup>— of which I had an agreeable account so be easy on those heads.

Your boarding with M<sup>r</sup> M<sup>c</sup>auley,<sup>3</sup> a gent of the faculty, was a happy thought and will, I flatter myself, redound greatly to your improvement, and to your information in a variety

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of interesting particulars. The situation is central, and desirable, and if you can secure the friendship of M<sup>r</sup> M[<sup>c</sup>auley] and y<sup>r</sup> med<sup>l</sup> colleague of 2 y<sup>rs</sup> standing, it will, I think, be a great acquisition. Present my respects to these gent<sup>l</sup>. and acquaint them (if you see proper) with any sentiments on this head. When you meet at meal times, if you hint y<sup>r</sup> doubts and difficulties they will kindly clear them up, and by instructive conversation you will thus be enabled to fill the interstices of time with mental improvement. “Vita brevis—ars longa”<sup>4</sup> therefore catch time by the forelock. “Nil actum credens dum quid superesset agendum.”<sup>5</sup> If on the contrary you should turn idle and neglect instruction, I hope y<sup>r</sup> comrades will give me notice that we may get you safely lodged in the Toll Booth. The inclosed bank bill will I hope reach you safe, of w<sup>h</sup> please to enter a memorandum in y<sup>r</sup> pocket book, and mind to endorse it when you pay it away. Let not letter writing encroach on y<sup>r</sup> time except on real business, or when a lucky opportunity offers of conveyance by London or otherwise. I value y<sup>r</sup> last and indeed most of y<sup>r</sup> letters very highly but must now consider y<sup>r</sup> silence as an indication of business, and y<sup>r</sup> time too precious to be squandered in scribbling to, Dear Sir, y<sup>rs</sup> very

sincerely and affectionately  
N.B. Mr Dawson’s A. Fothergill  
Compts

<sup>1</sup> In 1755 Alexander Monro, *secundus*, employed John Innes as a dissector who oversaw the students who returned in the evening to examine the bodies dissected in the day. In 1777 Andrew Fyfe joined Innes, who died shortly afterwards. Fyfe was still in this post when Woodforde attended the university. See Rex E. Wright-St. Clair, *Doctors Monro: a medical saga*, London, The Wellcome Historical Medical Library, 1964, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> The figure at [?] looks like a 5 but it cannot be, or it is a mistranscription. When the Society was founded there seems to have been no introduction fee. Members paid sixpence after each weekly meeting to defray expenses. There were fines for absences without reason. See James Gray, *History of the Royal Medical Society 1737–1937*, Edinburgh University Press, 1952, p. 31. Five guineas seems a huge amount. There was an entrance fee of 2 guineas in 1820 but there are no records of earlier financial matters. In 1969 the fee had gone down to 1 guinea. We are grateful to Pat Strong, Permanent Secretary of the RMS, for this information.

<sup>3</sup> Not identified.

<sup>4</sup> “Life is short, art is long”. Hippocrates, *Aphorisms*, 1, i.

<sup>5</sup> “Thinking nothing had been done so long as anything remained to be done”. Lucan, *Civil War*, 2.657

N<sup>o</sup> 21 21

Bath Feb: 6<sup>th</sup> 1792

Dear Sir,

Pursuant to y<sup>r</sup> request respecting the loan of a small sum to subscribe to some additional lectures, I forwarded without delay the middle of Oct<sup>r</sup> last a Bank of England bill of £10 by the post, w<sup>h</sup> I make no doubt you received safe. Tho’ I did not require an immediate answer, nor press you to write often as heretofore for fear of wasting y<sup>r</sup> time or encroaching on y<sup>r</sup> studies, yet after so many thoughts have elapsed I cannot but wish to hear that the bill proved a seasonable supply at that juncture, and that you pursue your studies with alacrity and success. To spare you the postage of this I send [it] by M<sup>r</sup> Dawson’s parcel to M<sup>r</sup> M<sup>c</sup>leary, apoth<sup>y</sup> in Edin<sup>t</sup>, with whom it perhaps may be not amiss to be acquainted,

*Anthony Fothergill*

as professional men who are residents may now and then befriend a stranger without much trouble in a thousand nameless streets. Your quarters where you entered I hope prove agreeable, and that by this time you find yourself at home among the worthy North Britons who, tho' like the English show a little reserve on first acquaintance, yet afterwards, like them, prove steady and sincere friends where they discover signs of merit to attract their attention. It will, however, behove you to use discretion among the numerous acquaintances with whom you may chance to fall in company, how you form friendships which you will find advisable to confine to a select few, whose character and morals will bear a strict scrutiny. And this maxim you will find important not only now, during y<sup>r</sup> residence in a strange place, but also in y<sup>r</sup> future transactions thro' life wherever your lot may chance to be. Amidst the various deceptions and deep laid artifices to circumvent<sup>1</sup> which are daily had recourse to, espec<sup>y</sup> in populous cities, by deep designing men hackneyed in y<sup>e</sup> ways of fraud, a literary man, devoted to his books, has but little chance unless perpetually upon his guard. I shou'd not have dwelt so long on this point had I not thought it a matter of consequence, and tho' your own prudence may in some measure have anticipated me, yet in such a world as this, which may be considered as a grand theatre where every species of legerdemain and deception is daily practised by a set of masked characters, inexperienced youth can hardly be too wary. Sæpe numero decipiuntur specie recti.<sup>2</sup> Cautela ergo non nocet!<sup>3</sup>

Before M<sup>r</sup> Dawson answers M<sup>r</sup> M<sup>c</sup>leary's order, he wishes to know from you whether he has a good shop and appears to live in credit and in a good situation etc. Mess<sup>rs</sup> Palmer and Silv<sup>r</sup> well, when I was there on Wednesday last. D<sup>r</sup> Bar [indecipherable] is dead and 3 Candidates enter y<sup>e</sup> lists. Was called to M<sup>r</sup> Edgell butcher at Trowbridge in extremis. Died next morning—after a full season Bath now grows thin among the French nobles. The celebrated Countess Gurlis and her very accomplished pupil the Princess D'Orleans were lately under my care. I have only room to add—I remain,

D<sup>r</sup> Sir much y<sup>rs</sup>  
A. Fothergill

N.B. Shou'd you at any time change y<sup>r</sup> lodgings be sure to notice in writing the alteration, at the Post Office.

<sup>1</sup> The sentence makes more sense with “to circumvent” placed after “fraud”. Presumably there has been a transcription error of some sort.

<sup>2</sup> “Often we are deceived by a mirage of right”. Horace, *Art of poetry*, 25.

<sup>3</sup> “Caution therefore does no harm”. Not attributable.

N<sup>o</sup> 23 22

Bath March 15<sup>th</sup> 1792

Dear Sir

Your very obliging letter of Feb. ult. brought me the welcome tidings of your health and your happy progress in y<sup>r</sup> studies, and the seasonable arrival of the bank note, all w<sup>h</sup> afforded

## Letters

me much satisfaction. Your strict attention to oeconomy and abstaining from the allurements of the idle, the vicious and the voluptuous will in time amply reward y<sup>r</sup> self denial, and the interim cannot but prove highly satisfactory to your affectionate mother, whose maternal care and tender solicitude, no doubt follows you in your absence with anxious eye and looks forward with impatience for your joyful return. By steady perseverance in the good course you have begun according to the plan I endeavoured to sketch out for you, I flatter myself you will preserve your health, insure the esteem of your preceptors and obtain an education perfectly adequate to your station, at a moderate expense. But if you once give ear to that Siren pleasure, your declared foe of study and every laudable pursuit, the fertile source of folly, intemperance and disease, farewell of all hopes of excelling in y<sup>r</sup> profession, or gaining the confidence and good will of mankind! For who would willingly entrust his health to the care of one, who is daily hastening to destroy his own? It is recorded of the sage Ulysses that on his approach to the dangerous coast where the Siren poured forth her songs and blandishments, if he but listened, he knew he should certainly be undone as had many of his predecessors. He therefore wisely stopped both his ears, and ordered his attendants to bind him to the mast. By listening to the Siren how many students of promising abilities have suffered shipwreck at an early period in their fame, health, and fortune, too many instances of which have happened within my own remembrance! “Sperne voluptates: nocet empta dolore voluptas”!<sup>1</sup>

The present year I consider as the most important of your life. Ergo, “carpe diem”<sup>2</sup> and “Ito pede certo et securo.”<sup>3</sup>

“Nil tam difficile est quod non solertia vincat.”<sup>4</sup>

Rise early — study diligently, live temperately, allow 1 hour for exercise, 6 or 7 for repose.

In protracting your stay till Sept<sup>r</sup> you judge right. Lectures still going on, libraries open, Infirmary with numerous invalids, notes to be revised, in a word the summer may be well employed, no want of work at Edin<sup>r</sup> to those that are industrious, not even during recess. At present you have many irons in the fire, too many I s<sup>hd</sup> think for most artists to engage with at once. But knowing your dexterity, I flatter myself you will manage them all well, and not suffer one to burn or calcine, w<sup>h</sup> however might probably happen were you permitted to give full scope to your propensity to frequently sitting down to write long letters to A.F. when you should be busy at your anvil. If any preliminary directions of mine in conducting y<sup>r</sup> studies have contributed to enable you now “to feel y<sup>r</sup>self not inferior to many of y<sup>r</sup> colleagues of 2 or 3 years standing” I rejoice at it most sincerely and think the labour well bestowed. But however glad I may be to hear of your progress, I must not retard your literary career so honorable to yourself by tempting you to support a too frequent and laborious correspondence. I gladly engage this opportunity by M<sup>r</sup> Dawson’s packet to the druggist of answering y<sup>r</sup> last very acceptable letter, and must not forget to present best respects from M<sup>r</sup> Batchelor and Bainbridge and M<sup>r</sup> Dawson and D<sup>r</sup> Hawes. The terms of the Med<sup>l</sup> Soc<sup>y</sup> are strangely advanced since my time, and it is now to be regretted, if thro’ some narrow policy the door of science is to be shut against young men of genius, and not to be opened unless they are provided with a Golden Key<sup>5</sup> w<sup>h</sup> may not always be at hand. In this case they certainly have a right to avail themselves of the key of some good natured colleague as often as they decently can, and at other times learn the result of any interesting debate from the Sec<sup>y</sup> or other members and this may answer y<sup>e</sup> purpose tolerably well. But had it been mentioned in time y<sup>e</sup> Gent<sup>n</sup> alluded to should not have been kept out for want of a G[olden] Key. To the professors who in consequence of my recommendation

*Anthony Fothergill*

have shown you so much attention and kindness, be pleased to present my grateful acknowledgements: and it will be your duty and also y<sup>r</sup> interest to strive earnestly to merit their esteem, and profit by their instructions, of w<sup>h</sup> indeed you leave me no room to doubt, but have already given me very ample testimony. Attend closely at the Infirmary to y<sup>e</sup> phenom<sup>a</sup> of diseases, y<sup>e</sup> operations of medicines, the effect of external applications, the diet, regimen, oeconomy and ventilation of y<sup>e</sup> house: of inattention to the last, I think M<sup>r</sup> Howard<sup>6</sup> complains. Indeed there are few hospitals or prisons in w<sup>h</sup> this important circumstance is not still too much neglected. A neglect w<sup>h</sup>, I am persuaded, often defeats the best concerted plan of treatment. What is all the pomp and parade of med<sup>s</sup> when compared to y<sup>e</sup> animated influence of a current of fresh air? In foul offensive wards, nurses and patients often shut windows or air vents that ought to be kept open. If you mark this, complain boldly to the physicians or clinical professor who may be too much engaged to notice every abuse. A lying-in hosp<sup>l</sup> and another for maniacs will be great acquisitions to the College and to the pupils.<sup>7</sup> A course of clinical lectures on insane subjects wou<sup>d</sup> be very interesting to the cause of science and of humanity. Obligated as I often am to write letters by candlelight and at a late hour as at present (1/2 past 1) I feel the inconvenience very sensibly and must request you in future to use blacker ink and larger type. 'Tis a pity such a well—I mean ill-written—letter but replete with elegant phraseology sh<sup>d</sup> be scarcely legible. Imitate not my minikin microscopical hand w<sup>h</sup> I hereby prohibit you, and every person from using except—myself. The moment a man begins to use spectacles he is said to be old, but observe tho' it is the ton to be near-sighted, I am not ambitious to wear spectacles or to be thought old, tho' I confess my garrulity in this long letter may seem a prelude towards it. Take care of y<sup>r</sup> health and of y<sup>r</sup> sight. Without these, what is knowledge to you, D<sup>r</sup> Sir, y<sup>rs</sup>

A. Fothergill—Adieu!

<sup>1</sup> "Scorn pleasure: pleasure bought with woe does harm". Horace, *Epistolae*, 1.2.55.

<sup>2</sup> "Seize the day". Horace, *Odes*, 1.11.8.

<sup>3</sup> "Go with steady pace and free from care". Not attributable.

<sup>4</sup> "No difficulty is so great that ingenuity does not overcome it". Known proverb, obviously one of Fothergill's favourites; see letters 5 and 13.

<sup>5</sup> See letter 20, note 2.

<sup>6</sup> John Howard (1726–1790), advocate for prison reform in Britain and abroad.

<sup>7</sup> A lying-in hospital was erected in 1793. The foundation stone of the Royal Edinburgh Asylum for the Insane was not laid until 1809, although clearly special provision for lunatics had been discussed much earlier. See John D. Comrie, *History of Scottish medicine*, 2 vols., London, The Wellcome Historical Medical Museum, 1932, vol. 2, pp. 455, 465.

N<sup>o</sup> 22 23

Bath April 18<sup>th</sup> 1792

My dear Sir

Having in my last enlarged on some of the topics w<sup>h</sup> appeared to me most intimately connected with your present and even future welfare and having at present nothing either



## Letters

new or important to add, I shall confine myself to a few general remarks in ans<sup>f</sup> to your last very affectionate letter. For I can not let slip so favorable an opportunity of throwing off a few hasty lines (*volante calamo*)<sup>1</sup> by the Dawsonian packet laden with a cargo of sweets and bound to the barren regions of the north where, if we may believe the great Johnson—“not a bee will grow”—and to which Virgil’s description of another dreary spot may seem applicable, where he says—

“*Infelix lolium et steriles dominantur avenæ.*”<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, chameleon like, you must learn to live upon air, and content yourself with intellectual food. But as fasting wonderfully sharpens the senses, and quickens all the mental faculties, I can easily account for the rapid progress you are making in y<sup>r</sup> studies. Hence perhaps it is that the Scotch people, by dint of meagre diet become as keen as y<sup>e</sup> northern blast, and excel all other nations in deep speculation. So you must make a virtue of necessity, and as oats are the chief produce of that sterile country, you must content yourself with oaten cake, oatmeal gruel, and now and then (if you can get it) a little oatmeal crowdy.<sup>3</sup> If you but just kept from starving so much the better. You’ll return, we expect, as thin as a rat, and with famine in y<sup>r</sup> countenance, but then you’ll return sharp set and with y<sup>r</sup> senses as keen as a razor. ’Twas by mere dint of starvation that the learned Ty[?]<sup>4</sup> became such an adept in the occult sciences, and to prove an overmatch for all the fat fellows of both our universities. The dancing bear could never be brought to move a minuet with such grace and agility were he not kept on very low diet during his education. The little devil, I am told, was an awkward clumsy fellow, till he was starved down to almost a skeleton, w<sup>h</sup> brought him to such a surprising degree of activity of body and mind as to perform with ease such feats of agility as none, one wou’d think, but the real devil himself wou’d ever be capable of. In short since low diet, or in other words *starving*, so wonderfully excites all the active faculties of men, of brutes and of devils, it is hoped you will patiently submit to y<sup>r</sup> fate, and since all’s for the best, consider this meagre regimen as not only salutary, but necess<sup>y</sup> during y<sup>r</sup> stay.

But now ad rem,<sup>5</sup> and to be serious, as you continue thro’ the summer I think it will be right to attend D<sup>r</sup> H[ome’s]<sup>6</sup> clin<sup>l</sup> lect<sup>s</sup>. Boerhaave, van Swieten and Morgagni,<sup>7</sup> I can lend you on your return. To go thro’ them is a work of time. I observe with satisfaction your attention to hosp<sup>l</sup> cases and the result of the different methods employed in the treatment. The want of success among such learned and able professors may serve to inspire a becoming diffidence in their pupils who on first entering into practice are generally too sanguine and ready on all occasions to pronounce—“*Veni, vidi, vici,*”<sup>8</sup> forgetting the power of medicine at best is but a relative term. If such profound chemists as D<sup>r</sup> Black adopt the Lavoisierian theory y<sup>e</sup> phlogistic doctrine must, I think, give way.<sup>9</sup> The former from its simplicity and the ingenuity with w<sup>h</sup> it is supported is truly fascinating. The latter pleads the sanction of time and maintains its ground as a useful auxiliary at a dead lift. The rabies canina has been frequent and fatal in many parts of England. Do you meet with anything new or important in the prevention or cure? Any clin<sup>l</sup> lectures thereon? or any good remarks in the Encyclopedia Edinb<sup>10</sup> at the College Lib<sup>y</sup>? Whether I shall find leisure to give a few remarks on that terrible malady in the Bath Soc<sup>s</sup> next vol.<sup>11</sup> in compliance with y<sup>e</sup> wish of some of y<sup>e</sup> members, I am uncertain. The faculty have long been silent, and art seems exhausted. Sh’d you find my friend M<sup>r</sup> J<sup>h</sup>n Mosman still in the land of the living remember kindly to him and believe me, D<sup>r</sup> Sir, y<sup>r</sup>s assuredly

A. Fothergill

Anthony Fothergill

PS: D<sup>r</sup> Hawes having seen some of your letters has conceived an esteem for the writer, commends his continuance at Edin<sup>r</sup> and says everything kind on that head  
With M<sup>r</sup> Dawson's best thanks etc.

<sup>1</sup> "With flying pen".

<sup>2</sup> "The unfruitful darnel and barren wild oats prevail". Virgil, *Georgics*, 1.154. See letter 18.

<sup>3</sup> Crowdy, crowdie: porridge.

<sup>4</sup> This word has defied decipherment, being variously read by numerous people as Ty, Pig, Tig, etc. It was probably a reference unknown to the transcriber, but from what follows it would seem to suggest the figure was Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727), legendary (quite undeservedly) for his neglect of food. See Rob Iliffe, 'Isaac Newton: Lucretello professor of mathematics', in Christopher Lawrence and Steven Shapin (eds.), *Science incarnate: historical embodiments of natural knowledge*, Chicago University Press, 1998, pp. 156–201.

<sup>5</sup> "To the matter in hand".

<sup>6</sup> Francis Home (1719–1813), MD (Edinburgh 1750), since 1768 professor of materia medica in the university of Edinburgh.

<sup>7</sup> Giovanni Battista Morgagni (1682–1771), *The seats and causes of diseases investigated by anatomy*. . . . Translated from the Latin . . . by Benjamin Alexander, 3 vols., London, A. Millar & T. Cadell, 1769.

<sup>8</sup> "I came, I saw, I conquered". Suetonius, *Caesar*, 37.

<sup>9</sup> Joseph Black had definitively adopted Lavoisier's chemistry by 1790. See R. G. W. Anderson, *The Playfair collection and the teaching of chemistry at the University of Edinburgh*, 1713–1858, Edinburgh, The Royal Scottish Museum, 1978, p. 26.

<sup>10</sup> Possibly, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Edinburgh, A. Bell and C. Macfarquhar, 1771. Second edition, 1778–83.

<sup>11</sup> Anthony Fothergill, *Essay on the nature of the disease occasioned by the bite of a mad dog*. . . . *To which is prefixed, a letter to the author from the Count L. de Berchtold, on the efficacy of olive oil*. [Bath, 1799]. Reprint of Article XVI, Volume IX, of the *Transactions of the Bath and West of England Society*.

N<sup>o</sup> 24 24

Bath June 30<sup>th</sup> 1792

My dear Sir

A journey to London on urgent business together with a variety of dispatches on sundry occasions have till this moment so completely occupied my whole time that I have not had even a chance of answering your former letter till lo! a 2<sup>nd</sup> has just arrived w<sup>h</sup> involves a question of no small moment. To answer this with propriety and in proportion to its importance I must confess myself more at a loss than on my former occasion. Your predilection for anatomy I concluded had given you a decided preference for surgery, to w<sup>h</sup> however it now appears that you have a dislike, and propose to content yourself with [the] humble department of pharmacy for w<sup>h</sup> you have contracted a strong partiality. Your mother's kind wish and approbation for your continuing another year at Edin<sup>r</sup> can never be sufficiently acknowledged, an indulgence w<sup>h</sup> claims your warmest thanks, your warmest gratitude. After this, y<sup>r</sup> own feelings, y<sup>r</sup> own inclination guided by y<sup>r</sup> own discretion will determine y<sup>r</sup> choice better than any other person can determine for you. However as you seem anxious to hear my opinion, I will briefly [word missing?] my sentiments, tho' in a matter of such moment, I cannot pretend to advise. Should you fix in Bristol or some great city y<sup>r</sup> original plan of surgery and midwifery might be sufficient alone. If in a country town, pharmacy seems a necess<sup>y</sup> appendage to the other two, and a sine qua non, if you

## Letters

wholly decline surgery. But s<sup>hd</sup> surgery after all be y<sup>r</sup> chief branch, half a year in Lond<sup>n</sup> either this or the next winter might be sufficient for an anatomical course and dissections, with occasional visits to some of the London hospitals. But to enter regul<sup>y</sup> at any of the great hospitals it will cost you at least 20 G<sup>s</sup>, and above double the sum as surg<sup>y</sup> pupil.<sup>1</sup> As to the more humble station of an apothecary, many people wou<sup>d</sup> think you have already done that department, not considering that in this country the apoth<sup>y</sup> is literally the physician, the all in all in the widely diversified field of physic. The great doctor in the big wig is indeed as a matter of form, and now and then to lend a hand at a dead lift, occasionally had recourse to. But the apoth<sup>y</sup>s mortar sounds aloud, and his introduction to practice is more smooth, easy and expeditious—his journeys are regularly expected; and the score for d<sup>fts</sup> and boluses steals silently on long after the great D<sup>r</sup> is dismissed. Midwifery is a key by w<sup>h</sup> he gains admission to the ladies' hearts as well as their nurses—a child or 2 are unwell, or may be by and by—and who so fit to take care of them as the dear tender-hearted man who brought them into y<sup>e</sup> world, or was perhaps instrumental towards their very existence? You have the theory of midwifery, only want a little more practical knowledge, and then with a snug well-stored shop, value 50<sup>£</sup>, with a golden label over the door—J.W., Apoth<sup>y</sup> and Accoucheur—you may start & boldly declare—“Opiferque per orbem dicor.”<sup>2</sup> When in town, at a meeting of the Royal Society I was accosted by D<sup>r</sup> Gregory<sup>3</sup> who of his own accord spoke of you what I was very willing to hear, but need not repeat, as all acc<sup>ts</sup> agree that you are driving on Jehu<sup>4</sup> like, and “that y<sup>r</sup> progress keeps pace with y<sup>r</sup> diligence.” Now since the height of y<sup>r</sup> ambition is to be an apoth<sup>y</sup>, that is a retailer of drugs, an administerer of clysters and carrier out of gallipots, as the name of y<sup>r</sup> brethren plainly implies—A-pot-he-carries, I flatter myself that in time you may be qualified for this high calling. One supposition more, and I have done. Suppose Apollo the God of Physic, tho' once only a collector of herbs or rather strolling apoth<sup>y</sup> sh<sup>d</sup> after all whisper in y<sup>r</sup> ear—“Why all this anxious preparation, this long toil and study to sit down an understrapper at last? Why sit down at y<sup>e</sup> foot of y<sup>e</sup> hill of science with powers sufficient to gain the summit? and when one winter more will conduct you to the ‘primis in medicina honoribus’<sup>5</sup> and entitle you to an upper seat in my temple? But then you must wait with patience till the blossoms w<sup>h</sup> hang over my shrine ripen into fruit, and learn to live on aethereal air as many of my votaries are obliged to do 2 or 3 seasons before they are admitted to pluck the ‘aureum pomum’<sup>6</sup>”—If you listen to these suggestions, and can afford to wait, you'll stay where you are and push on with y<sup>r</sup> wonted alacrity, only add a course of theory of medicine and devoting y<sup>e</sup> time allotted for English, to Latin, read<sup>g</sup> Celsus<sup>7</sup> and van Swieten. Before you finally determine, reconsider y<sup>e</sup> matter well. Consult y<sup>r</sup> mother and y<sup>r</sup> relations etc. The pros and cons are now before you “Nullum numen abest si sit Prudentia.”<sup>8</sup> That you may determine wisely is the ardent wish of D<sup>r</sup> Sir y<sup>rs</sup>

### A. Fothergill

P.S. My best respects to D<sup>rs</sup> Duncan, Gregory and others who kindly countenance you and to whose able admonitions I recommend you and to show all possible attention to 'em.  
P.S. July 15 This lett<sup>r</sup> was ready a fortnight ago as the date expresses, but being sent to D<sup>r</sup> Hawes, who is an able judge, for his opinion w<sup>h</sup> I now find coincides with my own. But instead of forwarding y<sup>e</sup> lett<sup>r</sup> to you as desired, he forgets, and sends it back here this day from whence it is now dispatched. Purposes will happen!

Anthony Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> See letter 16, note 3.

<sup>2</sup> “And I am called throughout the world the aid-bringer” Apollo, the god of medicine, is the speaker. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 1.521.

<sup>3</sup> James Gregory, since 1790 the professor of the practice of medicine in the university of Edinburgh.

<sup>4</sup> A coachman, especially one who drives at a rattling pace. “The watchman told, saying . . . The driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously”. 2 Kings ix, 20.

<sup>5</sup> “Foremost honours in medicine”.

<sup>6</sup> “The golden apple”.

<sup>7</sup> One of the many editions of A. Cornelius Celsus (*fl.* 1st century AD), *De medicina libri octo*, called the “Cicero medicorum” for the elegance of his Latin.

<sup>8</sup> “No deity is absent, if there be prudence”. Juvenal, *Satires*, 10.365. See also letter 19.

N<sup>o</sup> 26 25

Bath 8<sup>ber</sup> [October] 6<sup>th</sup> 1792

Your very obliging letter, my dear sir, is just arrived, and tho' I am very busy, I cannot omit answering it immediately, and am glad opportunity offers of a safe conveyance to Newcastle where this letter will be expedited by the post. I am truly concerned to hear of your indisposition which is evidently of the hypocond<sup>l</sup> kind and plainly brought on by too intense application and the want of due exercise and amusement. If I am right in my conjecture as to the cause, the cure I hope will not be difficult. But then you must resolutely observe y<sup>e</sup> following rules, for these blue devils must absolutely be brushed off or they will take possession of you and render you a moping useless being. But remember you are born to nobler ends, therefore banish spleen—banish melancholy. Allow yourself 2 hours for brisk exercise every day, whether in fencing, dancing or riding a rough-trotting horse, which last is the best because y<sup>e</sup> exercise is in the open air. Devote 2 or 3 evenings in a week to music or convivial meetings, but exclude all intemperance. Never study close immediately after a full meal. When the languor and depression are very great take a glass of Julep c[um] Camph[or] with a spoonful of Vin Croci<sup>1</sup> and Tinct: Cort Huxh.<sup>2</sup> Of nights restless—Syr [?]h.s.<sup>3</sup> By the above method I hope you'll soon regain your wonted health and vivacity. But you must not think y<sup>e</sup> time lost that is to be thus devoted to exercise. Remember health is too important to be sacrificed to books and solitude. I am pleased to hear that your associates are selected from amongst the most respectable students—the sons of the professors. Those that are communicative and of good morals merit your attention, and their friendship deserves to be cultivated. As to y<sup>r</sup> destination, I have set before you the pros and cons—you and y<sup>r</sup> friends must determine. From what I have stated you'll easily gather my opinion and also that of D<sup>r</sup> Hawes, and we shall both at pleasure ruminat on y<sup>r</sup> pres<sup>t</sup> proposal w<sup>h</sup> is not without its objections. What says your mother, brothers, etc? What in short wou'd be y<sup>r</sup> own choice? I hoped by this time you had consulted them and determined the question. For this ought to determine your ensuing course of studies. But whatever be y<sup>r</sup> destination, remember to take care of y<sup>r</sup> health and not forfeit it to y<sup>r</sup> passion for books. For that wou'd be bad policy and wou'd also frustrate every purpose. You attempted too much last y<sup>r</sup>—you must be more discreet this season. If you attend theory of medicine, anat<sup>y</sup> and clinical lectures—quite enough. Materia medica you may collect from authors. If you can get elected at Med<sup>l</sup> Soc<sup>y</sup> you must not be balked

### Letters

for a little sum<sup>4</sup>—so enter if you can—and let me know if cash is likely to run too short to make both ends meet before the conclusion of the lectures. Beware of purchasing many books the carriage of w<sup>h</sup> you'll find a weighty additional expense at last. Your course of reading is good, but you need not be so anxious about the Latin, the exam<sup>n5</sup>—or the space before practice becomes in some degree productive. Excuse haste and believe me my worthy youth y<sup>rs</sup>

assuredly  
A. Fothergill

P.S. The papers lately announced the fatal hydrophobia at Edin<sup>r</sup> of w<sup>h</sup> I shall be glad to hear the particulars. Various avocations retard my essay on that subject.<sup>6</sup> In June I accidentally fell in with Professor Gregory at the Royal Society tho' I did not know him at that instant nor till he was gone.<sup>7</sup> Please to remember me to him and also to Professor Monro.<sup>8</sup> The Edin<sup>r</sup> new Pharmc<sup>a</sup> will I suppose appear 'ere long.<sup>9</sup> Adieu!

<sup>1</sup> Saffron wine.

<sup>2</sup> Tinct Cort Huxh refers to Huxham's compound tincture of bark (cinchona). Fothergill prescribed two drachms in Apothecary signs.

<sup>3</sup> Refers to six drachms (in Apothecary signs) of a syrup to be taken at bedtime: h.s.—hora somni. The syrup's name is indecipherable but the context suggests Syrupus e Meconio. This opiate was prepared from poppy heads.

<sup>4</sup> See letter 20, note 2.

<sup>5</sup> That is the MD examination.

<sup>6</sup> See letter 23, note 11.

<sup>7</sup> This is extremely odd, since in June (letter 24) Fothergill reported speaking to Gregory at the Royal Society.

<sup>8</sup> Alexander Monro, *secundus*.

<sup>9</sup> Presumably, *Pharmacopoeia collegii regii medicorum Edinburgensis*, Edinburgh, Bell & Bradfute, 1792.

N<sup>o</sup> 25 26

Bath Nov: 22<sup>nd</sup> 1792

Dr Sir

Having with some difficulty procured this frank, time I fear will hardly permit me to fill it much less supply an enclosure expatiating on the different topics of y<sup>r</sup> last letter. My last of the preceding week left with D<sup>r</sup> Hawes (with a request that he would fill up the vacant space with a postscript), I hope you have received, w<sup>h</sup> will leave but little to add at present. For tho' friends may state their opinion in the most full and disinterested manner respecting y<sup>r</sup> destination, it must still rest with you and y<sup>r</sup> relations ultimately to determine. In the present lottery of medical affairs there is no possibility of insuring success—the most eligible and the most promising plan sometimes fails, while a random hit succeeds, and leads on to fortune and distinction. For my own part I have no very high opinion of those lucky hits w<sup>h</sup> may or may not occur independent of real merit. An ingenuous mind must shrink back abashed on receiving honours etc., emoluments it is conscious of being in no wise entitled to. Let it be your study to frame your own fortune on the basis of a good education, and to depend more on prudence and propriety of conduct than on fortunate contingencies, or even the recommendation of friends. In a word, I wish you to become

Anthony Fothergill

as much as possible (whatever y<sup>r</sup> lot may be) independent of fortune, and what Horace pronounces concerning the man of virtue and integrity “Totus teres atque rotundus.”<sup>1</sup> Y<sup>r</sup> case of hydrophobia appears to be very accurately and circumstantially delineated whether drawn from hospital reports or y<sup>r</sup> own immediate observation. In the 1<sup>st</sup> stage it partook more of febrile diathesis than is, I believe common, and yet the phenomena after death testified no evident marks of inflammation. Whether the pain etc. extending along the arm marked out absorption or only nervous irritation does not appear—had reddish lines along the lymphatics from the wound, attended with soreness and tenderness of the axillary gland, been observed, it wou’d have afforded a strong presumptive proof of the virus being absorbed. The clinical professor and sev<sup>l</sup> students wou’d doubtless have [had] an eye to this and noted every phenomenon in his lecture. The other symptoms and fatal termination confirm what has been too often observed in similar cases. The 3<sup>rd</sup> day from the commencement of the dread of liquids was accordingly the fatal period. But y<sup>e</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> stage afforded more openings for the use of vigorous measures than common, but despair of success seems in this and some other cases to have prevented the physician from availing himself of them till it was too late! Perhaps some new thesis on that subject may be obtained. My M.S.[on hydrophobia] remains dormant till D<sup>r</sup> Lettsom’s translation of an American thesis with notes appears,<sup>2</sup> w<sup>h</sup> may perhaps surpass my observations. M<sup>r</sup> Dawson’s compt<sup>s</sup>. I have only room to add the best wishes of Dear Sir,

y<sup>rs</sup> assuredly A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> “Whole, smooth, and well-rounded”. Horace, *Satires*, 2.7.86.

<sup>2</sup> James Mease (1771–1846), *An essay on the disease produced by the bite of a mad dog, or other rabid animal. . . . With a preface and appendix by J. C. Lettsom*, London, C. Dilly, 1793.

N<sup>o</sup> 27 27

Bath Dec<sup>r</sup> 24/92

Your excellent letter, my Dear Sir, addressed to D<sup>r</sup> Hawes containing many warm expressions of gratitude which do credit both to the head and heart of the writer has just now been communicated to me. As D<sup>r</sup> Hawes may be too busy to send an immediate reply, I am sit down (tho’ by no means at leisure) to answer it in his part as well as my own, and am happy to have engaged in y<sup>r</sup> interest so warm and steady a friend as D<sup>r</sup> Hawes. I hope you received my last wherein I expressed a wish that he cou’d be elected an Hon<sup>y</sup> Member of the Royal Med<sup>l</sup> Soc<sup>y</sup> of Edin<sup>r</sup> and cou’d now wish that it cou’d be brought about by y<sup>r</sup> means, as it would attach him still more closely to y<sup>r</sup> interest, and I know wou’d be highly grateful to him, and add to his éclat as he is about to publish a vol. addressed to the King as Patron of the Humane Society.<sup>1</sup> His modesty will not permit him to speak out for himself, and his professional character stands already too high to solicit it. So that by elect<sup>s</sup> him the Soc<sup>y</sup> wou’d receive as well as confer honour. Therefore please to make strict inquiry as to the present rules respect<sup>s</sup> the elect<sup>n</sup> of hon<sup>y</sup> members—whether a person must have studied at Edin<sup>r</sup>? been an ordinary member a certain time? whether a young member can propose him? whether elected by ballot? and what majority requires it? If the 2 first

## Letters

circumstances are essential he has no chance and the matter drops. In that case write him an account of the rules without hinting my present interposition in his favour, and that as soon as you can, but without seeming to write expressly on that topic. I am hearty glad of your own introduction into the Society, and if you can find means to carry his elect<sup>n</sup> by interest with senior members I know you'll not be wanting in zeal or assiduity. But shou'd he be proposed and rejected, I trust it will never reach his ears. I am much pleased and so is D<sup>r</sup> Hawes to hear you have at length formed a resolution of becoming a candidate for a D<sup>rs</sup> degree tho' it was too delicate a point for us to urge, or even persuade you to without the entire concurrence of yourself and friends. I trust that they nor you will ever see cause to repent it. You'll do well, however, to consider this may be accomplished in 2 years, the term allowed by y<sup>e</sup> College, as well as in 3 yrs.<sup>2</sup> If so why add the heavy expense of an additional year? If you cannot equip yourself in 2 years as well as many others do in 3 or even 4 years I have made a wrong estimate of y<sup>r</sup> abilities and y<sup>r</sup> assiduity. Not that I mean you shou'd kill yourself by overstudy in order to reach your imagined acme of perfection by running against time. No, take care of your health first; secondly of y<sup>r</sup> study and thirdly of your purse, or rather your poor mother's. So as the Dutch express it, I must leave this ad referendum. The late cautions and instructions I suggested have, I hope, not been thrown away as to any of these important points, and as you are silent as to bodily complaints I flatter myself your health is tolerably reestablished. I approve much of the plan of study you are now engaged in: anatomy, clinical lectures and clinical practice, van Swieten, with the result of fatal diseases as illustrated by Morgagni. Your time, I am convinced, cannot admit of long letters, much less encountering any essay except your future thesis, and this you should lose no time in bringing forward unless you determine not to graduate next summer. You shou'd habituate yourself to speak and write in Latin as the College, I fear, will not cordially allow of an exam<sup>n</sup> in English as the Dublin College has wisely done. Read van Swieten much and also Celsus, they will give you easy and elegant diction. Turn English into Latin and Latin into English, and if there be any Latin book on the anim<sup>i</sup> oeconomy in [the] form of dialogue, strive to get it. If not, I may perhaps supply the defect by a short manuscript previous to y<sup>r</sup> examinations.<sup>3</sup> Remember the sooner you get on the toga medica, the sooner you will begin to reap the fruits of it, and the more time you will have to see practice in London and reconnoitre the country for a vacancy. I shall not expect to hear from you till you have made up y<sup>r</sup> mind on this matter. My respects to y<sup>r</sup> kind preceptors and friends, and believe me, my D<sup>r</sup> Sir, much yours A. Fothergill

N.B. Blacker ink and a rounder hand will add to the pleasure of reading your letters not a little

N.B. M<sup>r</sup> Dawson's respects

<sup>1</sup> Presumably, William Hawes, *Modes of treatment for the recovery of drowned persons*, 1793.

<sup>2</sup> Fothergill was mistaken, see Introduction, p. xx.

<sup>3</sup> Fothergill does seem to have supplied such a catechism, which was subsequently lost. See letters 32, 42, and 46.

N<sup>o</sup> 75 28

Bath Feb 1<sup>st</sup> 1793

Dr Madam,<sup>1</sup>

Your son having with y<sup>r</sup> consent and that of his relations and friends determined to graduate at Edin<sup>r</sup> he wrote to me some time ago that he proposed to continue his stay at the university and equip himself for a D<sup>rs</sup> degree against the summer 1794. Knowing his course of preparatory studies his diligence and abilities, I strongly advised him to finish at Edin<sup>r</sup> the ensuing summer 1793 by w<sup>h</sup> both time and expense wou'd be saved, but in his letter just now arrived, he assures me that by a new regulation in the College since my time, it now requires instead of two, three years to obtain a D<sup>rs</sup> degree.<sup>2</sup> A circumstance unknown to me and w<sup>h</sup> will, necessarily, greatly enhance the expense. By strict oeconomy however and diligence w<sup>h</sup> I have every reason to believe regulates his whole conduct, I hope in due time he will still surmount this and every other difficulty and amply repay the debt of gratitude due to an indulgent mother. He has, I make no doubt, informed you that in compliance with his request I lent him Oct<sup>r</sup> 14 1791 ten pounds, the receipt of w<sup>h</sup> he acknowledges in a subsequent lett<sup>r</sup>. At present I find he is in great want of a further remittance. If you cannot spare him 10£, I will, if you desire it, endeavour to procure it, and send him a bank bill of that amount per post as before. But as life is uncertain and accidents may happen, it is but reasonable that I sh<sup>d</sup> have security f<sup>m</sup> you or y<sup>r</sup> promissory note, on a stamp, in some such form as the following, w<sup>h</sup> as soon as I receive, I will take care no time is lost in procuring and forwarding the money to y<sup>r</sup> son, and in the interim remain with best wishes, D<sup>r</sup> Madam

your very humble servant

A. Fothergill

I promise to pay D<sup>r</sup> Anthony Fothergill on order twenty pounds for cash advanced to my son Mr John [*sic*] Woodforde student of physic at Edin<sup>r</sup> at different times viz. Oct<sup>r</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> 1791 and Feb\_\_1793 as witness my hand £ 20

P.S. Perhaps you may rather choose to supply him with the present sum yourself and then your note to me will be only £10.

<sup>1</sup> This letter, to Woodforde's mother, seems to confirm the suggestion that the Woodfordes were unknown to the transcriber, since James is referred to as John.

<sup>2</sup> See Introduction, p. xx.

N<sup>o</sup> 28 29

Bath Feb<sup>y</sup>: 10<sup>th</sup> 1793

Dear Sir,

I am truly concerned to hear that by some late regulation of the College, candidates



### Letters

cannot now be received for graduation under 3 years, When I fully expected the affair would be completed the ensuing summer! If ever this hard law is dispensed with, I hope it still may [be] in your favour, as it cannot be denied that pupils who come well prepared and to genius add indefatigable assiduity, will make greater progress in 2 years than others without these qualifications usually do in 3 years. If this indulgence cannot be obtained a trip to Leyden this summ<sup>r</sup> may finish the business without another year at Edin<sup>r</sup> [which] must inevitably add greatly to your expense, and it remains for y<sup>r</sup> consideration, and that of y<sup>r</sup> relations whether you will submit to it, or graduate this sum<sup>r</sup> at some other University or finally contract y<sup>r</sup> plan to the humble station of surgeon and apothecary as proposed originally till you can in some measure reimburse yourself. In the interim, oeconomy, rigid oeconomy will, as you observe, be absolutely necessary. Soon after your letter arrived, I wrote to y<sup>r</sup> mother on this unexpected dilemma, and mentioned your necessity as to a remittance, offering that if it was not quite convenient to her to send you a £10 bill, I wou<sup>d</sup>, on her dropping a line with her promissory note on a stamp for the whole advanced on your acc<sup>t</sup>, as wou<sup>d</sup> be but reasonable considering the extreme uncertainty of life. Having waited her answer till this moment, I fully conclude she had or will soon send you the remittance herself. This is fortunate, for a friend just now has requested me to join him in the purchase of some ground rents—to w<sup>h</sup> I have agreed and the purchase money will, I find, not only require all my present cash, but, even the loan of a moderate sum for which I must pay 5 per cent. In case your remittance sh<sup>d</sup> not be speedy the enclosed commission from M<sup>r</sup> Dawson, may perhaps put a little cash in your hands for the present and you can request your mother to repay him the like sum here. I am pleased to hear of your progress and see your visible improvement in the epistolary way. With a few general rules from your Latin master you may now dispense with his attendance and spend 1 hour as usual on that language, in prose rather than verse unless you had more time. As soon as the ballot is over write directly to D<sup>r</sup> Hawes the result, meanwhile use every effort to gain votes and ensure success. He knows that his name has been proposed. May he receive good tidings and may you have the pleasure of communicating them in the sincere wish of D<sup>r</sup> Sir, yours sincerely

A. Fothergill

P.S. My best respects to D<sup>r</sup> Gregory, and your other preceptors who distinguish you by their kindness and attention. N.B. I forward this under cover to Lond<sup>n</sup> w<sup>h</sup> will lighten postage

N<sup>o</sup> 29 30

Bath March 10<sup>th</sup> 1793

Dear Sir,

Tho' very busy, I think it necessary to answer your letter just arrived, immediately. Hitherto, as you well know, I have anxiously avoided dictating, or even advising as to your future destination. This, I repeatedly desired you to determine yourself at leisure after due deliberation with your relations. Having at length declared your resolution for graduation,

*Anthony Fothergill*

the term of w<sup>h</sup> it seems is altered from 2 to 3 y<sup>rs</sup> w<sup>h</sup> will of course make near 100<sup>£</sup> difference in the expense. I hinted to your friends that if the expense cou'd not be complied with, there was but this alternative, either to relinquish the plan, or to graduate at Leyden this summer, not that it wou'd be more eligible, and even reputable to graduate at Edin<sup>r</sup>. Many, it is true, for similar prudential reasons go over to Leyden and if a degree can be had there (as I presume it may after 2 y<sup>r</sup>. study at Edin<sup>r</sup>, of w<sup>ch</sup> however you can easily satisfy yourself from the students as to the laws of that university) you can then soon determine with your relations accordingly. For I neither can, nor dare venture to advise. Holland at present is agitated by warlike alarms but the contest is likely to be soon over, and I have not heard that medical affairs at Leyden are even at this time interrupted. This university is doubtless held in a more reputable point of view than any Scotch seminary, Edin<sup>r</sup> excepted. Had you resolved to sit down a mere apoth<sup>y</sup>, 1 year at Edin<sup>r</sup> wou'd have been sufficient and more than falls to the lot of the generality of pharmacopolists according to the present system of education. To complete the education of a phys<sup>n</sup> he sh<sup>d</sup> have an independence of 100 or <sup>£</sup>150 per annum to set out with, but as you entered well prepared it is but fair to reckon you have at least a year start of y<sup>r</sup> competitors who entered mere novices at the time you went to Edin<sup>r</sup> and consequently that your 2<sup>nd</sup> year is at least equal to their 3<sup>rd</sup> year which qualifies you to graduate this summ<sup>r</sup>. But when a physician has taken his degree you'll recollect what I have formerly observed, that much time, patience and assiduity are still necessary to introduce him by slow degrees into medical practice and that the present rage for educating young men as physicians has so considerably overstocked the profession in every eligible station as to render their introduction and progress still more difficult. Unless the rules of the Leyden college require that the candidate shou'd enter the classes there previous to graduation, I should think it wholly unnecessary. The thesis is, I believe, always printed at Leyden. The epilepsy is by no means a very frequent disease, or so popular as many others you'll have to encounter in practice such as smallpox inoculation, rhum<sup>m</sup>, phthisis pulmonalis, catarrh, angina, typhus etc. Not but that every tyro sh<sup>d</sup> choose his own subject. It will be necessary to converse in Latin either with the pupils or a Latinist to acquire facility in answering the questions at the different examinations. A thesis of 20 or 30 pages may be written in English and translated, and lastly corrected by a Latinist.<sup>1</sup> If so able a practit<sup>r</sup> as D<sup>r</sup> Pearson<sup>2</sup> has been rejected it is an unfavorable omen for D<sup>r</sup> Hawes, tho' of much longer standing. But the dye is cast, and by this time his fate determined. Sorry—I shall be extremely sorry if it has gone against him. If so he must be told it in the most gentle and soothing manner. I regret young Percival's death, the son of my venerable correspondent and contempor<sup>y</sup>, D<sup>r</sup> Percival.<sup>3</sup> Also the other youth, especially if son of some of my old friends from Dublin. None of the theses of last summer have arrived at Bath, only the titles, some of which appear interesting, particularly on submersion, poisons,<sup>4</sup> etc. If you determine for Leyden, the time and every particular requisite thereto sh<sup>d</sup> be well learnt at Edin<sup>r</sup>, and no time lost in the preparative requisites. If on the other hand y<sup>r</sup> friends consent to another year at Edin<sup>r</sup>, your Leyden journey will be spared. Whatever may be their determination you have the best wishes of, D<sup>r</sup> Sir, y<sup>rs</sup> sincerely

A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> The MD examination was conducted in Latin. The student was first examined orally at the home of one of the professors. The student then submitted his thesis, following which he was examined by two

## Letters

professors in the presence of the faculty. He then had to give a written explanation of two Hippocratic aphorisms and then a written commentary on two cases, which had to be defended orally. See Christopher Lawrence, 'Medicine as culture: Edinburgh and the Scottish Enlightenment', University of London, PhD thesis, 1984, pp. 197–200.

<sup>2</sup> I.e. rejected for honorary membership of the RMS. Possibly, George Pearson (1751–1828), MD (Edinburgh 1773), FRS, physician and chemist; or Richard Pearson (1765–1836), MD (Edinburgh 1786), physician; or John Pearson (1758–1826), FRS, surgeon, member of the RMS in 1820.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Percival, MD (Leyden 1765), FRS, physician and founding member of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society (1781). James Percival, his son, died in 1793 while finishing his medical studies in Edinburgh. See letter from 'Dr. Percival to Dr. Haygarth', Manchester, 1793, in *Memoirs of the life and writings of Thomas Percival MD*, London, Richard Cruttwell for J. Johnson, 1807, pp. clxxvii–clxxxix, cclv–cclvi.

<sup>4</sup> Edinburgh MD theses for 1792 included Jacobus Davidson, *De vita submersorum resuscitanda*. There was no thesis on poisons.

## N<sup>o</sup> 30 31

Bath June 16 1793

About a fortnight ago, my Dear Sir, I was favored with your obliging letter which various engagements have obliged me to postpone answering till now. It is with peculiar satisfaction that I find your mother has given her free consent to your continuing at Edin<sup>r</sup> another year, for w<sup>h</sup> act of maternal affection and indulgence she merits all the thanks and all the gratitude that filial duty and obedience can bestow and I flatter myself that her well timed liberality will in the end be amply repaid, and that neither she nor you will have cause to repent of the additional time and expense which the change in y<sup>r</sup> destination necessarily requires. As this favour was rather to be hoped for than expected I need not add that it will be incumbent upon you to employ it to the utmost advantage, and that with a strict eye to oeconomy. Tho' it is true you might, this summer, [have] passed muster with as good a grace as some of longer standing yet the consciousness of having completed your education in a more ample manner must add greatly to y<sup>r</sup> own satisfaction when you sit down to practice. Having moreover fulfilled the laws of the 1<sup>st</sup> medical school in Europe will give additional éclat to your first setting out, on w<sup>h</sup> so much often depends. I am pleased to hear that your progress keeps pace with y<sup>r</sup> diligence and application, and that the rugged brow of science begins to wear a more smooth and engaging aspect. This will continue to brighten as you advance, but think not that you are nearly arrived at the summit. For at that moment you'll find, as Pope elegantly expresses it:

"Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise!"<sup>1</sup>

Tho' much is done, much you'll find still remains to be executed, for science is boundless "Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam/ multa tulit fecitque puer."—Horace<sup>2</sup>

I fear you still [have] too many irons in the fire and must request you not to waste time on things trifling or indifferent, for tho' you have 1 year before you, it will quickly slide away. Spend not too much time on the papers for the societies, nor on botany beyond the 1<sup>st</sup> lines of the Linnean system much less on miscellan<sup>s</sup> correspondence. You say after y<sup>e</sup> elapse of 3 months, instead of lapse. Time elapses, but the substantive is lapse. However this is only a lapsus calami<sup>3</sup> and the only lapse I have met with in your late letters. D<sup>r</sup>

Anthony Fothergill

Hawes and I are both convinced that his want of success was not owing to any want of exertion on your part. He bears it with philosophy and has promised me to write to you (as is utmost due) a grateful letter, and also hints about your thesis but I think the choice must be left to yourself. I see no objection to typhus, a beaten track will require less time and trouble than to cut a new road thro' a trackless forest. Haller's *Methodus Studii Medici*<sup>4</sup> will supply a list of practical authors on malig<sup>t</sup> fevers—van Swieten and Hoffman will afford matter to be improved on by Cullen and late writers—also Theses de Typho in Smellie and Webster's collection.<sup>5</sup> From what I have said you stand higher with D<sup>r</sup> Hawes than ever, and so far from being offended we both are sensible of y<sup>r</sup> services, and kind intention. Amidst the fashionable failures are 2 of the Bath banks. By one of w<sup>h</sup> I shall sustain a very heavy loss. But I feel more sensibly for many of my fellow citizens who have lost their all!!! When you have once fixed on a subject for a thesis, begin without delay. Take time by the forelock for behind he is quite bald—"Nullus dies sine linea."<sup>6</sup> My respects to your preceptors. Consult them when difficulties occur, and go on with alacrity. Collect materials from the best sources, leave blank leaf and open lines for corrections, and now my D<sup>r</sup> Sir, Vale! et cave ut valeas!<sup>7</sup>

A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Pope (1688–1744), *An essay on criticism*, 1. 232.

<sup>2</sup> "He who strains to attain the longed-for goal on the race-course has endured and done much while still a boy". Horace, *Art of poetry*, 412–13.

<sup>3</sup> Slip of the pen.

<sup>4</sup> Presumably, Hermann Boerhaave, *Methodus studii medici. Emaculata & accessionibus locupletata ab Alberto ab Haller*, 2 vols., Amsterdam, J. a Wetstein, 1751.

<sup>5</sup> William Smellie (1740–1795), *Thesaurus medicus: sive disputationum in Academia Edinensi ad rem medicam pertinentium . . . delectus*, 4 vols., Edinburgh, Typis Academicus, 1778–85; and Charles Webster (1750–1795), *Medicinæ praxeos systema ex academia Edinburgenae disputationibus praecipue inauguralibus de promptum*, 3 vols., Edinburgh, J. Bell & R. Murray for W. Gordon and R. Murray, 1781.

<sup>6</sup> "No day without a line". Proverb mentioned in Pliny, *Historia naturalis*, 35, 84. I.e., no day without some work on one's art, supposed originally to describe how the Greek painter Apelles went to work.

<sup>7</sup> "Farewell! and take care you keep well". Not attributable. See also letters 32, 33, 82, and 84.

N<sup>o</sup> 31 32

Bath Oct<sup>r</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> 1793

Before me, Dear Sir, is your affectionate letter, and am happy to hear that y<sup>r</sup> health and spirits enable you to pursue your studies with y<sup>r</sup> wonted alacrity and w<sup>h</sup> in time will I hope be crowned with academical honours. Tho' I have little to add to the admonitions already offered, I cannot let slip this opportunity of throwing off a few hasty lines by M<sup>r</sup> B. D[awson's] packet w<sup>h</sup> is ready, and only waits for this. But what I think will be of much greater importance and enable you to approach the dread tribunal (before which you must 'ere long appear) with a more firm step and more steady countenance I enclose for y<sup>r</sup> careful perusal a few M.S. of preparatory exercises ready cut and dry w<sup>h</sup> you may soon make yourself master of and have at your fingers ends ready to be played off on the day you are attacked. For my wish is that you may appear unabashed before the Solemn Court of

## Letters

Inquisition serena fronte,<sup>1</sup> and answer their interrogatories ore rotundo.<sup>2</sup> If you think the list not suffic<sup>y</sup> ample, your own ingenuity and knowledge of the trim of the College may suggest to you a few more, together with the responses according to the theory of the times by way of appendix. Thus armed at all points you may like the hedgehog roll yourself up snug, and bid defiance to all their artillery, and perhaps even wound some of your less powerful assailants in the encounter. 40 candidates for next session!!!<sup>3</sup> You my worthy élève amongst this number must enter the lists, and must expect to meet with some very able competitors, but will I trust be found not the last in the race, nor the least deserving the laurel wreath.

As to y<sup>r</sup> subject, tho' I hinted what I thought ineligible, I wou'd not direct what you shou'd fix on but left it to your choice. For one drowned person you will in practice meet with at least a dozen cases of typhus. As your thesis on that is nearly finished, suppose you shew both in confidence to D<sup>rs</sup> D[uncan] or G[regory] and request their candid opinion; which they think most advisable or best adapted to y<sup>r</sup> present views, or future prospects. The one omitted, if found valuable, may still appear on some future occasion if necessary.

Your chief bent this winter must be towards the practice. This with clin<sup>l</sup> lect<sup>s</sup>, the Infir<sup>y</sup> and perusal of suitable pract<sup>l</sup> writers, finishing and retouching y<sup>r</sup> thesis, will find you very full employment. Therefore lose not time in writ<sup>g</sup> any lett<sup>rs</sup> that can be omitted. But, *Perge et respice finem*.<sup>4</sup> If you can imitate the concise neat style of Celsus or even the easy perspicuous one of van Swieten which, tho' less elegant and less Roman, is perhaps much more intelligible and therefore more useful, you need not a better model. But the translation of y<sup>r</sup> thesis will cost you more labour than you are aware of, therefore the sooner you get thro' it y<sup>e</sup> better as it will need twice polishing. Compare y<sup>e</sup> rates of paper and printing at different presses, you'll want but a few copies on fine paper and must study oeconomy, not vie with y<sup>e</sup> extravagant sons of fortune. Y<sup>r</sup> letters are easy, natural and well expressed but require a microscopic eye, as this does at present, w<sup>h</sup> is a fault tho' not of great magnitude. Now my, D<sup>r</sup> Sir, adieu!

Vale! and cave ut valeas!<sup>5</sup>

### A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> "With untroubled brow". Not attributable.

<sup>2</sup> "With well-rounded diction". Horace, *Art of poetry*, 323.

<sup>3</sup> There were actually 29 graduates in 1794. See *List of graduates in medicine in the University of Edinburgh*, Edinburgh, Neill & Company, 1867, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> "Go ahead and have regard to the end". Not attributable.

<sup>5</sup> "Farewell! and take care you keep well". See also letters 31, 33, 82, and 84.

N<sup>o</sup> 32 33

Bath New Year's Day 1794

My dear Sir,

Tho' pressed for time beyond measure and obliged to postpone answering all letters unless on urgent business, yet I cannot let this day slip without felicitating you on your late

Anthony Fothergill

hair breadth escape and on your entering on a new year. Most sincerely do I rejoice that you are still in the land of the living and that your progress towards perfect recovery is so promising. Much is due to your kind preceptors for their humane attention and also to the worthy family with whom you lodge. Amidst strangers and remote from your relations, how deplorable must your situation have been had it not been for the friendly aid of these good Samaritans! Having thus escaped shipwreck it is hoped you will not endanger your health and life again by embarking too suddenly, or before you have recovered sufficient firmness—“non bene ripæ / creditur. Ipse aries etiam nunc vellera siccat.”<sup>1</sup>

A relapse remember, is sometimes worse than the original disease. But your worthy physic<sup>s</sup> I make no doubt have given you every necess<sup>y</sup> caution on this head. The anxiety we lately felt on your account can only be equaled by the joy we now experience. I cannot help adding my hearty approbation of the classes you propose to attend previous to your examinations. Your having your thesis in such forwardness was a happy circumstance, and its having passed in form of a case the Med<sup>l</sup> Soc<sup>y</sup> with applause will enable you to retouch it where weak, or correct exceptionable or doubtful passages.<sup>2</sup> Van Swieten was always a great favorite and by consulting him you'll find a fund of useful facts, and from his simplicity and perspicuity improve your Latinity. Haller's *Elementa Physiologiae* 8 tom.<sup>3</sup> must be also considered, tho' too voluminous to be read thro' at this time. The *Edin<sup>f</sup> Encyclopedia*<sup>4</sup> will deserve to be dipped into on certain points, and also the *English Cyclopedia*.<sup>5</sup> I am glad the M.S. reached you safe and shall be much pleased if it proves useful, as a preparatory to your approaching trial and enable you to appear

“Totus teres atque rotundus.”<sup>6</sup>

For other particulars medical, oeconomical or prudential, I refer you to my former letters, and now I must hastily conclude with my best wishes for your health and success and y<sup>t</sup> you may live to see many happy new years

Dear Sir vale! et cave ut valeas!<sup>7</sup>

A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> “There is no trusting the river bank. The ram himself is still drying his fleece”. Virgil, *Eclogues*, 3.94–5.

<sup>2</sup> See Introduction, p. xxi.

<sup>3</sup> Von Haller, *Elementa physiologiae*, see letter 6, note 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica* perhaps. See letter 23, note 10.

<sup>5</sup> Possibly E. Chambers, *Cyclopaedia; or an universal dictionary of arts and sciences*, 2 vols., London, James & John Knapton, 1728. Another edition, 5 vols., J. F. and C. Rivington, 1791, 1779–89.

<sup>6</sup> “Whole, smooth and well-rounded”. Horace, *Satires*, 2.7.86. See also letter 26.

<sup>7</sup> “Farewell! and take care you keep well”. See also letters 31, 32, 82, and 84.

N<sup>o</sup> 33 34

Bath April 10<sup>th</sup> 1794

Your obliging letter, my Dear Sir, arrived about 5 days ago and brought me the welcome tidings of your health being reestablished—a mercy w<sup>h</sup> claims the most profound tribute of gratitude, adoration and praise to that Being who overrules all events, and “whose mercy

## Letters

is over all his works”!!! Such a signal deliverance, and at such an important period in y<sup>r</sup> life ought to make such an impression on your mind as never to be obliterated! The eldest son of my worthy friend D<sup>r</sup> Lettsom<sup>1</sup> is, I understand, prosecuting his med<sup>l</sup> studies at Edin<sup>f</sup>. A fine promising youth with whom you should be acquainted. The beadle or porter of y<sup>e</sup> College will inform you where he lodges. Tell him, at my request, you take the liberty to wait on him, and to inquire if you can render him any acceptable service from your previous acquaintance in the place, and assure him of my best wishes for his success. Let this be your introduction. If my last afforded you some consolation when just beginning to emerge from a most dangerous illness, I trust this will tend to fortify you against that fear and trepidation w<sup>h</sup> usually precedes the first examination. You can but be remanded to y<sup>r</sup> studies, so you know the worst that can happen and may still do for a country a pot he carry—the summit of your early ambition. And tho’ of 30 candidates<sup>2</sup> you should be the only one doomed to wield the pestle, why never mind it, since the present Duke of Orleans of blood royal and born to an estate of more than £50,000 per annum is content to be usher to a country school master, while his royal relation, the heir apparent, is confined to a loathsome prison!

Let us suppose you for a moment, in a state of arrest and summonsed to take your trial before the revolutionary tribunal with Danton and other conspirators, why still you wou’d have this consolation, that you cou’d but lose your head, and that amongst orators and legislators, the very best of company. Fortunately however you are not in a state of arrest, and have not to face a tribunal whose judges are your enemies, or a corrupt jury bent on your destination but a tribunal distinguished for mildness and candor whose judges are your preceptors, y<sup>r</sup> friends, your well-wishers, indulgent to venial errors, and encouragers of modest merit, who know how to make allowance for little slips which may arise from timidity, or want of presence of mind after such a severe illness, all of which, if you see necessity, you may in a short preface avail yourself. Banish then from this moment all childish fears, re-peruse the letter of the 20<sup>th</sup>.<sup>3</sup> Drink a bumper of wine (for I hear you are become a complete wine bibber) and then march up to the tribunal serena fronte.<sup>4</sup> Strike out of your thesis every superfluous word which only weakens y<sup>r</sup> language. Aim at the conciseness of Celsus, and reduce, if possible, your 40 to 30 pages. Unfold the principles in a masterly outline, and leave somewhat to the discernment of the reader to fill up. Remember you address not the vulgar but the erudite, ready to anticipate your argumentation. Avoid, above all things, every unnecessary expense. Y<sup>r</sup> friends promised to supply the needful, but rely on your strict oeconomy, and that you will not engage in any unnecess<sup>y</sup> tour in things fit only for the affluent. Your Latinity depends more on conversing and your own industry than on a teacher. The books you read are very proper, to w<sup>h</sup> add Celsus for the sake of his language. Avoid writing letters till the whole be over, your time is doubly precious, and I can easily conceive what is passing. Collect theses, and watch every new improvement but tarry not longer than necessary

With best wishes for your happy deliverance  
I am Dear Sir, yours assuredly

A. Fothergill

My respects to any who may inquire after me.

*Anthony Fothergill*

<sup>1</sup> John Coakley Lettson's son, John Miers Lettson (1771–1800).

<sup>2</sup> See letter 32, note 3.

<sup>3</sup> If this refers to one of Fothergill's letters, it is missing, along, probably, with many others.

<sup>4</sup> "With untroubled brow". See also letter 32.

N<sup>o</sup> 34 35

Bath May 28<sup>th</sup> 1794

Dear Sir,

Your obliging letter which arrived here 3 days brings me the welcome news of y<sup>r</sup> having passed the private ordeal<sup>1</sup> with much credit. This I persuade myself affords a happy omen that y<sup>r</sup> public examination will be performed with no less éclat. In the interim I need not exhort you to lose no time in making all necessary preparation, in anticipating the questions and responses, and guarding y<sup>r</sup> Latinity from vulgarisms & false concord. For it demands no small presence of mind to speak a dead language correctly, and make the responses pointedly in public before such an august assembly of medical and literary critics. It may not be amiss to prepare y<sup>r</sup> first response with a short apology for any lapsus linguæ that may possibly escape you from the awe w<sup>h</sup> the appearing before such a learned assembly must naturally inspire. On very doubtful or intricate points it is fair to hesitate a little and better to give modest than a pert reply or peremptory—as ut mihi videtur<sup>2</sup>—or cum pace eruditissimi professoris<sup>3</sup>—or ea qua par est deferentia doctissimo præceptoris.<sup>4</sup> Let your M.S. be written fair and not too small, and correct the press yourself with great care submitting the punctuation to the composition. A multiplicity of margin<sup>1</sup> or other notes increase the trouble and expense of printing, and also look pedantic and are becoming unfashionable. Paper and printing being very dear, I should think 200 copies quite sufficient, and will require you not to be too prodigal in the distribution, saying you have several friends in England to whom copies will be indispensable. Perhaps a dozen or 2 should be on fine paper, but no occasion for marbled covers. But M<sup>r</sup> M<sup>c</sup>aulay must know the [printers? word missing] and will assist you in making the most oeconomical agreement as to paper and press work, w<sup>h</sup> sometimes is charged very exorbitantly. It seems odd that the Irish students do not graduate at their own university. You did well to pay attention to young Lettson and should strive to cultivate his acquaintance as it may pave the way for an introduction to his father—a circumstance that may one day prove beneficial to your settling. As some time must elapse before you can be established, the sooner it is, perhaps, the better, and the sooner you will be in the way of reimbursement—an object of no small importance to your kind parent as well as to yourself. Till you are perfectly established, you'll see daily more and more reason for adhering to the strictest rules of oeconomy. The wary North Britons greatly outdo the English in this, and by this it is that they often supplant their English competitors and make their way rapidly in every part of England, nay of the globe. To assist merit struggling with difficulties wou'd at all times afford me the most exalted pleasure. But the inclination without the ability is truly painful! My losses last y<sup>r</sup> on X<sup>'s</sup> Bank; on private securities, and a Chan<sup>y</sup> suit now pending are more heavy than I choose to express to everyone. But independent of this, cou'd you wish me again to incur the displeasure of y<sup>r</sup> mother and brother? Before, when in compliance with y<sup>r</sup> request I lent



*Letters*

you £10 of w<sup>h</sup> I could not doubt y<sup>r</sup> having acquainted 'em, they testified, as soon as they understood this, the utmost surprise, saying they both had and would send you the needful. Indeed I was sorry to find that what I had done hurt their minds and their laudable spirit of independence, w<sup>h</sup> at the same time I could not but admire. Having no doubts of y<sup>r</sup> friends send<sup>g</sup> what is necess<sup>y</sup> nor of your passing the tribunal with honor, I shall scarcely expect to hear f<sup>m</sup> you again till you appear. The portmanteau will hold y<sup>r</sup> clothes & a few vol<sup>s</sup>. Heavy books or luggage best to be shipped for Bristol. D<sup>r</sup> Sir, y<sup>rs</sup> assuredly

A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> See letter 30, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> "As it seems to me".

<sup>3</sup> "Pace the learned professor".

<sup>4</sup> "With due deference to the learned preceptor".

N<sup>o</sup> 35 36

Bath June 5<sup>th</sup> 1794

My dear Sir

Had your former letter intimated your kind intention of addressing y<sup>r</sup> inaug<sup>l</sup> dissertation to me, I cou'd have answered it in my last, franked by Sir J. Sinclair, and forward<sup>d</sup> ab<sup>t</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> last Month w<sup>h</sup> I hope you have since received tho' not before your last sent out. Resolving not to bias your voluntary inclination, I have been silent on this head. Your favour of yesterday disclosing y<sup>r</sup> intention, I accept it with pleasure as a fresh instance of that gratitude and attention w<sup>h</sup> animates all your letters. Your annexing the name of my much esteemed friend D<sup>r</sup> Hawes gives me additional pleasure as I hope it may redound to y<sup>r</sup> interest, and is exactly what I should have recommended to your consideration, but for the reason above mentioned, being besides one of the properest persons (considering y<sup>r</sup> subject) that cou'd have been suggested. Behold this moment a letter from him wherein he writes his titles thus and desires me to communicate them to you, but I wish he had (as he perhaps has) written more fully to you

William Hawes M:D:

Sen<sup>r</sup> Phys<sup>n</sup> to the Surry and Lon<sup>n</sup> Dispensaries

Hon<sup>y</sup> Member of the R.P.S. Edin<sup>t</sup>: Mass H.S.

Manchester L.P.S. etc<sup>1</sup> — w<sup>h</sup> appear to me not very intelligible. Should you send him any packet you can enclose any letter etc. to me in it, as he will send me down the Philosophical Transactions some time before the end of the month. I am pleased to hear of your progress and that thus far you have passed muster with credit. My last will I hope facilitate y<sup>r</sup> cause till you reach the "summos in med. honores."<sup>2</sup> In ans<sup>r</sup> to your request concern<sup>g</sup> my titles, they are as follows. A. Fothergill — M.D., F.R.S.

Member of the Royal College of Phys<sup>n</sup> of London;

Honorary Member of the Medical Societies of London, Edinburgh, and Paris.

Also of the Philosophical Societies of Manchester; Philadelphia etc.<sup>3</sup>

Which may be abbreviated without being rendered unintelligible.

Anthony Fothergill

Sh'd you incline to have a motto what think you of the following?

"Phoebe, fave: novus ingreditur tua templa sacerdos" — Tibullus<sup>4</sup>

vel — "Multum adhuc restat operis" — Seneca<sup>5</sup>

vel — "Nulla re homines propius accedunt ad deos quam salutem hominibus dando" — Cicero<sup>6</sup>

Whatever theses connected with the subject you can procure will be interesting.

I am happy to hear your mother has got so favorably thro' a most dangerous disease and remain with best wishes for your success at this critical moment. D<sup>r</sup> Sir, yours assuredly

A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> Woodforde's dedication read: "Necnon Viro Praestantissimo GULIELMO HAWES, M.D. Londinensi Valitudinar. Londinens. et Surrien. Med. Seniori. Societ. Reg. Phys. Edin. Soc. Honor. Societ. Human. Mancunien. et Societ. Phys. Londin. Socio. Ob urbanitatem limitissimam et amicitiam sinceram, quibus sese constanter et generose prosequi suit dignatus".

<sup>2</sup> "The highest honours in medicine".

<sup>3</sup> Woodforde's dedication read: "Viro Doctissimo et Ingeniosissimo ANTONIO FOTHERGILL, M.D. Soc. Reg. Societ. Col. Med. Reg. Londin. Soc. Societ. Medic. Londin. Edinen. et Parisien. Soc. Honor. et etiam Societ. Philosoph. Mancunien. Philadelphien., &c. Socio. Qui artem Hippocraticam, summa cum laude sua, summoque cum generis humani commodo, Bathoniae exercet; Ut indicium animi in eum, ob amicitiam benevolentiamque fere paternas, in sese, numerosissimis in exemplis, clare evidenterque demonstratas, gratissimi".

<sup>4</sup> "Phoebus, be favorable: a new priest enters your temples". Tibullus, *Elegies*, 2.5.1.

<sup>5</sup> "Much still remains to be done". Seneca, *Moral letters to Lucilius*, 64.7.

<sup>6</sup> "By no achievement do men come nearer to the gods than by giving health to men". Cicero, *Pro quinto lugario*, 38. Woodforde actually chose this motto (in Latin) for his thesis.

N<sup>o</sup> 38 37

Bath 7<sup>ber</sup> [September] 6<sup>th</sup> 1794

My dear D<sup>r</sup>

Your affectionate letter gave me much satisfaction, and I cannot sufficiently commend your resolution of employing your leisure hours in useful study. By this, you'll be still adding to your present stock of knowledge, and having laid a good foundation will be able to carry on the superstructure with increasing pleasure. I wrote immediately to our friend D<sup>r</sup> Hawes who probably by this time has answered your query respecting the papers. Your thesis I know he has rec<sup>d</sup>, as I hope to see him ere long I shall remind him of that and other matters. From a sheet which he sent me about 10 days ago I understood his new vol. was printed off except the errata.<sup>1</sup> Wishing to introduce you to my esteemed friend D<sup>r</sup> Renaudet,<sup>2</sup> I return his pamphlet<sup>3</sup> thro' y<sup>r</sup> hands with the enclosed letter which also affords you a perusal of this American tract.<sup>4</sup> The ensuing week I shall probably pass sometime with D<sup>r</sup> Townsend<sup>5</sup> at Pewsy or perhaps in London, and have some chat with him in your behalf. M<sup>r</sup> Dawson, as you will see from the enclosed, I have engaged warmly in your interest, and as he comes to your fair, I intend he shall be the bearer of this. So you see we are all plotting how to do you all the mischief we can. Your thesis I am circulating among medical dons, not forgetting to abuse the author as he deserves. But to be serious, on my return I shall be glad to see you whenever you can make it convenient. With best respects to y<sup>r</sup> affectionate mother and brother. I am my D<sup>r</sup> D<sup>r</sup> much y<sup>rs</sup>

A. Fothergill

## Letters

M<sup>r</sup> Dawson will forward this in my absence tho' he should not attend the fair which now seems uncertain. Perhaps I may be detained till about the 25<sup>th</sup>. This however is luckily the dead calm at Bath when even the turnspits stand still

<sup>1</sup> Possibly, William Hawes, *Transactions of the Royal Humane Society [from 1774 to 1784. With an appendix of miscellaneous observations on suspended animation, to . . . 1794. Edited by W. Hawes]*, [London, 1795].

<sup>2</sup> Peter Renaudet (1745?–?), MD (Aberdeen), practised in Bath and Bristol, Hotwells.

<sup>3</sup> Probably a pamphlet belonging to, not written by, Renaudet, since he seems never to have published anything.

<sup>4</sup> Possibly the tract by James Mease. See letter 26, note 2.

<sup>5</sup> Wallis and Wallis, letter 1, note 2, identify only one Townsend as a physician practising at this time. Richard Townsend (1740?–?), MD (Edinburgh), practised in Cork.

## N<sup>o</sup> 36 38

Bath 28th Sep<sup>r</sup> 1794

D<sup>r</sup> D<sup>r</sup>

I was fav'd with y<sup>r</sup> lett<sup>r</sup> by M<sup>r</sup> Bush and shall expect you here according to promise tomorrow evening, and have a bed at your service. On Tuesday about half past 3 you'll dine with me, and I shall invite D<sup>r</sup> Moodie<sup>1</sup> and B. Dawson to meet you. M<sup>r</sup> Bush bro<sup>t</sup> 5 theses w<sup>h</sup> you kindly sent me, but I am unwilling to deprive you of them beyond a perusal when leisure offers, after w<sup>h</sup> you may have the whole or a part back with your books w<sup>h</sup> were left here. Being detained with a sick friend at Highgate longer than I expected, I did not return home till Thursday last, tho' much wanted. You did right to send your thesis to D<sup>r</sup> L[ettsom] and son, who, with D<sup>r</sup> Hawes, will on my account be ready to serve you whenever occasion offers, as will D<sup>r</sup> Renaudet who is a sincere, friendly man, but valetudinary and afraid to stir abroad—of your future plan more when we meet.

My best respects to your mother and brother and believe me, Dear Sir, yours assuredly

A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> Probably John Moodie (1762–1819?), MD (Aberdeen), practised at the Bath dispensary.

## N<sup>o</sup> 37 39

Bath Oct<sup>r</sup> 19th 1794

I forward this book, my D<sup>r</sup> D<sup>r</sup>, thro' your hands for two reasons. 1st to give you an opportunity of hasty perusal (for it must be a rapid one as D<sup>r</sup> Renaudet himself has not yet read it) and 2<sup>y</sup> that by waiting on the D<sup>r</sup> with it you may improve y<sup>r</sup> acquaintance with one who is so worthy our esteem. I regretted your sudden escape from hence before we had time to talk over affairs, and without even a sight of the Humane Society's highly finished

Anthony Fothergill

Medal.<sup>1</sup> But of these more when we meet tho' I know not when I shall be able to see you at Bristol. I hope your mother and brother are both well and have barely time to add that I am D<sup>r</sup> Sir,

much yours  
A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> Fothergill received the Humane Society's prize for an essay on suspended animation in 1794. Anthony Fothergill, *A new inquiry into the suspension of vital action, in cases of drowning and suffocation. Being an attempt . . . to elucidate the approximate cause and to appreciate [sic] the present remedies, and to point out the best method of restoring animation*, Bath, S. Hazard, 1795.

N<sup>o</sup> 39 40

Bath Oct<sup>r</sup> 29<sup>th</sup> 1794

D<sup>r</sup> D<sup>r</sup>

Your M.S. with your obliging letter of last night came safe. What with correcting the press, composing, revising etc., added to my other engagements my hands at present are full, but if I can steal short intervals to look over your M.S. within the time, I will. And I want to make you acquainted with a worthy friend of mine and eminent practitioner who may chance some time or other to be useful to you—behold the enclosed is your introduction. My edit<sup>n</sup> of Hoffmann not being the latest, viz. 1761,<sup>1</sup> I hastily, sometime ago, parted with it, my de Haen consists of some parts of his *Ratio Medendi*<sup>2</sup> wh<sup>h</sup> I never was able to anything near complete, otherwise you should have had them sent with this. But doubtless you may easily have the perusal of either at the Bristol Lib<sup>y</sup> or of some of the faculty, perhaps of D<sup>r</sup> Renaudet or M<sup>r</sup> Baynton.<sup>3</sup> A scene of hurry prevents my getting thro' your Cullen M.S. and a list of anat<sup>y</sup>, but if you want them only say and they shall be sent. As your mother hinted many weeks ago, her being ready to replace the sum I lent you, it will be doubly acceptable if she can do it next week, or even when you come over, as I shall want to complete a small sum against the middle of Nov<sup>r</sup> due to a correspondent. Suppose you sleep here the evening before you proceed to London. On rec<sup>d</sup> the Medal, being politely asked to think of a question for the next prize for 1795, I contrived to bring forward 2 which I thought might suit you to a T. So thinks friend Hawes, one would think we had been plotting. Behold one of the 2 is syncope from profuse haemorrhage. In great haste, dear D<sup>r</sup>, yours

A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Hoffmann, *Medicinae rationalis systematicae; or, Opera omnia physico-medica denuo revisa, correctae et aucta, in sex tomos distributa, quibus continentur doctrinae solidis principiis physico-mechanicis, et anatomicis, atque etiam observationibus clinico-practicis superstructae. . . . Cum vita auctoris [by J. H. Schultze] et ejus praefatione de differente medicinae et medicorum statu*, 6 vols. in 3, Geneva, de Tournes, 1761.

<sup>2</sup> Anton de Haën (1704–1776), *Ratio medendi nosocomio practico, quod . . . condidit Maria Theresia . . . Imperatrix*, 5 vols., Vienna, J. T. von Trattner; H. Krüchten, 1760–67.

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas Baynton (1761–1820), surgeon at Bristol, developed a method for treating ulcers of the legs. See letter 55.

N<sup>o</sup> 41 41

[Bath December 1794]

D<sup>r</sup> D<sup>r</sup>

Pursuant to y<sup>r</sup> request no time has been lost in adding my testimony to y<sup>r</sup> credentials. Preserve a fair copy of my letter w<sup>h</sup> I trust may avail you on more occasions than the present, and perhaps carry more weight than a whole cargo of random recommendations from persons less competent to judge. As M<sup>r</sup> D[awson] joins me heartily in y<sup>r</sup> interest and is intimate with M<sup>rs</sup> Beck's uncle, he promised me to wait on him this day to entreat him to write to his niece in your favour. Y<sup>r</sup> lett<sup>r</sup> will explain tho' occasion the shortness of time. Whether you succeed or not in your present application, the ardor of y<sup>r</sup> friends will not fail to cause others to embark in y<sup>r</sup> interest, and ensure y<sup>r</sup> establishment. My respects to D<sup>r</sup> Renaudet and M<sup>r</sup> Baynton, and you'll do well to consult 'em on this occasion. You'll wait on the Governors in person, and, if from home, leave a respectful card intreating the favor of their vote and interest.<sup>1</sup>

Health and success

adieu A. Fothergill

Bath Dec<sup>r</sup>: ult: 94

<sup>1</sup> Woodforde was obviously a candidate for an appointment at a voluntary hospital, possibly the Bristol Royal Infirmary.

N<sup>o</sup> 40 42

Bath Jan<sup>y</sup> 27<sup>th</sup> 1795

D<sup>r</sup> D<sup>r</sup>

Herewith I hope you'll receive safe Hippocrates and Aretaeus<sup>1</sup> two of the most venerable of the ancients, and w<sup>h</sup> it is strange the Bristol Lib<sup>y</sup> sh<sup>d</sup> be without, tho' most provincial Lib<sup>y</sup>s are miserably defective in med<sup>l</sup> authors. These, with the voluminous authors you mention, if perused with care, as they must be if read to advantage, will engross all y<sup>r</sup> leisure hours for this very considerable time to come. However I send them without delay to be in readiness. The printer and I meet with so many interruptions that my press work goes on but slowly, tho' we are got to the 80<sup>th</sup> page, and it will not be my fault if the rest be not expedited. Being ever too nice in correction and attempts towards improvement, I find the revision<sup>2</sup> not a work of recreation—but of

Anthony Fothergill

re-creation. The case you describe seems to be a real suppuration of the liver, and if it breaks externally by emoll<sup>t</sup> cataplasms etc. and you can keep air from penetrating the abdomen, all may still do well, tho' a very critical situation of w<sup>h</sup> the man's relatives should be privately admonished. It will be right to take notes as you pass thro' the above important authors. Remember me kindly to D<sup>r</sup> Renaudet, M<sup>r</sup> Baynton etc

D<sup>r</sup> D<sup>r</sup>, yours in great haste

A. Fothergill

P.S. When you next come to Bath bring with you the M.S. of College exercises I sent you to Edin<sup>r3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Presumably one of the many editions of Aretaeus of Cappadocia ( AD c.150–200, *De causis et signis acutorum et diuturnorum morborum*).

<sup>2</sup> There does not seem to have been any new editions of any of Fothergill's works in 1795, so what is being discussed here is unclear. He was probably referring to the manuscript of his *Inquiry*, see letter 39, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> See letters 27, 32 and 46.

N<sup>o</sup> 42 43

Bath April 10<sup>th</sup> 1795

D<sup>r</sup> D<sup>r</sup>

Daily journeys to country patients in addition to my other numerous avocations have put it out of my power to ans<sup>r</sup> y<sup>r</sup> last oblig<sup>e</sup> fav<sup>r</sup> with the loan of Fordyce's book<sup>1</sup> till now. I am happy, however, to hear y<sup>r</sup> late visit to Bath afforded not only consolation to y<sup>r</sup> mind, then under great agitation, but a truce to y<sup>r</sup> bodily complaints, besides sparing you the expense and inconvenience of being long absent from home. If the slight glut w<sup>h</sup> still recurs at intervals be divested of all virulence and contagion (as I trust it is) the vessels, if not too much urged and irritated by astrigent stimulants, will in due time recover their tone. Instead of harassing the mucous membrane with injections of this kind, suppose you leave the matter to the powers of the system; gently aiding these by the cold bath treatment[?] or a cold water fall from the height of 4 or 5 feet, on the genitals every morn<sup>g</sup>—taking 4 or 6 pills of G: Oliban:<sup>2</sup> with [antimony symbol] of P. Rh[?]i every night.<sup>3</sup> As soon as a leisure hour will permit I will run over D<sup>r</sup> Fordyce on Simple Fevers<sup>4</sup> and return it safe. The printer thro' absurd forgetfulness instead of working off some extra copies of my Inq<sup>y</sup> as ordered, expressly in the presence of the compositor and pressmen, only printed just the Society's number.<sup>5</sup> Hence I am left with 2 imperfect copies for myself, one of w<sup>h</sup> I request y<sup>r</sup> acceptance of herewith, which being much disguised with corrections is only fit for your private perusal, tho' sufficiently legible. Wishing you success in your new situation, I remain D<sup>r</sup> D<sup>r</sup> in haste much yours

A. Fothergill

<sup>1</sup> Possibly one of many editions of George Fordyce (1736–1802), *Elements of the practice of physic. Part the I. Containing, the natural history of the human body. Part the II. Containing, the history and methods of*

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*treating fevers, and internal inflammations*, London, J. Johnson, 1771. Sixth edition, 1791.

<sup>2</sup> Olibanum is sometimes described as a gum and sometimes as a resin. It is also known as frankincense.

<sup>3</sup> The symbol is that of antimony and the prescription makes no sense. It probably should read, take “oliban with antimony [possibly meaning tartar emeticus] and P. Rh[?]i”. The latter could be Rhaei, an unusual spelling for rhubarb root, or Rhoei which could refer to wild poppy. The former is most likely.

<sup>4</sup> George Fordyce, *A dissertation on simple fever, or on fever consisting of one paroxysm only*, London, J. Johnson, 1794.

<sup>5</sup> See letter 39, note 1.

N<sup>o</sup> 43 44

Bath June 3<sup>rd</sup> 179[5] [figure illegible]

Dear Sir,

I am happy to find that your health and spirits are so well restored and that you enjoy once more the greatest of sublunary blessings, the

“Mens sana in corpore sano.”<sup>1</sup>

M<sup>rs</sup> Woodforde’s request alas! happens at a most unfortunate time, for on Friday last I parted with what ready cash I had to spare, in a remittance to Lond<sup>n</sup> to the amount of 40<sup>£</sup>. Indeed since my late villain of a servant by means of a false key stole several G<sup>s</sup> out of my escritoire, I have made a point of keeping by me only small sums for current expenses. Add to this M<sup>r</sup> Chaplin, who had promised to pay in a sum on mortgage on Monday last 1<sup>st</sup> June, writes that his correspond<sup>t</sup> has disappointed him, so behold the payment is put off sine die!!!—Dreadful times! no punctuality of payment—increasing burthens and decreasing ability to support them, and yet in spite of all this, people of all ranks live beyond their incomes, and by lighting the candle at both ends quickly exhaust every resource, and plunge themselves into bankruptcy! The small sum wanted however for present exigency will no doubt soon be raised by your brother among some of the monied Bristolians. By the by, if any of his clients will advance me 600<sup>£</sup> on an undoubted security of a mortgage on a leasehold estate near Bath on 3 good lives, interest at 5 per cent which is punctually paid half yearly, I shall then be able to supply M<sup>rs</sup> Woodforde with the sum you mention. Time and assiduity as I formerly admonished you must be required to gain you a firm establishment<sup>t</sup> especially among so many hungry antagonists. Your prospect however, for the time is superior to most of the juvenile physicians. Your tract of Fordyce’s I passed thro’ the hands of good Renaudet who has or will convey it to you safely, and your other books I shall now hasten thro’ and return in due time. Best respects to your dear mother and brother and believe me, Dear Sir,

y<sup>rs</sup> assuredly

A. Fothergill

P:S: I think you have my late tract on the poison of lead and copper etc.<sup>2</sup> or I would send you a copy. No copies alas! on Vital Action<sup>3</sup> but what I must buy, as lately one for Phil<sup>l</sup> Soc<sup>y</sup> of Philadelphia w<sup>h</sup> I forwarded by the hands of D<sup>r</sup> Renaudet, to whom my best respects and who will, I hope, not forget his long promised visit to Bath accompanied with fresh dispatches from his worthy nephew Judge Turner, of w<sup>h</sup> his late short letter gave intimation and for w<sup>h</sup> I wait with the utmost impatience. Vale! P.S. The messenger who bro<sup>t</sup> yrs

*Anthony Fothergill*

neglecting to wait or call in half an hour for the ans<sup>r</sup> obliges me to forward this by the coach, after waiting a day his promised return.

<sup>1</sup> “A healthy mind in a healthy body”. Juvenal, *Satires*, 10.356.

<sup>2</sup> See letter 6, note 6. Fothergill actually used the symbols derived from alchemy to indicate the metals.

<sup>3</sup> See letter 39, note 1.

N<sup>o</sup> 44 45

Bath June 18<sup>th</sup> 1795

Dear Sir

After mature consideration of your patient’s history, it is still by no measure clear either from the remote cause assigned or from the symptoms, whether the irritating cause is seated in the encephalon, or the stomach or the duodenum. As the menses are reg<sup>f</sup> we cannot fairly attribute the origin of the disease to the effects of damp linen. Worms in the alimentary canal have more than once caused similar affections. With this view, and also to get rid of the mercur<sup>l</sup> sympt<sup>s</sup>, I shou’d be inclined to try the following plan about 3 weeks; if it fails, the succeeding ones may deserve attention. Charge her to observe all her stools—to leave off tea and never make a full meal. With best wishes for your success in this obscure case, and all others committed to your care, I remain

D<sup>r</sup> D<sup>r</sup> in haste much y<sup>rs</sup>

A: Fothergill

P:S: My respects to D<sup>r</sup> Renaudet, M<sup>r</sup> Baynton etc. I hope M<sup>rs</sup> W[oodforde] got the [money? illegible] without difficulty.

N<sup>o</sup> 46 46

Bath Sept<sup>r</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> 1794 [1795]<sup>1</sup>

My D<sup>r</sup> Sir,

Your kind mother has my best thanks for a couple fine chickens w<sup>h</sup> arrived here this morning in my absence with M<sup>c</sup>bride’s Practice,<sup>2</sup> and am sorry the messenger left no word where he was to be found, or whether inclined to bring an ans<sup>r</sup>. The only M.S. returned with former parcel was a Latin case, and I have turned over Hippocrates and Aretaeus from beginning to end, but the Ordo Examin:<sup>3</sup> so much wanted is not to be found, tho’ it is to be hoped your Edin<sup>r</sup> correspond<sup>t</sup> if it has been lent out will yet recover it. In the progress of my inquiry on y<sup>r</sup> account I have just heard that a vacancy of a physic<sup>n</sup> to Northamp<sup>n</sup> hospital has been lately announced in the Lond<sup>n</sup> papers, but doubtless numerous medical candidates all around will crowd forwards, add to this D<sup>r</sup> Curry of Kettering<sup>4</sup> well known



## Letters

at Northampton from former residence, will probably supersede all others, having been employed some time ago by the directors of the new Humane Society established at Northampton to draw up a short statement of the method to be pursued, w<sup>h</sup> he performed much to their satisfaction. To cope with Kerr<sup>5</sup> who rules with unrivaled sway it wou<sup>d</sup> require that an antagonist should appear flush of money with a couple of good saddle horses, a livery serv<sup>t</sup> and other things in style to please this proud, showy, dressy people, who weigh medical mind by external appearances—a plan where an Akenside,<sup>6</sup> a Stonhouse,<sup>7</sup> a Watts,<sup>8</sup> a Kerr etc. have been accustomed to set every engine to work, and to push on business by machinery. This would not suit you. The expedition forming for the West Ind<sup>s</sup> will demand a number of med<sup>l</sup> and chirurg<sup>l</sup> attendants but I know of no key to these military commanders who fix the appointments, otherwise a good introduction to practice might thus be obtained. Your brother in Lond<sup>n</sup> might by diligent application and inquiry at the respective offices in Lond<sup>n</sup> obtain the necess<sup>y</sup> intelligence and you might send a letter to the board setting forth the course of your studies and your readiness to embark in the service provided you should feel an inclination to undertake a western voyage. Without some speedy exertion of this sort, you may, it is fear<sup>d</sup>, remain a considerable time longer unknown, unemployed. To obviate this and to forward your wishes is the ardent desire of

Dear Sir,

Yours very sincerely

A. Fothergill

P.S. Beddoes edit<sup>n</sup> of Brown<sup>9</sup> has not found its way into the Bath libraries as yet.

<sup>1</sup> The reference to Beddoes's edition of John Brown, see this letter note 9, along with other evidence, dates this as 1795.

<sup>2</sup> David Macbride (1726–1778), *A methodical introduction to the theory and practice of physic*, London, W. Strahan, 1772.

<sup>3</sup> Fothergill seems to be referring here to the catechism he sent to Woodforde in Edinburgh. See letters 27, 32 and 42.

<sup>4</sup> Presumably James Curry (1755–1819), MD (Edinburgh 1784), FSA, became physician to the County hospital (Northampton), later removed to London, Licentiate of the College of Physicians (1802), and eventually physician to Guy's Hospital.

<sup>5</sup> Presumably William Kerr (1738–1824), MD (Oxford), Army surgeon and surgeon to the Infirmary at the County Hospital (Northampton), later he practised as a physician in Northampton.

<sup>6</sup> Presumably Mark Akenside (1721–1770), poet and physician, doctor of physic (Leyden 1744), FRS, FCP.

<sup>7</sup> Sir James Stonhouse. See letter 8, note 3.

<sup>8</sup> Presumably William Watts (1725–1786), MD (Aberdeen), practised in Northampton.

<sup>9</sup> John Brown (1735–1788), *The elements of medicine. Translated from the Latin, with comments and illustrations, by the author. A new ed. . . . with a biographical preface by Thomas Beddoes*, 2 vols., London, J. Johnson, 1795.

N<sup>o</sup> 45 47

Bath Nov: 25<sup>th</sup> 1795

Dear Sir

My friend Kingston kindly called just now with the enclosed letter from his correspond<sup>t</sup>

*Anthony Fothergill*

in London whom he wrote purposing on y<sup>r</sup> account. I therefore forward it without delay for y<sup>r</sup> information. The place he presumes is still vacant as no intelligence has arrived of its being filled. From this account together with information you collect f<sup>m</sup> y<sup>r</sup> Bristol correspond<sup>ce</sup>, you'll learn whether a successor has gone over, and to form a judgement of its eligibility. You will of course consult y<sup>r</sup> friends and from the general result form your determination. All I know of the matter is now before you. Sh<sup>d</sup> you wish to consult D<sup>r</sup> Kingston again, he is removed f<sup>m</sup> N<sup>o</sup> 16 to No 20 Milsom street. Madeira belongs to the crown of Portugal, and except the English factory and English sojourners, the inhabitants are Portuguese, hence the restriction about dispensing med<sup>s</sup>. Tho' the Portuguese have physic<sup>s</sup> of their own, yet they generally give preferences to an English practitioner and that for very wise reasons. They are better instructed. I remain, D<sup>r</sup> Sir, in haste much yours

A. Fothergill

P.S. How far the present locum tenens is likely to prove an antagonist you'll judge f<sup>m</sup> the letter.

[N<sup>o</sup> 88a] 48

Copy of a letter received from M<sup>r</sup> Jas Russell Surgeon, Edin<sup>r</sup>.<sup>1</sup>

16<sup>th</sup> of December 1795

D<sup>r</sup> Sir,

I am favored with y<sup>r</sup> letter of 10<sup>th</sup> ins in which you do me the honor to ask my advice for a young relation who unhappily has been deprived of the sight of both eyes by an attack of cataract. By the account given of the case there seems to be nothing remarkable in the appearance of the eyes, nor any thing in the state of the symptoms unfavorable to an operation so that the time of operating is the only point to be determined. Now it is plain that it never can be adviseable to operate till the eye be so large and the patient so steady as to allow all the steps of the operation to be performed with tolerable certainty of success and these circumstances cannot be expected to take place sooner than 8 or 10 years of age; tho' more probably not till 12 or 14. About 12 therefore I consider as the medium line of life at w<sup>h</sup> the operation of couching is performed, there is a chance that the state of the eye and of the patient's steadiness may admit of operating a year or two sooner. But if extraction is to be performed, 12 will be in all likelihood the earliest age at w<sup>h</sup> the operation will be adviseable, I sh<sup>d</sup> not however esteem it prudent to determine a particular case by a general rule; without taking into consideration all the specialities in the patient's situation. Upon this account I sh<sup>d</sup> recommend the occasional examination of his eyes when the period of life approaches at w<sup>h</sup> it may be prudent to perform the operation in order that the surgeon may avail himself of the first favourable opportunity to attempt to restore him to sight. As to the operation w<sup>h</sup> I prefer, I have in general given the preference to depression, though I do not think the preference very marked and sh<sup>d</sup> think that if y<sup>r</sup> own inclination leads you to prefer extraction you ought undoubtedly to recommend it to y<sup>r</sup> relation. There is one advantage attends depression in this case: it can probably be admitted some years

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sooner, w<sup>h</sup> is so much time gained in the acquisition of knowledge. Whatever you determine on I shall be glad to learn the result of the operation. I sincerely hope it will be favourable and I do assure you it will give me the greatest pleasure to think that my advice can be of use to you either on this or any other occasion. I remain D<sup>r</sup> Sir y<sup>r</sup> most obd<sup>t</sup> and very humble servant.

James Russell

P.S. My friend's letter is very pertinent and satisfactory but I cou'd wish he had been more definite in mentioning when the eye became large enough for performing an operation. If the full growth of the eye is requisite this cannot take place before the age 18 or 20. The chief impediments in my opinion to the early performing [of] the operation are the unsteadiness of the patient and of course the inability of the surgeon to perform properly the several steps of the operation. Were proper instruments contrived for fixing the eye at pleasure—why may not the operation be performed at a very early age? I sh<sup>d</sup> suppose the eye not more susceptible at 2 or 3 years of age than at 12 or 14. And all agree in affirming that it is the consequent inflammation w<sup>h</sup> usually frustrates the cure. But probably the force that wou'd be requisite to fix the eye without any cooperation of the patient wou'd excite inflammation. This to me is the only reason why we may not immediately attempt to restore vision. Since writing the above it occurs to me that puberty takes place in each sex about the age of 10 or 14 years, but the body has not acquired its full and perfect growth at this time. D<sup>r</sup> Gregory fixes this to about the 18<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> year.

“Justam et plenam staturam juvenis forsan adipiscitur decimo octavo vel vigesimo ætatis anno.”<sup>2</sup> Since M<sup>r</sup> Russell's letter I have been honored with the opinion of two other eminent practitioners in surgery: M<sup>r</sup> Fyfe<sup>3</sup> and M<sup>r</sup> Latta.<sup>4</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Fyfe thinks extraction better than couching. M<sup>r</sup> Latta prefers the latter and both agree in considering it improper to operate before the eyes are of such growth, and the patient so sensible and steady as to allow all the steps of the operation to be properly performed.

<sup>1</sup> James Russell (1754–1836) was an Edinburgh surgeon, author and first professor of clinical surgery at the university, 1803. This letter is unnumbered. It appears in the letterbook after letter N<sup>o</sup> 88 (87 in this sequence), the last from Philadelphia and before the final two letters from London, N<sup>o</sup> 89 and N<sup>o</sup> 90 (90 and 91 in this sequence). We have numbered it 88a to locate it in the letterbook but placed it chronologically as 48 in this sequence. It seems that the original from Russell was sent to Fothergill who then sent it to Woodforde with a P.S.

<sup>2</sup> “A young man reaches his proper full stature perhaps in his eighteenth or twentieth year”. Not attributable.

<sup>3</sup> Presumably Andrew Fyfe (1754–1824), anatomist, dissector to Alexander Monro, *secundus*, professor of anatomy in the university of Edinburgh. See letter 20, note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Presumably James Latta (1765?–1804), FRCSE, surgeon-apothecary in Edinburgh, and author of *A practical system of surgery*, 3 vols., Edinburgh, G. Mudie, A. Guthrie & J. Fairbairn, 1795.