

I. *Part of Two Letters of May the 22th and June the 12th, 1699. from Sir Charles Holt to Dr. Shadwell, Concerning a Disease caused by Swallowing Stones; with Remarks on the same, by Hans Sloane, M.D.*

THIS now about Two Months or more since one *Tho. Gobsill*, of *Shelden* near *Coleshill* in *Warwickshire*, (a Lean, Spare Man aged about 26 or 27.) came to me and gave me the following Account of himself: *viz.* That about Three Years ago, he was extremely troubled with the Wind, which put him to great Torture: and one day making his Complaint to an old Woman in the Neighbourhood, she advised him to swallow Stones, *viz.* round white Pebbles: upon the next return of a Fit, he observed her Directions; and the Stones passing easily through him, he found great Relief by his new Medicine, of which he was very proud; and repeated it as often, as he had occasion with the same happy Success. After some Months, he being seized with a violent Fit of this Spleen Wind (as he call'd it) he immediately apply'd himself to his old Remedy, and swallowed his usual number of Stones (which as I remember was Nine) but they not passing, he repeated the Dose; and so continued taking of them till he had taken above 200. He had these Stones in him above two years and a half, when he first came to me, and then complained, that his Appetite was gone, that he could digest nothing, but threw up every thing he eat; I was then going abroad, and had not time to make a more particular Enquiry, but from this Relation I imagin'd, that the Stones by their Weight and pressure might have distended the Coats of the Stomach, and form'd themselves a Bed *in fundo Ventriculi*. But the next time I saw him, I found I was mistaken; for upon

on Examining his Belly I found the Stones lay almost as low as the *Os Pubis*, and thrusting my Fingers just above that Bone, so that the lower part of the *Abdomen* might lie on my hand, I could with the Motion of my hand shake them, and make them rattle, as if they had been in a Bag. When I had made this Discovery, I caus'd a Ladder to be set against a Wall, and hung him by the Hams on the inside of the Ladder with his Head directly perpendicular to the ground. Whilst he was in this Posture, he told me the Stones were got up to his Stomach; but being set upon his Feet, after a very small time we could plainly hear the Stones drop successively one after another, and so distinctly, that they might be counted.

If his Body be not Laxative, he Vomits all he eats or drinks; to prevent which he commonly keeps it open with Whey. As he lies in Bed the Stones will sometimes get up (as he exprest it) almost to his Heart, and give him great Disturbance; at which times he is forced to get upon his Knees, or to stand upright, and then he can hear them drop as is before-mention'd; and at such times he has counted an hundred and odd; some times more, sometimes less, but always above an hundred.

He is now so disabled by these Stones that he cannot Work, but in pain; and when he attempts it, he finds the same Night and the next day, a great foreness in the bottom of his Belly, and voids large quantities of Blood by Stool.

Before I saw him, he had been under the hands of several Quacks: some had Vomited him with *Stibium*, and Purg'd him, others Purg'd and Glister'd him; but all the forcing Medicines they made use of, could never bring one Stone from him.

He now eats tolerably well, but complained when I saw him last (which was *Friday* the 5th of *June*) that the Stones grew more troublesome to him every day than other.

Not

Not long since my worthy and ingenious Friend, the Learned Dr. *Fowke*, making me a visit, I shew'd him this Man, and he was pleas'd nicely to examine his Case, and told me he had never heard, or met with in Books, any thing like it.

This day (*June 12.*) I saw *Gobfill*; he looks better than he did when I left the Country. Dr. *Davies* was with me, and examined all the Particulars herein mentioned.

The REMARKS.

There are many People who are of Opinion, that the Swallowing Stones or Pebbles is very beneficial to the Health, by helping the Stomach to digest their Food. The reason of this, I suppose, is because they see Birds Languish, unless they swallow Gravel or small Stones. I have been consulted by some upon this occasion, but was always against this practice in Men: because the Stomachs (or Gizzards) of Birds (they wanting Teeth to grind their Food) is made very strong, Muscular, and defended in the inside with a Coat, by the help of which, and these Stones, their Victuals are ground. Now the Stomach of Men being different, 'tis not reasonable to think they should be of use to them. I knew one Mr. Kingmill, who used to swallow for many Years (if I remember right) Nine at a time, once every day, without any injury. He at my desire, swallowed some before me, those he swallowed were near as large as Walnuts. He told me he found they pass'd, and had no inconvenience by them, though he had used them many Years; and bought them by the Peck, having them taken up some-where in Kent. He only chose such as were roundish and smooth. He died afterwards suddenly.

As Remedies which have been found helpful to other Animals may be sometimes beneficial to Man, yet the instance here related shows great Consideration should be had of them.

II. Some