

II. *A Letter from Sir William Beefton, Governour of Jamaica, to Mr. Charles Bernard, containing some Observations about the Barometer, and of a Hot Bath in that Island.*

Jamaica, April the 8th, 1696.

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BY the *Ruby Man of War*, in *December* laſt, I gave you the beſt Account I could of the Comet that appeared here in *October*; but the Weather at that time was often Cloudy: I had no Inſtruments nor Celeſtial Globe, and am not perfectly acquainted with the Southern Conſtellations; for which Reaſons the Relation was but indifferent.

Now having no Acquaintance with any of the *Royal Society*, I have ſome other Remarks to make to you, which I refer to you to acquaint ſome of them with, or not, as you think it may be worth their Notice.

When I came from *England*, I cauſed my Barometer (which had wrought very well in *England* ſome Years) to be carefully put up, with intent to try if the Air had the ſame Effect on the \varnothing here as in *England*; but by ſome Miſfortune, when I came to take it out my Tube was broken, and I could never procure another till about *Chriſtmas* laſt; then I met with one of 36 Inches, and cleaned all my Frame and the Tube very well, put my \varnothing through double Cloth, and made that Fine, and ſet it up with all the Exactneſs I could; when it was firſt in the Ciſtern the \varnothing ſtood one degree below Changeable; I diligently obſerved it every day, and found that in the Mornings before the \odot aroſe it would be there; and as the Heat encreaſed with the Day, it ſunk to within one De-

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gree above Rain ; there it continued several Days, and never altered above Three Degrees, tho' sometimes Fair, sometimes Rain, and sometimes Cloudy; and one Morning leaving open my Window, and the ☉ having South declination, it shone in on the visible part of the Tube, and in half an Hour it sunk 3 Degrees; (which I never observed it to do with Heat in *England*) I presently shut the Window, and in one Hour it arose again to within one Degree of Changeable; after it had kept this Course in several Weathers, for six Weeks together, I began to doubt if it were well adjusted, and therefore took it down, new filled the Tube, turn'd it three or four times up and down, to let out the Air, and put it up with great care, and ever since it continues the same, never by one Degree to Changeable, nor down by one Degree to Rain; so that the whole Progress of the ☿ is but $\frac{1}{8}$ of an Inch; whether the Air here be so much higher, and so much more constant from Vicissitudes then in colder Climates, I must leave to the *Magi* to consider.

Another thing I have to tell you, is, that for many Years past it has been known, that here is a very hot Spring of Mineral Water; but being an uncouth Way for about six Miles, from any usual Roads, and amongst Hills, Woods, and Rocks, it has not been frequented but accidentally by Hunters, who are a laborious People and make few Remarks. Ever since I came hither I have been prompting People to try it, but the distance and trouble has hindred till this last Month; two, the one very much Macerated with the Belly-ach, and another with the Pox, as is supposed, went to it, carr'd Cloths, built a Hut, to keep them from the Rain and Sun; and both presently, by Drinking and Bathing found such Ease, that in about ten Days they return'd perfectly Cured. It comes out of a Rock, in a fresh Current, near to a fine Rivulet of good cool Water,

ter, but is so hot, they all affirm it soon Boils Eggs; some say Craw-fish, Chickens, and even a Turkey; but perhaps this last wants good Confirmation. However it's certain, that near where it comes forth, there is no enduring any part of the Body but it takes off the Skin, it Cures Ulcers, and contracted Nerves and Sinews in a few Days to a Miracle. Colonel *Beckford*, who was given over by the Physicians, with Pains in his Bowels very Acute, that had worn him out, and another for the Veneral Disease; and one for the Belly-ach are now gone up; and perhaps before I seal this we may hear from them; and if it Cures them, it must be of that virtue and efficacy, that perhaps there's not the like known in the World; We are in Hopes it will also do for the Gout; and if it has all these Qualities, it will bring the *Spaniards*, and all the Nations about us for Cure, and make the Island famous.

It has been try'd with Gauls in my sight, and it makes the Water in Twenty four Hours look only like Canary, or Old Hock. But we have a fine large River runs by the sides of this Town, which serves all the People for Drinking and other Uses, and was by the *Spaniards* call'd *Rio Cobre*, or the *Copper River*; this now our Curiosity has led us to try with Gauls, and in one Night the Water turns to a deep Green, more enclining to Black, deeper Coloured then any Emerald I ever saw, which makes me doubt the Copper Mines in it are not enough digested, and that its unwholsome, but were the more refined and excellent, it would be a Salubrious Water; this will put us upon trying most of the Water we drink of in the Country, where is abundance of Springs and Rivers; but I believe most of them Impregnated with some Mineral or other.

Sir, It's now the 18th of *April*, since that above; *Col. Beckford* is finely Recovered, and the other almost Cured of his Ulcers, so that the Water is beyond doubt, and many are resorting to it. And since that time I have tryed several Water-Springs, and Rivers hereabouts, and find them all ting'd with some Metal or other, more or less, so that we know not the Riches that may be in the Earth, nor the Value of the Vegetables; and it's pity some Ingenious People are not employ'd to enquire into them.

Whether this be worth your Reading or no, I know not; however, I pray you to accept of it from

Tours, &c.

III. *An Account of a strange kind of Earth, taken up near Smyrna, of which is made Soap, together with the way of making it, Communicated by Dr. Edward Smith, F.R.S.*

THERE is a considerable natural Curiosity in the Neighbourhood of *Smyrna*, call'd by the *Franks Soap-Earth*, and has no other proper distinguishing Name among the *Turks* or *Greeks*. 'Tis found only in two Places near *Duraclea*, a large open Village, about six Leagues to the Eastward of *Smyrna*; and in a very flat plain, about a League Westward of the River *Hermus*. 'Tis a fine Soap, and at the first gathering whitish Earth, which boileth or shoots up out of the Earth. 'Tis gathered always before Sun Rise, and in Mornings when there falls no Dew, so that a stock must be laid in for the whole Year in the Summer Months. It comes up in some Places an Inch or two above the Surface of the

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