

MAN-MIDWIFERY

A N A L Y S E D :

A N D T H E

TENDENCY OF THAT PRACTICE

D E T E C T E D A N D E X P O S E D .



L O N D O N :

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A L E T T E R

Addressed to all Men in general,

A N D

To all Married Men in particular.

I Lately published, at the request of some prudent, sensible married women, a Letter, addressed to a young lady on her marriage, relative to the indecent and destructive practices of Men Midwives, and have the satisfaction to hear the design of that letter is generally approved of by men of sense, and women of modesty.

The matter is of the utmost importance ; and I flatter myself there are few women into whose hands the letter may fall, who will not seriously weigh the arguments therein advanced on a subject so interesting, and so essential to their happiness.

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But finding myself under many restraints in point of decency, in an address to a young lady, and well knowing how necessary it is, that all men, as well as women, should unite in discountenancing this indecent and unnecessary practice, I now address myself to all men in general, and to all married men in particular. It is not that I want to indulge my fancy in impure thoughts or expressions, though I must in this epistle make use of both ; but let it be remembered, that my motive is thereby to put a stop to impure acts, immodest actions, and the indelicate, unchaste, and unnecessary transactions of Men Midwives, such as they avowedly and publicly profess, and such that every man of sense, decency, sentiment and spirit, must and will disapprove, or be totally indifferent as to his wife's conduct, or his own honour.

The following story is a matter of fact, which happened lately in the West of England. A gentleman of the faculty, i. e. a country surgeon, apothecary and man-midwife, being sent for in great haste to deliver a woman, did, as soon as he arrived, in order I suppose to shew his dexterity, by the means of a Hook, deliver
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her instantly from her pain, and the child from a life, it could scarcely be said to have enter'd into, and having so done, took his fee and his leave; but before he had got two miles off, he was pursued and overtaken by the Husband, who desired his immediate return, as the pains of his wife were come on again in a more violent manner than ever; but before the husband and doctor got back, she was delivered of another child, by the help *only* of that excellent, and never failing female midwife, Goody Nature! This old lady, who had practised the art of midwifery in every corner of the globe, for many thousand generations, with amazing success, was, about fifty years ago, stifled in France between two feather-beds, by Messrs. Doctors *La Motte* and *Mauriceau*; and no sooner was the good old lady interred, than these, and many other male impostors in that fantastical country, endeavoured to intrude themselves on the public as her legitimate sons; nay, to be able by their art, and with the help of hooks, crotchets, fillets, forceps, and scissars, to surpass the good old lady.

The vivacity, and the love of novelty, peculiar to that nation; the great liberties the two sexes are allowed to
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take in that kingdom, promoted the designs of these men, and prevented a detection of such impostors, till they became so numerous, and had established so much interest, (owing I presume to their sex) that the old lady, their pretended mother, has there long since been forgot: That such a practice as this should begin in France, be encouraged by the ladies, and permitted by the men, does not much surprisè me; because chastity, in that country, is rather an unfashionable part of high breeding and high life; but that Englishmen, tenacious of their own, and their wives honour, should tamely submit to a practice so unnecessary, and so big with mischief, amazes me beyond conception; and I can account for it only, because a few women of fashion, as they are called, have countenanced it, and their pusillanimous husbands have been afraid to forbid it. The middling class of people must be in fashion, and ape the quality; decency be kicked down stairs, and modesty put out of countenance, because my Lady Betty Modish hates an old fumbling woman about her person.

The Critical, or Monthly Reviewers, I forget which, were pleased to observe, that the author of the Address to a Young Lady on her Marriage, was (though a pre-
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tender to decency) the most indecent creature himself that ever took a pen in hand. Whether this resentment arose from the *sting* in the *tail* of the letter level'd at these *Book Midwives*, or from their being chiefly composed of surgeons and men midwives, who murder books for want of *infant practice*, I must submit to the reader's judgment; but they ought to have owned that every indelicate expression in that epistle is extracted almost *verbatim* from their Friend Dr. Smellie's Treatise on Midwifery, a book written in English, the matter by Smellie, and the language said to be that of Dr. Smollet.

That men midwives may think foolishly, and act wantonly, is no more than I can easily conceive; but that a man midwife should sit down and write, and publish a serious book, and give therein serious directions relative to the practice of midwifery, so contrary to reason, so void of judgment, and so alarming to modesty, is astonishing beyond expression! But to avoid the monthly critic's lash, I will give a few extracts from one of these learned gentlemen's performances, that the decency of this writer, and the letter writer, may be compared by the judicious reader, as well as the reviewers. Dr. Smellie in his Treatise on Midwifery, page 92, speaking

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of the parts of generation in women, observes, *That the Clitoris, with its Preputium, is found between the Labia on the middle and fore part of the Pubis; and from the lower part of the Clitoris, the Nymphæ rising, spread outwards, and downwards, to the Os Externum, forming a kind of sulcus, or furrow, called the Fossa Magna, or Navicularis, for the direction of the Penis in coition, or of the Finger in touching, into the Vagina!* By this shrewd observation on the wisdom of Providence, the modest Doctor, in his first chapter, shews plainly that *touching* is an essential part of the practice of Midwifery; and that, in his opinion, those parts of a woman were formed by nature, not only for the direction of the Penis in coition, but for the *direction* of the Doctor's finger in *touching*: The manner of doing which, the Doctor explains thus, page 180.

Touching, says the ingenious Doctor, is performed by introducing the forefinger, lubricated with pomatum, into the Vagina, in order to feel the Os Internum, and Neck of the Uterus; and sometimes into the Rectum! to discover the stretching of the Fundus: By some we are advised to touch with the middle finger, as being the longest; and by others to employ both that and the first; but the middle is too much encumbered by that on each side, to answer the
purpose

purposefully; and when two are introduced together, the patient never fails to complain. The design of touching is to be informed whether the woman is, or is not with child; to know how far she is advanced in her pregnancy; if she is in danger of a miscarriage, &c. &c. &c. Thus far the ingenious Doctor: But as women's passions are very unlike those of men, and generally lie dormant till stirr'd by the dalliance of a man, may I not be permitted to observe, that the design of touching also, *may be* to see if any emotions arise in the *touched* lady's breast, that the Doctor may take advantage of. A man once admitted to such a liberty, knows not himself, and the woman, who through simplicity, (or what, *she is told*, is necessity) consents to it, cannot answer for the consequences that may arise from such transactions. I will suppose myself, for instance, a man-midwife, sent for by a lady of youth and beauty; the lady has not been long married; she is unwell; doubtful whether she is with child, and desirous of being informed.

Upon my arrival, if her husband happens to be present, he must retire; for I know too well the pain that he must feel on hearing even the *first necessary question!* Therefore nothing but an affected, stiff air, a grave face peeping out of a *profound* wig, and my hand kept warm
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in my muff, must transpire till *husband* is gone out of the room, and from that instant the dressing-room becomes sacred to me and my patient. I then proceed to ask such Questions, with an air of gravity and importance, that must confound a woman of modesty beyond imagination; she is embarrassed: I then get up, take her by the hand, and tell her how very unlike her conduct is to my lady Susan Squeamish's, whom I have just left; that her ladyship thought she was with child, but that I *could perceive* no circle round *her nepples*, nor by the *Touch* had I any reason to believe she was breeding: This reconciles my new patient; she hears, and wonders at lady Susan's conduct; but believing it no more than is common, and that the Doctor has a licence to take, and she to grant these liberties, she acquiesces. I then proceed to examine *her breasts*, nepples, &c. by which I can soon be able to discover what further liberties I may proceed to, under the sanction of my great wig, and my grave face; and if once admitted to *the touch*, all difficulties for seven or eight months after are removed; my patient and I understand one another; secrecy is the word; my character, and her honour, seal it.

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If men-midwives under these circumstances stand unmoved, they are a part of the human species I am a stranger to! Suppose then, for it is no more than natural to suppose it, that I should offer some further liberty, after *the Touch*, (a more indelicate liberty I cannot offer) suppose then, I say, my patient should fly out, and ask me what I mean by such insolent and unwarrantable conduct? make towards the Bell in order to call her husband or servants: what must be done? why step in between her and the bell, drop on my knees, and implore her pardon; telling her that my profession does not emasculate me; that my own and family's bread depends on my character and in my profession; that I never was so *operated* upon on any *former* occasion; that what had happened was more my misfortune than my fault; and that I must have been more or less than man, to have been unmoved on *such* an occasion, with *such* a woman. Here is a full and certain pardon obtained; for a sensible woman would be too wise to tell her husband, and a foolish woman too vain.

However high the above scenery may be coloured, it is no more than nature exhibits every day, not only in

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the capital of this kingdom, but almost in every country town. Whichever way I go out of London, far or near, every town is ornamented with a red door, and a bright knocker, and over it you are informed in gold letters, that the house is the property of Dr. Blowbladder, furgeon, apothecary, and man-midwife ! nay, often two names, as partners in this *mysterious business*, ornament the board.

I know not which to despise most, the professors of this bawdry profession, or the husbands who tamely submit their wives to be so wantonly and unnecessarily handled by them ; and I am persuaded I am now speaking the sentiments of every man in England in proportion to his knowledge of human nature.

The dangerous consequences of iron instruments, almost constantly used by men midwives, and which often destroy the life of the child or mother, or both, and the certainty of rendering the woman's person less *agreeable*, and often loathsome to her husband, ought to have great weight with women and their husbands also, provided the matter of delicacy, decency and modesty, was out of the question : and yet it is no uncommon thing to hear
a male

a male midwife practitioner call the greatest calamity and misfortune that can befall a woman, by the ludicrous epithet of *Laying Pit and Boxes together*.

Men were born, and women were delivered by the proper attendance of women only, for many generations, and without any bad consequences either to the mother or the child. Nature left to herself scarce ever errs; if she does, it generally happens that she over-does, but never under-does her part. To wait the course of nature, receive her hints, and gently assist her efforts, is the part of a skilfull midwife; he or she who does more, is ignorant of the little they have to do; and this business ought always to be done by the assistance of women only, and a thousand arguments might be produced to confirm it.

I am not unaware that it will be here said, that difficult labours require not only the skill, but strength of a man, and that it would be impossible to deliver some women without instruments; it may be so; but I will take upon me to say, it only happens to such women who have been injured by hasty or forced labours with a former child, or by iron instruments; it never happens
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to a woman with her first child; nor it never happens to the poor with any child; the reason is, that they are not injured by the former labours; and that the old lady mentioned above, is the faithful and unerring midwife of the latter. I see continual accounts of the death of women in childbed that are women of fashion: I never hear in the country where I live, of the death of any of my unfashionable neighbours of this *distemper*, as Dr. Smellie calls it. When does a mare, a cow, a hare, a rabbit, or any part of the brute creation die, in bringing forth their young? Never: And has Providence been so careful of the preservation of brutes, and left the noblest part of her production in danger? Certainly no: Why then should women think it necessary to expose their persons, and their infirmities, and to be twisted and turned about in whatever posture or attitude the man midwife is pleased to direct, either in bed or up, and to keep her husband all this time in more pain of mind, than that which she suffers in body, for no other end but the vanity of having a doctor, as they call it; but what I call, an outrage to sense, dignity, love and virtue.

That

That some of these Touching Gentry have been prosecuted and severely punished for their lustful attempts, in *touching* their patients, is a notorious truth; that hundreds of them get off, and that many succeed, cannot be doubted: nay, it can scarce be doubted but they all are liable to fall into the situation I just now supposed myself, and pointed the way to get out.

I could mention several prosecutions of men midwives upon record; but the following will be sufficient; though a man who is robbed of his wife's fidelity, does not miss it till it is too late to advertise the thief.

A merchant in this kingdom, who had a very young and beautiful wife, was attended by an eminent man-midwife, to cure him of a disorder he had got by going astray, and amusing himself one evening in the environs of Covent-Garden, while his buxom wife imagined he was gone to his country house at Epsom: The merchant therefore desired the doctor to visit his wife, whom he suspected to be with child; and, to save appearances, persuade her, that, by a complaint he found (*from touching I presume*) she laboured under, it was absolutely necessary to lie apart from her husband. The doctor

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undertook

undertook the commission ; when, instead of saving the husband's credit, and faithfully keeping his secret, he informed the wife with the whole truth of the matter ; and made such inflammatory observations on the inconsistency of her husband, and the beauty of the wife, that, with the advantage of opportunity, her husband's falseness, and large doses of *cantharides*, which he administered, he debauched the woman : But these stimulating medicines had such an effect that she died in consequence thereof ; and, by way of atonement to her injured husband, declared the whole truth in her last hours.

Doctor Smellie, in the introduction to his treatise on midwifry, says,---“ *It is natural to suppose, that, while the simplicity of the early ages remained, women would have recourse to none but persons of their own sex in diseases peculiar to it ! Accordingly, says he, we find that in Egypt midwifry was practised by women.*”-----
 What a pity it was that the use of hooks and crotchets, pincers, boring scissors, tapes and filleting, was not known to the poor Egyptians ! That Egyptians, who knew how to preserve dead bodies for three thousand years, and to keep their living form, should be so short of invention as never to have found out the method of scooping a child's brains out ! and thereby have preserved the lives of
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the poor Egyptian ladies is amazing! I suppose all the Egyptian mummies brought over here, besides that in the Museum, to be the bodies of poor Egyptian ladies, who died in child-bed! and that the *hieroglyphics* on their *sicamore* coffins, could they be decyphered, would appear to be the lamentations of their surviving husbands, that no art could be discovered whereby nature might be *corrected*, and made more perfect.

Little did the poor Egyptian ladies think that it would be three thousand years before doctor Smellie would be born, and the art of *touching*, and saving women's lives in this *dangerous distemper*, be brought to perfection.

But, to comfort my fair countrywomen, let it be remembered, that these were Jew ladies. Indeed the doctor observes that a law was made at Athens, prohibiting women and slaves from practising physic; but, says he, "the *mistaken* modesty of the sex rendered it afterwards absolutely necessary to allow *free* women the privilege of sharing this art with the men." By this it appears how similar the practice in our own country at this day is, to the laws then in force at Athens. *Free* women were allowed there to practise midwifery; and *Free* women encourage the practice of it here.

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Indeed we have many women amongst us, that would not suffer a man midwife to attend them under any circumstances whatever: nay I could, without quitting this island, produce a King, a Queen, and eight or ten Princes of the Blood, who all came into the world (God be thanked) just as the poor Egyptians did: but, I suppose it arose from a *mistaken* modesty of the sex; or doctor Smellie, or some of his brethren, had certainly been called in.

Much more might be said to convince every man of sense, how very indecent, and how very indelicate, the necessary business of a man midwife must be carried on. But if he be wantonly disposed, he may turn your wife in whatever attitude for sight, or *touch*, he pleases; nay, he may so place her, with her Breech towards him, on the side of her bed, with a sheet thrown over him and her, *as Smellie directs*, so as to gratify, unknown to the woman, any passion he pleases. I know it may be objected to, and said, that a woman, under such circumstances, must be disgustful, and remove every sensual appetite: But this I deny; it is said a woman is like a riddle, nothing in it, when *found out*! but a fine woman, *unfound out*, can appear in no situation, except in the act of death, but such as may stir the most unconquerable

querable of passions ; and such as is, and will be excused, by every man who knows human nature.

It is not practising men midwives I am decrying ; but the practice of men in midwifry : I own I never meet any of these charioted mungrel physicians, that I do not look on them as I should on the emperor of Morrocco, or the bashaw of Tangier, going to his seraglio. I really seriously consider, that, from the first peer in the kingdom, down to my butter-man's wife in Claremarket, (for she has *her Doctor*) who open their doors for men midwives, open a way to disgrace their families ; to injure the persons, if not the morals of their wives ; and invite every man, who seriously and prudently considers this practice, to look on the husband who consents to it, with contempt and indignation. As to myself, I ingenuously own, could my wife's mind be out of the question, I would sooner give her up to the embraces of any one man, once a year, than subject her person to be so exposed, *touched*, and handled, as she who is attended, and delivered of a child, must be, by a male midwife.

If the Reader is desirous of any further proofs of what I advance, let him read Doctor Smellie's book ; and take the Doctor's word, instead of mine.

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There is very little difference, except the sex, between men and women; nor any thing that is necessary relative to midwifry, but a woman can learn, and execute, with more propriety, and more safety than men: Instruments are always injurious, often dangerous, and never necessary. The world was peopled much better, before the amphibious name of men midwives was known; they were imported here from France, at the same time that *tire-women* were put down in England. The alteration of modes, within these thirty years, are very extraordinary: men midwives are become general; men hair-dressers, men stay-makers; in short, we want nothing now but the Italian *Chest.shea* to be introduced here, in order to qualify our high bred fashionable ladies to be justly ranked with the ladies of Genoa: a country without wood, water without fish, their men without honour, and women without virtue. And, if this should ever become the character of the finest, and, till of late, the most esteemed women in the world, for their modesty, beauty, and fidelity; strange as it may appear, I will pronounce, their degeneracy began with the practice of men midwifry, and must end with their disuse; or have a worse end.

It

It is my lot to know a great number of married women, who have always thought on this subject as I write; it is my wife's lot to be acquainted with none other: I would as soon send my wife a visiting a Covent-Garden hostess, as be familiar with the female male midwife Trumpeters.-----Lard, Madam, who is your Doctor? says one; well, I'll never *have a woman*; my Doctor is the sweetest man! so *gentle*, so *humane*, so *patient*! and then he is so *safe*: with a thousand such fine things of the Doctor, that the Trumpeter soon makes half the circle in love with her dear Doctor, before they have even seen him, and determine to consult him the next morning. I seriously believe that most women really love their midwife, in some degree equal to that which they feel towards their husbands; for, if the husband be an instrument to their pleasures, and comforts, the Doctor also is, in their opinion, the instrument of their ease, and their deliverer from extreme misery. I never heard a woman speak of her midwife but with an uncommon degree of kindness; I have often heard a woman speak of an affectionate husband, without betraying any.

That many innocent and chaste women have, and do employ men midwives, I make no doubt; and that
many

many men midwives may, and do acquit themselves, as decently as their practice will admit of, I will not deny : But, that it is an immodest, an unnecessary, and a shameful practice to encourage, I will maintain ; and that there lives not a man of sense and sentiment, who loves his wife, that ever returned to her bed with that degree of satisfaction and affection, who has undergone a male midwife's *Touch*, as she whose person is, or he supposes to be sacred to him, and him alone. Whenever I see a married woman nice in sentiments, and delicate in her expressions, and find she is attended by a male midwife ; I consider her a pretender to both : I look on her with contempt ; and I consider that, if she had the authority of custom to support it, she would permit me, or any other man to take the same liberty.

Hard as this, and my former treatise, may seem to fall on the ladies, those who are warned by it, and apprized of the consequences, will find the Author their friend, and their deliverer ; a friend of more importance to their happiness, than the unthinking multitude are aware of ; and a deliverer from worse evils than the pains of child-birth can produce.

Men

I desire every man who loves his wife, or regards his own honour, seriously to figure to himself a smart man-midwife, locked into his wife's apartment, lubricating his finger with pomatum, in order to introduce it into his wife's *Vagina!* nay, if he pleases, two fingers, or one finger in the *Vagina*, and the other into the *Rectum*, according to the ingenious Dr. Smellie's direction under the chapter *Touching*: 'Tis true, the doctor says, the patient never fails to complain when *two* are introduced; but what need the doctor care for that? He knows she will not *complain* of it to her husband; and her complaining to the humane, gentle doctor, furnishes him with an opportunity to express his concern; to shew a fresh instance of his *tendernefs*; and to profess his admiration of a woman so *exquisitely susceptible!*

And I desire every woman who loves her husband, or who covets his love, seriously to consider whether she be strictly intitled to the appellation of being called a modest woman, after she has admitted a male operator thus to insult her person and her understanding, by taking a liberty that can give him no information whatever, but that she is a fool, or worse, who suffers it. Nay, I am thoroughly persuaded, that every man midwife, who

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happens to be possessed of either sense or sentiment, must, in his own breast, entertain but a very indifferent opinion of the understanding of his patients *wives*.

That many women refuse their operator this liberty of *Touching*, I firmly believe; but the very attempt of the man, and the necessary consequence of the refusal of the woman, is almost as bad; and either one or the other is sure to happen, where the subject is, in *the Doctor's* opinion, worthy of *his inspection*.

But setting aside every consideration as to modesty, delicacy, sense, sentiment, and, above all, how this kind of proceeding may sit on the mind of an affectionate husband, I will maintain it, that every woman runs a greater risque of losing her life with a skilful man-midwife, than with even an ignorant fumbling old woman.

The man-midwife is for dispatch, and that dispatch cannot be obtained without a double force on nature; for it must be obtained with instruments, and, consequently, must bring into the world a child that ought not to have made its appearance for some hours: I suspect it will be said, what signifies an hour or two? But
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by the same reason it may be asked, what signifies a month, or a week? and yet either of these mistakes often prove fatal to the mother or child, or both. But suppose there were no other consideration but the preservation of the woman's person; a circumstance of no small importance with the fair sex; yet that is inevitably spoiled, so sure as a man-midwife, and consequently an instrument, comes near them; for they as certainly use them, as they prudently and *cautiously* conceal them, according to Doctor Smellie's particular advice.

When the parts have been once extended for the convenience of the Doctor's hand and forceps, they never recover their former elasticity; and if the woman escapes inward injuries that often terminate in ulcers many years after, she cannot escape without rendering her person less agreeable, if not totally disagreeable to her husband: For these people not only do injury at the time of delivery, but frequently three or four days after introduce their hand and arm to perform the office known amongst themselves by the epithet of *sweeping the womb!* than which nothing can be a stronger proof of the injury done the woman's person at her labour: for this act of womb-sweeping cannot possibly be performed on the person of
a woman

a woman who is delivered as she ought, by that unerring *Old Lady* mentioned with so much honour in the first sheet of this letter; and to this old lady I hope to be the means of making known all the young and amiable part of my fair countrywomen, who may be assured that it is less indecent to read this letter to every man of their acquaintance in public, than to admit a male midwife in private; and those who are wise enough to rely on what is here wrote, without any other view than their happiness, will find, by experience, that the author is as much their friend, as he seems to be an enemy to the male midwives; which, in truth, is not the case; for, as I said above, it is the *practice*, not the *men*, that I mean to exhibit in a proper, and consequently an odious light.

I cannot conclude, without drawing forth the sting from the tale of my former letter, *Addressed to a young Lady on her Marriage*, and levell'd at the Monthly and Critical Reviews; for tho' the Critical Review had the prudence to speak of that letter in the most contemptuous way, the Monthly Review has had the candour to mention it in a manner that did honour to both; and has made his remarks with that cool and dispassionate judgment, that is incumbent on Reviewers. It is not whether *they themselves* approve or disapprove the subject; but to inform their readers fairly and impartially with the subject and substance of the performance; yet these

critical

critical monthly Book Midwives (for they murder books for want of infant-practice) cannot confine their pens within the bounds of decency, because a letter is published decrying a profession they were bred to, but by which they cannot earn their bread ; and therefore were obliged to lay aside the forceps for the pen, and endeavour to *scoop out the brains of grown gentlemen and ladies* who figure in print, instead of *reducing* children's heads in their mother's womb. However, to convince you, Messrs. Critical Reviewers, that I am not very angry with you, one word of friendly advice : If you are really wise, and wish well to your brethren of the faculty, *forget* this *indecent* letter in your monthly catalogue ; for in spite of all you can say as to the indecency of the writer, or the incorrect manner in which he writes, it will have its weight among men of sense, and women of virtue : And I flatter myself that it will open the eyes of a multitude of men, and women too, who never considered this matter as they ought ; and determine them to be satisfied that Mrs. Draper, Mrs. Maddox, and many other women, can do all that is necessary to be done, with decency and safety ; and as the two first Personages in the kingdom have (when a crown was at stake) been content with the assistance *only* of *Goody Nature, Goody Kennon, and Goody Draper*, I hope to

see the Day, when butter or fish women only, will venture to fend for any of the male goodys: to such people as these, a taudry chariot, and a still more taudry doctor, with a black velvet coat, lined with pink silk, stopping at their doors, must be a matter of no small consequence: But that people of fashion should be amused and cajoled by such external trapping, is very amazing: but it is what, I am persuaded, I shall see for the future confined to that class of people only, who are void of sense and decency.

P. S. I do solemnly assure the Critical Reviewers, that neither my *Mother* nor *Grandmother* are *Midwives*; that *Chestisbea* is spelt according to auricular orthography, as I have no Italian dictionary near me; and that any information they may be pleased to give me of my grammatical Errors (of which I am conscious there are many) will be kindly taken; but I enter a caveat against a charge of indecency, without allowing me as much, at least, as their friend Dr. Smellie.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Page 9. line 13 *dele* and. Page 10. line 5. *for in read is:*

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