



Yi Xin Tong, detail of *A Certain Cure for the Bite of a Mad Insect* (2017), Sharpie on folded insulation paper, 43 x 48 x 4 inches

A letter from an apothecary in London, to his friend in the country; concerning the present practice of physick, in regard to empiricks, empirical methods of cure, and nostrums. With remarks on Dr. Deads, Mr. Freaks, and Mr. Children's method of cure for the itch, by externals only; setting forth the Dangerous Consequences of such a Method, if adhered to indiscriminately. Also some observations upon mania, shewing it to be a Composition though commonly supposed a Natural Production; with remarks on Dr. Deads' certain cure for the bite of a mad insect.

A young Girl, about thirteen Years of Age, was infected with an inveterate *Itch*, which had been neglected: She was directed to make use of a *mercurial Ointment* as infallible in the Cure of the *Itch*; it was used accordingly, and she was cured without a Salivation; but a Lameness ensued from the Hips downwards. She was bed-ridden several Years, and could get no Relief; in the mean Time several Parts mortified, and afterwards discharged much from the Sores; she became crooked, and a miserable Object, but at Length, by the benefit of Nature, and the Menses coming on, she recovered her Limbs and was able to do Business.

I knew a young Gentleman (then lately come out of the Country) who had been infected with the *Itch*; he was of a gross Habit of Body, full of Humours, and affected all over his Body with ulcerous Excoriations, occasioned by Scratchings; and the Sores discharged much. He was told it was the *Itch*, and advised to cure himself with Brimstone and Fresh-butter, which was accordingly done; the Sores healed very soon, the *Itch* disappeared, and he was cured without *Internals*, or and *Evacuations whatsoever*; But in a little Time after, he was seized with *Epileptick Fits*, which became so obstinate that they could not be removed by the Care and Prescriptions of two of the most eminent Physicians of *London* now living; but they told him he must leave off his Business and retire into the Country, and pronounced him incurable.

As to my general Method of Cure in the *Itch*, it is mostly by Bleeding, always by Purging, more or less, as the Case may require; and then, if at a proper Season, I directly the Patient to Bathe in the Sea, or River *Thames*; but in the colder Seasons, *Bathing* in warm Water is effectual, the Patient using a Wash-ball made of Almond Powder, Liquid Soap, &c. with which he may rub his Body. For it is to be observed, that as *Nastiness* is a great Source of Infection, so *Cleanliness* is the greatest Preservative; which is the true Reason, why the Poor are most obnoxious to Disasters of this Kind.