The English have the most surprizing Spirit for Novelty, of any People I ever yet met with, being not only strictly inquisitive after the Affairs of other Nations, but of every minute Circumstance attending the Lives and Actions of their own People. They have, I believe, almost as many Intelligences or News-Papers amongst them, as there are Stars in the Firmament; wherein every little Incident of human Life is carefully registered. I remember his Excellency the Envoy, having had some Cathartick Medicines administered to him, for a slight Illness, the next Day a particular Account of their Operations and Success, was printed and dispersed all over the Kingdom; and for the first six Months after our Arrival in London, there was not a Morsel of Meat we could put into our Mouths, nor a Garment on our Backs, nor even a Turn could we take in our Chambers, but a Relation of it was set forth in all their common News-Papers. In one of their Weekly Occurrences they once gave us an Account, ‘of a large Bird that came one Day and fix’d on the Cross of St Paul’s, the great Cathedral of London, the Wings whereof were of such Magnitude, that it eclips’d the Light of the whole City at Noon-day, so that the Traders were obliged to light Candles in their Shops to vend their Wares by.’

Another Paper affirmed, that ‘a Coach going from London for the North of England, with about six Persons in it, was by a sudden Whirlwind taken up into the Air at Highgate, a Village little more than a League from London, and was safely set down again at the Journey’s end, about 150 Miles farther, without the least hurt happening to either the Passengers, Coach-man, or Horses.’ We were inform’d, it was from this Accident, that these travelling Vehicles have ever since been call’d Flying Coaches. They are, almost to a Man, mightily delighted with such like extraordinary Occurrences, and marvellous Events; in the relation of which, they cannot help discovering a sensible Pleasure, though, at the same time, they are positively sure, or at least have all the reason in the World to believe, that they are entirely groundless, false, and fictitious. It is owing to this strange love of Novelty in some, and the desire of others to indulge them in this romantick Taste, that their common Books of Travels and Voyages are stuff’d with such monstrous and incredible Narrations. The People love to read and hear of things that they never read nor heard of before, and would despise an Author who presum’d to give them an Account of Incidents which appear probable, or Adventures which it is reasonable to believe. Their Children are wonderfully pleas’d and edified with the Achievements of Tom Thumb, Jack the Gyant-Killer, Bevis of Southampton, and the Seven Champions of Christendom, and such like extraordinary Heroes; and those of a more advanc’d Age, are little less delighted with such Books as the Lives and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, Jack Sheppard, and Lemuel Gulliver. To the same two-fold Inclination of hearing and divulging News, that Multitude of genteel Falshoods, and agreeable Lyes, which are to be met with in all their polite Companies, must be imputed. All their Conversation generally turns upon the News of the Town; and it is impossible for a Man to make a diverting Companion in any of their modish Assemblies, without furnishing himself at all times with fresh Intelligence and uncommon Occurrences, either foreign or domestick, for the Entertainment of his male and female Acquaintance; whether true or false, it signifies nothing, so it be but News. But the Dearth of News falls the heaviest of all upon a certain numerous Body of Men, who were originally instituted to gratify this Curiosity of the People, and whose Livelihood depends upon the
The Practice of Physick in England, appear’d to me to be under the least Regulation of any thing I observ’d; for here not only the Graduate and licens’d Physician, but even every broken-brain’d Tradesman is permitted to triumph over the Maladies of Mankind. It would be endless to recount all the vile Cheats and Impositions, daily practis’d on the weak and valetudinary part of the People. Such as your TINCTURA MIRIFICA, or the admirable Tincture for the Stone, which instantly upon the first Dose dissolves the Stone in the Bladder, with as much ease as a Dish of Tea doth a Lump of Loaf-sugar, and will even melt the Heart of a Miser or a Sheriff’s Officer into Pity.

PARALYTICON, feu Anima Nervorum, a stupendous Chymical Essence, for the Palsy and all other Nervous Diseases: Also TINCTURA NERVOSA CARDIACA, or the Cordial Tincture, both which will enliven an Author, and cause him to write on either Side, in a most Nervous manner, recommended to the Publick, by the famous Mr De F-e.