

Chap. 1.

Of Distilled Waters.

Hitherto we have spoken of Medicines which consist in their own Nature, which Authors vulgarly call Simples, though something improperly, for indeed and in truth, nothing is Simple but the pure Elements; all things else are compounded of them: We come now to treat of the Artificial Medicines, in the front of which (because we must begin somewhere) we place distilled Waters; In which consider,

1. Waters are distilled out of Herbs, Flowers, Fruits, and Roots.
2. We treat not here of strong Waters but of cold, as being to act Galen's Part and not Paracelsus.
3. The Herbs ought to be distilled when they are in their greatest vigor, and so ought the Flowers also.
4. The vulgar way of Distillation which people use, because they know no better, is in a Peuter Still, and although Distilled Waters are the weakest of all Artificial Medicines, and good for little unless for mixtures of other Medicines, yet this way distilled they are weaker by many degrees than they would be, were they distilled in Sand: If I thought it not impossible to teach you the way of distilling in Sand by writing, I would attempt it.
5. When you have distilled your Water put it into a Glass, and having bound the top of it over with a Paper pricked full of holes, that so the excrementitious and fiery vapors may exhale (which indeed are they that cause that settling in distilled Waters called the Mother, which corrupts the Waters and might this way be prevented) cover it close and keep it for your use.
6. Stopping distilled Waters with a Cork makes them musty, and so will a Paper also if it do but touch the Water, your best way then

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is to stop them with a Bladder, being first wet in Water, and bound over the top of the Glass.

Such cold Waters as are distilled in a Peuter Still (if well kept) will endure a yeer, such as are distilled in Sand, as they are twice as strong, so will they endure twice as long.