

## N.I. Pirogov's unpublished letters: the first and second letter to A.L. Obermiller (1877)

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**Abstract.** Eleven previously unpublished letters written by N.I. Pirogov to A.L. Obermiller in 1877–1880 have been discovered. Three of them were published in 2013 for the first time. Presented unabridged for the first time are two letters relating to the start of this correspondence, which contain Pirogov's treatment recommendations for the illness afflicting the chief of the Danube army, Grand Duke N.N. Romanov (senior), whose court physician was Obermiller. Pirogov participated in the treatment of the Grand Duke from December 1876 to January 1877 in Chisinau, where the headquarters of the commander-in-chief was located. Once the risk of complications in the patient had passed, Pirogov returned to the estate of Vishnya, from where he continued medical consultations for the Grand Duke via correspondence with Obermiller.

The reason for written consultation was the commander-in-chief's relapse in the form of dyspeptic syndrome, requiring an immediate correction in Pirogov's medical procedures. In five letters containing recommendations to Obermiller written during the space of a month (from January 30 to February 26, 1877), he presents an unexpected side. Pirogov is considered a representative of the 19th century scientific medicine, but with the publication of these letters a conciliatory stance becomes plausible, indicating an enthusiasm also for an empirical focus in medical practice. The nature of his medical recommendations leads to such a conclusion, based on the teachings of the German physician-empiricist J.G. Rademacher.

Pirogov's letters to Obermiller were discovered in 1926 by a prominent Soviet surgeon I.I. Grekov, who was preparing to publish them but did not succeed. Annotated reports about these letters, published in 1956 by the Soviet surgeon A.M. Geselevich, were of a selective character (aphorisms or fragments).

**Keywords:** N.I. Pirogov, A.L. Obermiller, Grand Duke N.N. Romanov (senior), Chief of the Danube army's illness

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The sizable epistolary collection of Nikolai Pirogov is widely known amongst researchers of his life and work. Individual quotes and, less frequently, passages from this collection have greatly influenced the scientific community. However, these fragments do not give a full picture of the nature of the letters. Included in this body of letters are not only those of a religious-philosophical nature, known as the “letters to fiancée (Aleksandra Bistrom)”, but also eleven letters written to Aleksandr Obermiller (1828–1892), an apprentice, companion at arms, and friend. Of these, our journal has only published three unabridged letters [1, p. 241–267], and the remaining are being prepared for publication<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Saint Petersburg. Fund. 839. Op. 1. # 1. Sheet. 2-12, 17-18, 21-23.

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At the time of his correspondence with Pirogov (1877–1880), Obermiller was serving as the court physician under Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich Romanov (the elder), the Commander of the Danube Army in the Balkans from 1876–1877.

By the end of 1876 (on the eve of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878), the Russian Empire had announced their first partial mobilization. Therefore, on the territory of several border provinces, including the Province of Bessarabia, the organization of units and forces intended for the Danube Army began. The administrative center of the Province of Bessarabia was the city of Kishinev, where the Russian military headquarters was located, the commander of which was the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich Romanov.

On the 7th of December 1876, in Kishinev the commander became seriously ill [3, p. 27]. Obermiller, unable to leave the Grand Duke's

side, promptly summoned a council of doctors, two of whom were the renowned doctors of the time: surgeon Nikolai Pirogov and therapist Sergei Botkin.

Pirogov came to Kishinev in the middle of December [4, p. 71] from his estate, Vishnya. The Vishnya estate was located in the province of Podolia, which shared a border with Bessarabia. As a result, Pirogov arrived in Kishinev earlier than Botkin, who had to travel all the way from Saint Petersburg.

From this point until the end of January 1877 (excluding a small intermission) constitutes the Kishinev period of Pirogov's career, the time when he was directly involved in the treatment of the severely ill Grand Duke. Unlike his colleague, Botkin was only able to spare a few days in December for the commander<sup>2</sup>, and was not invited to Kishinev any further.

On January 22, 1877, when the Grand Duke's health was considered relatively stable, Pirogov and Obermiller were photographed to commemorate their combined efforts. On the reverse side of the photograph is the signature of Aleksandra Pirogova, which reads "Kishinev, January 1877"<sup>3</sup> (see the picture above).

At the end of January, according to Pirogov's direct order, the commander of the Balkan Army was sent, accompanied by Obermiller, from Kishinev "to take the waters" at the Kuyalnik resort near Odessa (so-called "Russian Baden-Baden"). There, climate and mud treatments would prevent the Duke from relapsing in the near future. And thus, the renowned surgeon finally had the opportunity to return home to the Vishnya estate.

<sup>2</sup> The Diary of S.P. Botkin (1877–1889). National Library of Russia. Fund. 98. Op. 1. # 1. Sheet. 37, 38.

<sup>3</sup> Kirov Military Medical Academy Museum. N.I. Pirogov's fund. Nikolai Pirogov with Aleksandr Obermiller. January 1877. Taken by A. Sumovsky (16.0 × 10.6 cm).

However, with the Grand Duke's, who was known for his extravagance, transfer to Odessa, came the breaking of his dietary and treatment instructions<sup>4</sup>. In Odessa, consequently, the Duke began vomiting again. Obermiller hurriedly informed Pirogov about the matter in a letter written near the end of January, 1877.

Thus began the animated correspondence between the two doctors, the master and the apprentice. It lasted from January 30, 1877 until February 26 of the same year, and includes the letter, the fifth of the series, which specifies recommendations for the treatment of the Grand Duke's illness.

Notably, not one of Pirogov's five letters to Obermiller was ever published in full. To this day knowledge amongst the scientific community of these letters is only through the work of A.M. Geselevich (1956). Geselevich only published some selected fragments [3], which speaks to the lack of attention researchers gave to these letters and to the significant nature of Pirogov's recommendations for treatment, many of which are still relevant today.

Additionally, Geselevich, as a prominent Soviet scholar, was not able to portray the original medical recommendations to the full extent and without substantial errors.

Firstly, Geselevich's article has no indication of Pirogov's original prescriptions, which includes



Nikolai Pirogov (right) with Aleksandr Obermiller (left). Kishinev, January 22, 1877.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> D.A. Skalon, adjutant of the Great Duke, once told about a Christmas "gift", given to Obermiller from the Grand Duke. The Duke returned all of the medicine that he had been prescribed throughout the year, unopened and beautifully wrapped. "The doctor was horribly offended, but the Grand Duke laughed and would later tell about this incident" [6]. Also see: Pirogov, Nikolai Pirogov's Letter to Aleksandr Obermiller, January, 17 1879. The Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Saint Petersburg. Fund 839. Op. 1. #. 1. Sheet.2.

<sup>5</sup> Kirov Military Medical Academy Museum. Nikolai Pirogov's Fund. No. 20244. Portrait of Nikolai Pirogov with Aleksandr Obermiller. January 1877. Taken by A. Sumovsky (16.0 × 10.6 cm)

a tincture “*seminam Cardui Mariae*”. However, these two prescriptions are present in the letter written February 1877<sup>6</sup>, which Geselevich incorrectly dates February 6th [3, p. 30, 31].

Secondly, Geselevich, quoting a passage the letters from January 30, 1877, falsely interprets one of the recommendations on how to take the Carlsbad mineral water: “Each dose (2 drachms) should be taken orally over the course of no less than 20 minutes, and then, after a ½ hour, steamed milk should be taken in the same way”.

However, the original version of the same exact passage is fundamentally different. “Each dose (2 ℥) should be taken orally over the course of no less than 20 minutes, and then, after a ½ hour, steamed milk should be taken in the same way”<sup>7</sup>.

It is evident, that in the original, Pirogov uses the symbol for the pharmaceutical ounce (℥), in this case equal to 30 ml (8 drachms). The symbol for a drachma, a fraction of a pharmaceutical ounce, looks different (ʒ).

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<sup>6</sup> Pirogov, Nikolai. Letter to Aleksandr Obermiller, beginning of February 1877. The Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Saint Petersburg. Fund. 839. Op. 1. #1. Sheet 7.

<sup>7</sup> Pirogov, Nikolai. Letter to Aleksandr Obermiller, January 30, 1877. The Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Saint Petersburg, Fund 839. Op 1. #1. Sheet 4.

Thirdly, absent from Geselevich's article is any mention that Pirogov, an indisputable supporter of the anatomic-physiological school of thought, recommended for the Grand Duke a regime proposed by the German doctor Radermacher. It is widely known that Radermacher's treatment system is founded on principles of German mysticism and the medieval doctrine of Paracelsus, however Geselevich seems to consider Radermacher an “empiricist”, in other words, a believer in “experiential knowledge”, who would have no knowledge of how of the impact of the medicinal substances he would recommend for use.

Many instances of inconsistency can be detected Pirogov's work in his fusion of scholarly and “empirical” methods. This point of view, held by a doctor with such high prestige, suggests that many others in the field also held these ideas to be true.

Considering all of this, the best way to understand Pirogov's collection of letters is to read the originals, many of which are comparable to works of literature.

For the purpose of further study, two of Nikolai Pirogov's letters to Aleksandr Obermiller are presented unabridged with extensive clarifications and commentary.

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## APPENDIX

Nikolai Pirogov. The first letter to A.L. Obermiller (1877)<sup>1</sup>

Village of Vishnya, January 30, 1877

You didn't find anything in the vomit or the stool<sup>2</sup>? That is important, dear Aleksandr Leontievich. Vomit is to be expected, vicissitude is to be expected – do not forget that – we have said that again and again to anyone and everyone, including our esteemed patient<sup>3</sup>. He must know this and remember, firstly, in order to keep away from certain things, and secondly so that he does not fear any surprises. I suggest to you – given the inclination to vomit after ingesting acid, that these should be taken liberally in the mornings, and perhaps even at night after the Carlsbad 4 in small doses of 2 ounces<sup>5</sup> no more than 28-29 R<sup>6</sup> (Soklophunum) in capsules, additionally, (1 for 1), give him the Carlsbad 3-4 times hourly. The Carlsbad should be swallowed while walking around, and keep him warm while he takes it. Each dose (2  $\text{z}$ ) should be taken orally over the course of no less than 20 minutes, and then, after a ½ hour, steamed milk should be taken in the same way.

It is extremely necessary for His Highness, for you, and for me to ensure that he does not eat or drink more than 2 spoons at a time, and, imperatively, with pauses in between, especially with the milk. This will be boring, but necessary for the state of his stomach. If the smell of violets<sup>7</sup> ceases, then increase the frequency of the capsules, and if the smell is strong, then stop the capsule

treatment for 2 or so days, and during that time give the patient  $\text{z}$ <sup>8</sup> ... of warm Soklophunum.

He should take baths<sup>9</sup>, if he would like, but for the love of God not for too long and not every single day. Bowel movements should happen every day, and you may even encourage them with the milk and enemas 2-3 times. For the drinking – distilled water<sup>10</sup> and Bilin<sup>11</sup>. An abdominal belt<sup>12</sup>, every now and then, an electric current<sup>13</sup>, and warm legs!

Keep reminding and reminding the Grand Duke about these things, and write to me more often, not only about the bad, but the good too. Meanwhile, give my regards to Kuzma Ivanovich<sup>14</sup>, and tell him that the bowel movements should be ground up<sup>15</sup> as well as possible, and then looked at under a microscope very carefully. After 3 days I found distinct crystals<sup>16</sup> in the sample<sup>17</sup> I took with me. Study the vomit also.

I wish you good health, and my wife sends you a warm-hearted hello. May God grant you happiness and patience.

Yours truly,

Pirogov

<sup>1</sup> The Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences St. Petersburg Branch. Fund 839. Op. 1. # 1. Sheet 4-5.

<sup>2</sup> Pirogov is speaking about the recurrence of dyspeptic aggravation, which took place after the transfer of the Grand Duke from Kishinev to Odessa

<sup>3</sup> Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich (the elder).

<sup>4</sup> Carlsbad Mineral Water, which came from Karlovy Vary (then part of Austria-Hungary, now part of Czech Republic).

<sup>5</sup> The Russian pharmaceutical ounce – a unit of mass equal to 29.86 grams or 8 drachms. If the quantity is under an ounce, then it is understood to be a unit of volume and 1 ounce would be equal to approximately 30 ml.

<sup>6</sup> Indication of the temperature of the mineral water measured by the Réaumur scale.

<sup>7</sup> In all likelihood, the smell of urine, which is reminiscent of the smell of medicinal violet root.

<sup>8</sup>  $\text{z}$  is a symbol for the pharmaceutical ounce. The quantity of ounces was denoted by the following symbols:  $\beta$  – 1/2, i – 1, ij – 2, iij – 3, iv – 4, and so on. In this case, Pirogov is indicating 2 ounces.

<sup>9</sup> Likely, with warm seawater or water taken from the Kuyantsky estuary.

<sup>10</sup> Most likely, boiled water.

<sup>11</sup> Bilin Mineral Water, which was attained in the Czech district of Teplice, and which would be given for chronic cases of gastro-intestinal tract illness along with Carlsbad mineral water.

<sup>12</sup> Made of broadcloth. In olden times, warm abdominal belts were generally considered a steadfast means for prevention and treatment of gastrointestinal illnesses.

<sup>13</sup> Used as a physiotherapeutic method for treatment.

<sup>14</sup> Doctor Kuzma Ivanovich Berezkin, who was working under Obermiller.

<sup>15</sup> In order to discover any gallstones, the smallest of which would be taken to be examined under a microscope.

<sup>16</sup> Small gallstones.

<sup>17</sup> Sample for microscopic examination brought from Kishinev to the Vishnya Estate by Pirogov.

Nikolai Pirogov. The second letter to A.L. Obermiller (1877)<sup>18</sup>

77<sup>19</sup> February<sup>20</sup>, Village of Vishnya

My dear friend Aleksandr Leontievich,

If only David Aleksandrovich<sup>21</sup> Vyvodtsev<sup>22</sup> had been sent to Canada for the winter, so that he could bring us back the various instruments, with which the Americans clear the snow on their railroads. Perhaps this equipment would be more useful than the surgical instruments that he brought from Philadelphia<sup>23</sup>. This is just a catastrophe. It has been 8 days since the mail has arrived from Saint Petersburg or Odessa. The snow on the ground is above the arshin<sup>24</sup>. There was a blizzard that lasted from January 28th to the 31st, and then the temperature went down to 17° R<sup>25</sup>. Now it is 3-7° R on the glorious sleigh path. If we were at war in this weather, we would be able to cross the Danube with General Levitsky<sup>26</sup>, but then wait! There would be no supplies and no news from our side. I only

received your letter from the 30th of January today. Whether you received my letter from the 28th or the 29th (I don't remember<sup>27</sup>), God only knows. I haven't even read the newspaper in 9 days. The most recent thing I know about is the resignation of Midhat-pasha<sup>28</sup> and that the Grand Duke<sup>29</sup> is having his own type of Midhat crisis with his liver. As of yet there is nothing for him or for you to worry about. The matter is not unexpected, but, rather, foreseeable and inevitable... Il faut papier par la!<sup>30</sup> This, of course, is no consolation, but nonetheless in its own way is a comfort. Calm down, and, most importantly, convince our Noble Patient to have faith in the Durand remedy. Durand's<sup>31</sup> mixture (ol. Terpen. and aeth.[er] sulphur.[icus.]<sup>32</sup>) – a heavenly medicine. Only, make sure to be able to talk with him. Take a pause sometimes<sup>33</sup>, sometimes weaken, sometimes strengthen the dose. Nevertheless, do not under any circumstances stop the treatment for the next three months. The effectiveness of this will be as before, with some various fluctuations, lasting no less than 6 months. These are the general guidelines, and, now, on to the particulars, supported not only by my personal experience, but by the most experienced of empiricists<sup>34</sup> (Durand and Rademacher<sup>35</sup>):

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<sup>18</sup> The Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences St. Petersburg Branch. Fund 839. Op. 1. #1. Sheet 6–7.

<sup>19</sup> Meaning, the year 1877.

<sup>20</sup> The beginning of February. In the upper right-hand corner there is a note written, in all likelihood, by Obermiller, which reads, “received on the 8th, morning”. In his article “Unpublished Letters of Nikolai Pirogov to the Surgeon Aleksandr Obermiller” NAME Geselevich wrongly indicates a different date, the 6th of February 1877. He confused the Russian letter “C”, used by Pirogov here as an abbreviation for village, for the number 6.

<sup>21</sup> David Vyvodtsev's actual patronymic was Ilyich.

<sup>22</sup> David Vyvodtsev (1830–1896) was the head doctor of the War-Time Hospital Number 60 in Kishinev. From December 1876 to January 1877, he participated in the treatment of Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich (the elder). He was a talented inventor of his time who suggested an original method for embalming corpses, because of which the face of “the premier surgeon of Russia” Nikolai Pirogov was able to be preserved in perfect condition for a long period of time.

<sup>23</sup> At the Philadelphia World's Fair (1876) the Russian exhibition was composed of some of Vyvodtsev's shining achievements, which included a method for embalming corpses. He won a gold medal and a certificate for his invention.

<sup>24</sup> Unit of length equal to 16 *vershoks* or 71.12 cm.

<sup>25</sup> Here Pirogov is using the Réaumur scale.

<sup>26</sup> Kazimir Levitsky (1835–1899) – General, Assistant to the Director of the Danube Army Headquarters from 1877–1878.

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<sup>27</sup> Most likely, the letter from Pirogov to Obermiller on January 30, 1877.

<sup>28</sup> A high-ranking Turkish official of the time.

<sup>29</sup> Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich (the elder).

<sup>30</sup> Paper is needed there! (French).

<sup>31</sup> Durand was a French doctor and botanist (died 1794), who came up with this substance, which was widely used for the treatment of gastrointestinal illnesses.

<sup>32</sup> Terebinthine oil and sulfuric ether (Latin); 1 part of the former and 3 parts of the latter make up the Durand mixture.

<sup>33</sup> Meaning, a pause of small duration while ingesting the medicine.

<sup>34</sup> Empiricism is the knowledge or information received through experimental methods, and without scholarly analysis or the consideration of facts.

<sup>35</sup> Johann Gottfried Rademacher (1772–1850), a German practitioner and author of “Rational Experimental Therapy”, in other words “empirical doctoring”, based on the doctrine of Paracelsus (1491–1541), and therefore supporting elements of medieval alchemy and mysticism.

1) Do not strengthen the dose, and you may even discontinue its use while there is even a small amount of sensitivity of the liver.

2) Examine the urine (I did not mention anything about the urine or the properties of the vomit in the last letter). When the urine darkens a little (ordinarily) a pain or unpleasant feeling appears in the epigastrio<sup>36</sup>. As soon as that happens, you will need to stop the use of this substance.

3) The minimum dose per day is 30 drops (15 of each substance), and the maximum is 60.

“Die Erfahrung hat mich gelernt, dass sich die Menschen selten zu solch anhaltendem, — ein halbes Jahr ist die kuerzeste Frist,— obgleich wenig haeufigem Arzneigebrauch bequemen, wenn sie nicht vorher ... [nongitus? — illegible.] ein Paar Maal einen rechten Schmerzensturm ausgestanden ... [illegible.] um das Leden besorgt gewesen sind”<sup>37</sup>.

Our patient has experienced this, and therefore I hope, “wird sich bequemen”<sup>38</sup>

Ah, à propos<sup>39</sup>, we were joking back then about the contraction of the right muscoli Recti abdomini<sup>40</sup>, but you know, the old empiricist says, “war Gallenstein aber am toben, dann hatte sie (die Kranke) im Epigastriis heftigen Schmerz bis eine Ohnmacht, ein krampfhaftes Zusammenziehen der Bauchmusceln im Hypochondris dextro, welche sich gerade so anfuellte, als ob dort Verhaertungen im Bauche waeren”<sup>41</sup>.

We could have lived a century, studied for a century, but nonetheless we completely missed these krampfhaftes Zusammenziehen<sup>42</sup> during the

paroxysms. But when Botkin examined him<sup>43</sup>, the paroxysms<sup>44</sup> were not there. Nonetheless, they say, he found them, if not in the Grand Duke’s stomach, then in Botkin’s own head. In the letter from January 23–24th<sup>45</sup> I advised you to once more take up giving the small doses (up to žij<sup>46</sup>) of warm Carlsbad about 2 times per day. I recommend that, and also (Muehlbrunnen<sup>47</sup> or Schlossbrunnen<sup>48</sup>) and obligatorily Bilin<sup>49</sup>. Insist that the Grand Duke does not give up these waters and the warm Carlsbad even temporarily and that about 2 times per day he take it, and also that he does not stop taking my Durand mixture, and that he follows the rules set out for him. Look at the urine and track the sensitivity of the stomach and liver. This is important — the dosage (minimum 30 and maximum 60 drops) and pauses in the taking of medicine (for about 2 days) will depend on the state of the stomach and liver. During these pauses (when the urine is slightly darker and there is sensitivity in the *region hepatis*<sup>50</sup>) you may give the Grand Duke ž IV- V<sup>51</sup> of Carlsbad (maximum 27–28<sup>o</sup> R) per day. And on top of that, during these pauses, try

<sup>43</sup> When Pirogov and Sergei Botkin treated the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich (elder) together in Kishinev during the second half of December 1876.

<sup>44</sup> By spasm, Pirogov implies the tense rectus abdominis muscle, which was in reality noticed before the arrival of the prominent therapeutic doctor to Kishinev, but during the doctor’s consultation, their opinions differed. Pirogov did not observe this symptom, but Botkin had heard much about it before he came to see the patient, and he confirmed that he had discovered doubtless signs of the symptom.

<sup>45</sup> This letter (written by Pirogov) is not able to be found. However, his letter to Obermiller on January 30, 1877 contains a recommendation for the renewal of the usage of Carlsbad Mineral Water in small doses.

<sup>46</sup> ž is a symbol for the pharmaceutical ounce. The quantity of ounces was denoted by the following symbols: β — 1/2, i — 1, ij — 2, iij — 3, iv — 4, and so on. In this case, Pirogov is indicating 2 ounces.

<sup>47</sup> Mineral water spring called Mill Spring in Karlovy Vary (German).

<sup>48</sup> Mineral water spring called Zámecké Spring in Karlovy Vary (German).

<sup>49</sup> Bilin Mineral Water, which was attained in the Czech district of Teplice, and which would be given for chronic cases of gastro-intestinal tract illness along with Carlsbad mineral water.

<sup>50</sup> In the area of the liver (Latin).

<sup>51</sup> 4–5 pharmaceutical ounces

<sup>36</sup> Epigastrium (Latin).

<sup>37</sup> My experience has taught me that people will rarely agree to such a long period of treatment, a half a year being the minimum. However, sometimes they also do not agree to a less frequent regime, if they have not felt a painful shock a few times before, when their life would be at stake (German). A quote from the work of Rademacher, used as an example by Pirogov.

<sup>38</sup> He will agree to this (German).

<sup>39</sup> By the way (French).

<sup>40</sup> Rectus abdominis muscle (Latin).

<sup>41</sup> “If the gallstone was moving, then she (the patient) will have felt a strong pain in the epigastrium, so strong as to render her unconscious, a convulsive protracted pain in the stomach muscles of the right hypochondrium” (German). A quote from the work of Rademacher, used as an example by Pirogov.

<sup>42</sup> Cramps, prolonged pain.

Rademacher's medicine the tinctura seminam Cardui Mariae<sup>52</sup> again (my belief in these types of medicine is my weakness, but maybe, who knows? It is my service to God and to the sick). It comes as no surprise that Zdekauer<sup>53</sup> and Mandt<sup>54</sup> (who stole this belief from Rademacher) believed in it.

“Beim tobenden Stein (Gallenstein) kommt in Beschwichtigung der ueblen Zufaele kein Mittel dem Cardui Mariae gleich” and further “sobald der Urin nach dem Gebrauch des Durandischen Mittels anfaengt sich dunkel zu faerben und der Kranke Unbehaglichkeit im epigastris fuellt, muss man den Gebrauche des Mittels einstellen und eine Ab...chung der Samen Card. Mariae solange reichen bis das Urin wieder klar und hellstrohgelb von Farbe ist”<sup>55</sup>.

Those are the instructions of old man Rademacher. He says many stupidities in his last book<sup>56</sup>, but he is no liar, on the contrary, he is the most honest of empiricists, and, therefore, I believe him in all matters that deal with fact. So, I give you his observations on the subject, his assurances and the possibilities of the seeds. I confess, I myself rarely use Carduus Mariae and so give you not my own instructions, but his. I cannot see why you would not follow his

<sup>52</sup> A tincture made from milk thistle seed husks (Latin). Rademacher proposed using these the husks, obtained during the cleaning of the seeds of this medical plant, for the liver and bile duct.

<sup>53</sup> Nikolai Zdekauer (1815–1897) – a prominent domestic therapist of the nineteenth century, and court physician (1860–1882).

<sup>54</sup> Martin Mandt – a German therapist, professor at Heidelberg University, and then court physician for Tsar Nikolai I (1836-1856).

<sup>55</sup> “In the case of a moving stone (a gallstone), in order to prevent any serious incidents there is no substance equal to thistle. While using the Durand mixture, as soon as the urine turns a dark color and the patient begins to experience discomfort in the epigastrium, the use of the mixture must be put on hold and in its place thistle seeds should be used until the urine becomes transparent and the hue of light-colored wheat” (German). A quote from the work of Rademacher.

<sup>56</sup> Rademacher's book “Rechtfertigung der von Gelehrten misskannten verstandesrechten Erfahrungsheillehre der alten scheidekünstigen Geheimärzte und treue Mitteilung des Ergebnisses einer 25- jaehrigen Erprobung dieser Lehre am Krankenbette, von Johann Gottfried von Rademacher. Berlin, 1841”. Universal and Organ Medicine. Berlin, 1841. Vol. 2 (German).

instructions in this case. Carduus Mariae is not a metal, but a simple thistle (as the Ukrainians would say) with mottled leaves, which grows in our dried up little garden. The “curative powers” of the seeds, says Rademacher, is found in their shells, and not held in the flour. And, therefore, you must demand that the pharmacist, while grinding, does not get rid of the shells by putting them through a sieve.

Recipe: In  $\text{ξij}$ <sup>57</sup> of water, boil  $\text{ʒβ}$ <sup>58</sup> crushed, but not sieved, Card. [uus Marianus] (along with the shells) until there remains  $\text{ʒij}$ <sup>59</sup>, and after an hour feed to the patient with a spoon<sup>60</sup>. Recipe for the tincture<sup>61</sup>:  $\text{℥ij}$ <sup>62</sup> Samenhaeute von Cord. Mariae werden mit  $\text{℥ij}$ <sup>63</sup> reinen Brandwein von 16 – 19 Grad 6 Tage digerirt, ausgedrueckt und filtrirt<sup>64</sup> (if you will crush the seeds and put them through a sieve, then you will get 3 pounds of seed shells, which will give 4 pounds of tincture in 6 pounds of spirit).

Dosage: 5 times per day 15-30 gtt<sup>65</sup> of tincture (it's always a little bit cloudy) with  $\frac{1}{2}$  a cup of water or milk. Do not feed him a lot of fish. Order a bishop chowder to be made, meaning one with in a meat broth, but do not tell the Duke how the bishops make it. Avoid strenuous movement, especially when walking and travelling. Finally, I'll add the story of how Rademacher once discovered the presence of a gallstone. The patient was having seizures like the Grand Duke's. His wife sent for the doctor, saying that something unusual was happening. It turned out that, “Der Kranke in seiner Schmerzensnoth bittet die Frau ihm ein Tellertuch fort um den Bauch zu binden, in dem Augenblick, wo der Knoten des Tuches zugezogen wird, verschwindet der Schmerz wie durch einen Zauber Ich begriff, says Rademacher,

<sup>57</sup> 12 ounces

<sup>58</sup>  $\frac{1}{2}$  an ounce

<sup>59</sup> 2 ounces

<sup>60</sup> Pirogov means a tablespoon.

<sup>61</sup> A tincture is made by the extraction of an active medical ingredient from raw materials using ethyl alcohol (if water is used, meaning the material is boiled, then the substance is an infusion).

<sup>62</sup> 3 libras (with the symbol  $\text{℥}$ , equal to 360 grams or 1 pharmaceutical pound).

<sup>63</sup> 2 libras

<sup>64</sup> “Boil 3 libras of thistle seed shells, continue for 6 days until 2 libras of pure brandy of 16-19 degrees of strength remains, then press and filter the substance.” (German).

<sup>65</sup> Gutta – a drop (Latin).

dass durch dieser mechanischen Mittel nur eine von Gallensteinen abhängende Kolik koenne gehoben sein”<sup>66</sup>.

Remember, we dealt with something similar, and keep good track of the excrement.

I wish you good health. My wife sends her regards.

Pirogov

At the end of the letter read this.

P.S. Write to me not only about the bad, but about the good that you experience. Don’t forget about the urine and the excrement. Stick with the Durand, give him the Carlsbad and Bilin, and try the Carduus Mariae.

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<sup>66</sup> “The patient, exhausted by pain, asked his wife to tie a dishtowel around his abdomen. The moment she tightened the knot, the pain disappeared like magic. I understood, says Rademacher, that this is the one physical method to resolve a colic-induced gallstone” (German).