

## Darwin's Medical Practice

**Image:** Page from Erasmus Darwin's Prescription Book, showing a prescription for Brooke Boothby.

**Image from:** Erasmus Darwin House, Lichfield.

**Photograph:** David Remes (2003).

### 3. Darwin's Medical Practice

Darwin lived in his Beacon Street house for more than 20 years. Here he carried on a successful and extensive medical practice, gradually becoming known as the best British physician of the day. In the words of James Keir:

*"sympathy and benevolence were the most striking features. He felt very sensibly for others, and, from his knowledge of human nature, he entered into their feelings and sufferings in the different circumstances of their constitution, character, health, sickness, and prejudice."*

Some patients stayed in Darwin's house for days and even weeks. The poor were treated free. Brooke Boothby wrote of Darwin's house:

*"whose ever-open door  
Draws, like Bethesda's pool, the suffering poor;  
Where some fit cure the wretched all obtain,  
Relieved at once from poverty and pain."*