

IV. *Dr. Molineux's Historical Account of the late General Coughs and Colds ; with some Observations on other Epidemick Distempers.*

AMong the many secret workings of Nature, none seems more to deserve our Observation, than the rise and progress of Epidemick Distempers: Since Health, one of our chiefest Goods, is so nearly concerned, as to engage us in the Enquiry, and the Intricacy of the Subject may naturally stir up our Curiosity to the utmost prosecution of it.

The Coughs and Colds that lately so universally prevailed, give us a most extraordinary Instance, how liable at certain times our Bodies are, however differing in Constitution, Age, and way of Living, to be affected much in the same manner by a spreading Evil.

The most Instructive and Useful Account that can be given of such a Distemper, I take to be the setting down all the particular Accidents, or Matter of Fact, that occur'd in observing the way and course of its affecting Mens Bodies, rather than to raise wild and fruitless Speculations in Reasoning about it, which being Conjectures in all likelihood must fall short of the truth, and if so, must necessarily lead us into Error, rather than any way help us in prosecuting our Enquiry.

I shall therefore confine my self in the following History as close as I can to strict Matter of Fact, passing by all Hypotheses, and shall set down nothing that was not confirm'd to me by wary and repeated Observation.

'Twas about the beginning of *November* last, 1693. after a constant course of moderately warm Weather for the Season, upon some Snow falling in the Mountains and Country about the Town, that of a sudden it
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grew extremely cold, and soon after succeeded some few days of very hard Frost, whereupon Rheums of all kinds, such as violent Coughs that chiefly affected in the Night, great defluxion of thin Rheum at the Nose and Eyes, immoderate discharge of the *Saliva* by spitting, hoarseness in the Voice, sore Throats, with some trouble in swallowing, wheesings, stuffings, and soreness in the Breast, a dull heaviness and stoppage in the Head, with such like Disorders, the usual Effects of Cold, seized great Numbers of all sorts of People in *Dublin*.

Some were more violently affected, so as to be confined a while to their Beds, those complained of Feverish Symptoms, as shiverings and chillness all over them, that made several returns, pains in many parts of their Body, severe Head-aches, chiefly about their Foreheads, so as any Noise was very troublesome; great weakness in their Eyes, that the least Light was offensive; a perfect decay of all Appetite, foul turbid Urine, with a Brick-colour'd Sediment at the bottom; great uneasiness and tossing in their Beds all Night: Yet these Disorders, though they much frightened both the Sick and their Friends, usually without help of Remedy would abate of themselves, and terminate in universal Sweats, that constantly relieved.

This more violent degree of the Cold was more apt I found to fall on such as were given to Excess either in Eating or Drinking, or inclinable to a Scrophulous Disposition of Body, than on those that were more temperate, and less subject to Obstructions.

When the Cold was but moderate, it usually was over in Eight or Ten Days, but with those in whom it rose to a greater height, it continued a Fortnight, three Weeks, and sometimes above a Month, one way or other it universally affected all kinds of Men; those in the Country, as well as City; those that were much abroad in the open Air, and those that stay'd much within
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Doors, or even kept close in their Chambers; those that were robust and hardy, as well as those that were weakly and tender; Men, Women, and Children of all Ranks and Conditions, the youngest and the oldest; though I think if it were favourable to any sort, it most spared those that were very aged, among whom I knew several that were not the least troubled with it, yet it seized so universally, that not one in Thirty, perhaps I might safely say more, escaped it.

As it first appeared towards the beginning of *November*, so it seemed to arrive to its greatest degree of violence, and spread most universally about the middle of it; and by the beginning of the Month following it very sensibly abated, so that very few then complained of their Colds; and 'twas easie to observe on the Third of *December*, being Sunday, few were heard Coughing in the Churches, whereas a Fortnight before the noise of Coughing in every Congregation was very troublesome, and never out of ones Ears.

So that in the space of four or five Weeks it had its rise, growth, and decay; and though from first to last it seized such incredible Numbers of all sorts of Men, I cannot learn that any one truly dyed of it, unless such whose strength was before spent by some tedious Fit of Sickness, or labour'd under some heavier Disease complicated with it.

I find that about *November* and *December* 1691. by some short Notes I took then, Coughs were more than ordinary frequent here in *Dublin*, though nothing comparable to what they were lately; they chiefly then affected Young Children, whose Coughs usually turn'd to a violent Chin-Cough: Yet at this time among all the variety of Coughing Children, I have not met with more than one, that was troubled with a Chin-Cough, and that too was but in a slight manner: Which Minute differences in the ways of Epidemick Distempers operating

rating in our Bodies, clearly shew that their Causes cannot be ascribed only to the sensible alterations of the Weather, or the manifest qualities of Heat, Cold, Moisture, or Dryness highly predominant in the Air, according to the Vulgar Solution of them, but that they proceed from something more nice and latent than all this.

But to return to our general Cold, it was not only Remarkable for the great Numbers it affected in this Kingdom, but likewise for its vast extent elsewhere, spreading it self all over *England* in the same manner it did here, particularly it seized them at *London* and *Oxford* as universally, and with the same Symptoms as it seized us in *Dublin*; but with this observable difference, that it appeared three or four Weeks sooner in *London*, that is, about the beginning of *October*, than it did in *Dublin*, where 'twas not the least taken notice of till about the beginning of *November*, as I before mentioned.

Nor was its Progress, as I am credibly informed, bounded by these Islands, for it spread it self still further, and reached the Continent, where it infested the Northern Parts of *France*, as about *Paris*, *Flanders*, *Holland*, and the rest of the *United Provinces*, with more violence, and no less frequency than it did in these Countries; so that for its being so general in affecting such great Numbers in proportion to the few that escaped it, and taking up so vast a scope in its extent, I believe no Epidemick Distemper can compare with it; Pestilential Fevers and the Plague are commonly the most spreading Diseases, yet we find by their Histories the Infection of 'em usually limited within much narrower compass than this had, as if the same Providence had put Bounds to the raging of these deadly Distempers, as it has done to the Sea; for were they as universal and diffusive of themselves as these slighter Diseases are, they would entirely
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dispeople whole Kingdoms, and soon leave the World waste and destitute of Mankind.

No Example of any Epidemick Distemper seems in all respects to come nearer in competition with our late general Cold, than the transient Fever, that so strangely in the Year 1688 prevailed in these Countries, which I look upon to have been the most universal Fever, as this the most universal Cold, that perhaps has ever appeared; so that it will not be improper to insert here the History in short of that Remarkable Distemper.

About the beginning of *July* 1688. this short sort of Fever was first observed to appear here in *Dublin*, it so universally seized all sorts of Men whatever, that I then made an estimate not above one in fifteen escaped. It began, as generally Fevers do, with a chillness and shivering all over, like that of an Ague, but not so violent, which soon broke out into a dry burning Heat, with great uneasiness that commonly confin'd them to their Beds, where they passed the ensuing Night very restless; they complain'd likewise of Giddiness, and a dull pain in their Heads, chiefly about their Eyes, with unsettled pains in their Limbs, and about the small of their Back, a soreness all over their Flesh, a loss of Appetite, with a *Nausea* or aptness to Vomit, an unusual ill taste in their Mouths, yet little or no Thirst: And tho' these Symptoms were very violent for a time, yet they did not continue long, for about the second day of the Distemper the Patient usually of himself fell into a Sweat, (unless 'twas prevented by letting Blood, which however beneficial in other Fevers, I found manifestly retarded the Progress of this) and if the Sweat was encouraged for five or six hours by laying on more Cloaths, or taking some Sudorifick Medicine, most of the Disorders before mentioned would entirely disappear, or at least very much abate.

The Giddiness of their Head, and want of Appetite would often continue some days afterwards, but with the

the use of the open fresh Air they certainly in four or five days at farthest recover'd these likewise, and were perfectly well; so transient and favourable was this Disease, that it seldom required the help of a Physician; and of a Thousand that were seized with it, I believe scarce one dyed; by the middle of *August* following it wholly disappeared, so that it had run its full Course through all sorts of People in seven Weeks time.

Twas very Remarkable that in *England* as well as this Kingdom, a short time before this General Fever, a slight Disease, but very universal, seized the Horses too: In them it shewed it self by a great defluxion of Rheum from their Noses; and I was assured by a Judicious Man, an Officer in the Army of *Ireland* which was then drawn out, and encamp'd on the *Curragh* of *Kildare*, there were not Ten Horses in a Regiment that had not this disorder; which shews the cause of spreading Distempers to be so prevalent, that it works not only on the finer and more delicate Composition of Humane Bodies, but affects even the more strong and gross frame of one of the most robust Animal Productions in Nature; but this by the by.

This Fever as we were speaking of, as our late Colds, spread it self all over *England*; whether it extended farther I did not learn, but it raged as generally in *London*, as I was informed by a learned Physician from thence, as it did with us here in *Dublin*, and with the same concurrence of Symptoms, but with some difference of time in relation to its first appearance; for whereas they began to take notice of it at *London* about the middle of *May*, and it continued there till about the latter end of *June*; it did not shew it self here in *Dublin* till the beginning of *July*, after it had wholly disappeared in *London*. So likewise our late general Colds, as I before mentioned, were observed to keep such a sort of Regular Precedence of Time, as to their rise and fall at *London*,

in respect of *Dublin*: Whence one may reasonably gather, that these spreading Epidemick Distempers take their Progress from East to West. But this should be further confirmed by more frequent Observations before one may safely determine any thing in this matter; however, that it held true in the two foregoing Instances is certain; and 'tis not less certain that the Plague and Pestilential Fevers rage more frequently in the East towards *Constantinople* and the *Levant*, than in these more Western Parts of *Europe*, as if that seem'd a more Natural Climate for their rise and propagation; whence the several Estates of *Italy* so usually impose on Ships coming from all Parts of *Turkey* into their Ports the strict observing a *Quarantine*, before they Land either their Passengers, or their Goods.

And this might lead us to Discourse something concerning the cause of these sort of spreading Distempers: But till we have a better stock of more accurate Histories of them, and be further acquainted with their Nature and Progress, I do not think it so proper to the Design of those that candidly prosecute Philosophical Enquiries to determine any thing as yet in this Point.

I. M.

V. *Of a Stone found in the Gall-Bladder of a Woman.* By Mr. J. T.

After throwing up the *Sternum*, and inspecting the Parts contained in the Cavity of the Breast, I found the Lobes of the Lungs extremely turgid, and its Vesicles impleat with a grumous Blood, their investing Membrane in the upper part adhered firmly to the *Pleura*: The right Ventricle of the Heart was filled with a large quantity of coagulated Blood, but the left seem'd exsanguinous: