

XII. *A Thermometrical Account of the Weather, for Three Years, beginning September 1754. as observed in Maryland. By Mr. Richard Brooke. Communicated by Mr. H. Baker, F. R. S.*

*The highest and lowest State of the Mercury in each Month is here given, and other Observations are occasionally intermixed.*

[Read March 8, 1759.]

		Mercury.		
		Highest	Lowest	
1754.				
Sept.	80	73		Winds for the most part easterly, and very rainy.
Oct.	80	34		Winds easterly, and much rain in the beginning: latter end fair.
Nov.	67	23		Winds variable. Snow and rain.
Dec.	60	23		Much rain.
1755.				
Jan.	69	23		Much rain. Snow on the 1st day.
Feb.	64	14		Much snow.
Mar.	79	24		Much rain.
Apr.	83	40		On the 16th it snowed as hard as ever I knew. Cleared up at two o'clock P. M. all dissolved before night. Not one shower of rain this month. Wind easterly till the 14th; afterwards mostly westward.

May

		Mercury.		
		Highest	Lowest.	
May	87	47		Extremely dry : feldom any clouds : no rain. Every vegetable almost burnt up : strawberry-leaves, green plantain, and others, so crisp as to crumble. In this month many black cattle died for want of food.
June	90	70		Seasonable weather.
July	93	60		Very dry.
Aug.	90	61		Very dry.
Sept.	93	45		Very dry.
Oct.	75	36		Seasonable weather towards the end of this month. This was the driest summer and autumn ever remembered. Many springs dried up, that ran brisk before. My spring, a remarkable good one, ran very flow, and the water was unpleasant.
Nov.	65	29		On Tuesday the 18th I felt three shocks of an earthquake about eight minutes before four in the morning. The first was severest : it shook the house very much, and waked me. The second was less, and the third least of all. They succeeded each other at about one minute's distance, and were felt all over the continent.
Dec.	71	15		On the 16th there was a brisk southerly wind ; the mercury about noon at 71°. At four P.M. ☽ at 69° : at five o'clock the wind came about to N.W. blew excessively hard, and did great damage in

	Mercury.			
	Highest	Lowest		
Jan.	73	15	<p>in the country. A prodigious quantity of rain fell: it cleared up at six o'clock; but the wind continued blowing hard all night. At eight o'clock the <math>\varphi</math> was at <math>43^{\circ}</math>, at seven next morning at <math>26^{\circ}</math>, at nine at <math>24^{\circ}\frac{1}{4}</math>, and the morning following, <i>viz.</i> the 18th, the mercury was at <math>15^{\circ}</math>.</p> <p>1756.</p>	
Feb.	70	27		
Mar.	—	—		Not observed, being hindered by business.
Apr.	83	29		Seasonable weather.
May	81	48		Seasonable weather.
June	86	44		Plenty of rain: the season much colder than usual, $\varphi$ standing frequently between $60^{\circ}$ and $70^{\circ}$ . On the 22d in the morning a black cloud came from the northward, soon overspread the hemisphere, and threatened much wind and rain; but soon blew over without much wind or rain. The sun shone clear, and the weather calm, till towards noon, when clouds collected towards the north and north-west. About three P. M. there was the most threatening appearance I ever beheld: the clouds in some places of a deep green; in others, of a footy black. At 45 min. past three it began to rain and blow, attended with remarkable severe thunder; but as the

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thunder stopped the clock, I cannot say how long it lasted; but suppose near half an hour; in which time the most rain fell I ever saw. The wind did incredible damage in several parts of the country. In St. Mary's county, it is said, 200 houses were blown down, and many people killed. In every county in Maryland much damage was done by this gust, which was the most general ever remembered. It was all over New York, the Jerseys, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, and did much damage every where. How much farther it extended, either northward or southward, I have not heard.

In these two last months an epidemical spotted fever was common in the country: I have not heard it was mortal any where. Those, who had it most severe, were relieved with what Mr. Collinson calls *apocinon*. There raged at the same time an epidemical disease amongst the dogs, which destroyed great numbers in all the northern plantations. It came from thence to the eastern shore in Maryland, where it killed most of the dogs. It now rages amongst our dogs, and scarce any recover. They are first seized with a short cough, and a stoppage in the nose, so that they are obliged to breathe thro' the mouth. In four,

		<i>Mercury.</i>		
		Highest.	Lowest.	
<i>July</i>	93	69		Seasonable weather, and the most plentiful appearance of corn and tobacco I ever saw. The wheat was got in last month: it is supposed there will be the most of any year since the settlement of this country.
<i>Aug.</i>	93	68		Very dry. The disease amongst dogs continues, tho' less violent: many have their limbs seized with a paralysis: these all recover.
<i>Sept.</i>	92	60		The disease continues amongst the dogs. This month I saw a tame fox very ill with this disorder. I gave him a dose of a valuable powder, with which I have done much good; and for the knowledge of which I was obliged to my worthy friend Dr. Parsons, when I was last in England. I have known this powder cure dogs; which made me give it to this fox: but he died in three

Mercury.

Highest.

Lowest.

three minutes after ; which I attribute to the punch in which I gave it. This is the hottest and driest summer ever known in Maryland. There are great crops of corn and tobacco made ; but, through the extreme dryness of the weather, the latter crops of neither will come to perfection. Many springs are dried up, that were ever current before. Putrid bilious fevers are now very frequent in the country, and have raged for these six weeks past. So likewise has an hepatic dysentery, which, I have been informed (for it has not come within my own practice), has oftentimes been so malignant, as not to yield to any medicines that could be thought of.

Oct.

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The weather seasonable. The dysenteries, that have been so fatal in many parts of the province, have reached my neighbourhood. The bilious fever now is, and for some time past has been, very common in this country. As the patients under my care had frequent large bilious stools (after the stimulus on the intestines was removed by opiates, and they voided no blood), imagining the fever and the flux owing to the same cause, only affecting different parts, I gave Dr. Parsons's powders, which I always used with success, and my patients

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<i>Mercury.</i>	
Highest.	Lowest.
Nov. 73 27	<p>got well. The method I found successful, after trying many others, was to give opiates, at proper intervals, till the purging and bloody stools ceased : then four or five doses of Dr. Parsons's powders : afterwards a few doses of astringents, which never failed of curing. The opiate I used was <i>pil. matthæi</i> ; which I supposed best in this putrid bilious complaint, because of the soap in its composition. It is remarkable, that the frequent repetition of the strongest astringents never decreased the quantity or number of the stools, till Dr. Parsons's powders were given. These valuable powders, which that ingenious and benevolent gentleman communicated to me, when I was at London, have been of incredible service in the plantations. I am persuaded he will readily inform any practitioner what they are ; and that nothing is wanting to bring them into general use, in all bilious and putrid fevers, but a thorough knowledge of their extraordinary efficacy.</p> <p>The hepatic flux spreads very much in my neighbourhood. On the 22d I was called to a family, where the mistress and maid were both down with this disorder, and appeared to have it very much alike. They were much griped, and purged more than</p>

Mercury.		
Highest.	Lowest.	
		20 times in 24 hours: sometimes blood in a large proportion was mixed with their stools; but the most troublesome symptom was a violent <i>tenebrismus</i> . The mistress took two doses of Dr. Parsons's powder, and the maid as many of Dr. James's. At night the mistress took an anodyne draught, and the maid <i>gr. 8 pilulæ mattbæi</i> . The next day they took some astringent powders, at night their anodyne, and the day following both were well. The small-pox and swine-pox are now about the country.
Dec. 63	13	People in general very healthy. The small-pox spreads but slowly, and is very favourable.
1757.		
Jan. 65	10	Many sudden alterations, as to heat and cold, have been in this month: but the most remarkable I have ever observed, was the last day of this month, when the $\varphi$ was up at $65^{\circ}$ , and the next day, Feb. 1. when it was down at $28^{\circ}$ , about the same hour in the day. The people of Maryland were afflicted last year with scarce any complaints which were not attended more or less with bilious symptoms; and as the year advanced, the weather being unusually hot, such symptoms grew more more



more violent, and the bile more putrescent. A bare state of the many odd cases that came under my care would fill several sheets of paper ; but as my own was very particular, I shall only mention that. I was taken on the 24th Dec. last with a slight fever and fore throat, which continued three days : then the fever and fore throat left me ; but for three nights afterwards I felt more uneasiness than I ever before was sensible of, tho' quite free from pain or fever. I waked, I suppose, at least an hundred times each of these nights. If I tried to lie on either side, I always turned insensibly on my back. When asleep, my imagination was filled with the most frightful ideas that ever disturbed an human mind ; but I could remember none of them when I awoke. I constantly lost my breath when asleep ; and was waked by an hideous whooping noise, like that of a child in a chin-cough. I presently fell asleep again, and the same horrid scene was re-acted. The seventh night from my first attack was attended with a new train of symptoms. About three o' clock in the morning I was afflicted with a most excruciating pain about the fifth or sixth vertebra of the back, like the boring of an augre. I was forced to quit the bed, and, to my  
great

Mercury.

Highest.

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great surprize, was easy almost as soon as I got on my cloaths : but it returned as soon as I attempted to lie down again. This lasted 27 days, ever free from pain while up, and always taken about seven hours after lying down, either by night or day. Neither the Indian bath, blisters, or any thing I could think of, did relieve me : but getting up always eased me. It was plainly a spasm of the muscle trapezeus ; for if I rubbed my back ever so slightly, the pain would instantly remove to the muscles of the sternum, *et vice versa* ; yet I could never feel it in my side. Whether it was leaving me or not, I cannot say : but I seemed to find great relief by drinking punch, into which Goa stone had been plentifully grated. It is very strange, that during the whole time I had no fever, or lost my appetite, tho' I grew very weak.

Feb. 67 8 It rained almost every day this month : and at this time there prevailed a disorder among the Negroes, which, I believe, was peculiar to them ; for I never heard of any white person's having it. They were taken with pains in their heads, necks, shoulders, breasts, or bellies : it seldom continued long in a place, till it got to the thigh, where the complaint would form

Mercury.		
Highest.	Lowest.	
		form into a very hard and sensible tumour, generally in the triceps muscle. Emollient plaisters would commonly remove the tumour in two days time. The morbid matter would give exquisite pain in its descent down the thigh, and would collect again into a tumour, either in the ham, or in the calf of the leg. The same cataplasms continued would repel the tumour, and the patient would get well usually in about a fortnight. There was an high fever during the time. I never knew but one suppurate, tho' I have seen many in this complaint: this happened to a Negro boy about 15 years old: here the matter descended to the foot, which was very troublesome to heal.
Mar.	65 30	A vast deal of rain fell this month.
Apr.	67 35	The wettest and coldest April within man's memory. Impetigenous disorders very common both in Maryland and Virginia, and some very obstinate.
May	88 48	Seasonable and healthy.
June	90 72	An uncommon wet month. The hard rains beat off the flour, or <i>farina fecundans</i> , of the wheat; so that very little of that grain was made this year.
July	90 64	Much rain. It is very remarkable, that many people, this month and the last, in

<i>Mercury.</i>		
Highest.	Lowest.	
Aug. 90	67	Much rain, and thick foggy weather.
Sept. 88	47	Very wet. Within these two months I have seen five persons, and have heard of many more, who were taken with a violent pain in the <i>os frontis</i> , on the left side. The pain soon fell into the Eye on the same side, and occasioned a dimness: but this and the pain were soon removed by an epispastic behind the ear, if applied early. I was called to a Negro wench, who had had the complaint so long, that she was totally blind of both eyes; which appeared, as in the <i>gutta serena</i> , without any inflammation, or visible defect; but extremely painful. In her likewise the left eye was first affected, and much the most difficult of cure. Caustics behind the ears, and vitriolic colly-

		<i>Mercury.</i>		
		Highest.	Lowest.	
<i>Oct.</i>	67	43		<p>collyriums, cured her : but three caustics were put behind the left ear, before that eye was well.</p> <p>Very wet. Many horses died this month of a pestilential fever. They had the symptoms Markham describes in his chapter of Pestilential. Hen-dung infused in stale urine (which Markham recommends) was found serviceable. Many people were ruined by the loss of all their horses : but none died that had plenty of the juice of rue. It is remarkable that no horses had this distemper, but those on the salts of the different rivers. Mr. Pollard Edmunson, a gentleman on the eastern shore of Chesapeake, told me, he lost almost every horse by this disorder at his home plantation (the water there is salt), and not one in a forest pasture about a mile off.</p>
<i>Nov.</i>	65	33		<p>The disease among horses is over. On the 10th day of this month there was as severe a gust of thunder and lightning, as is common in July or August. Several horses, cattle, &amp;c. were killed in different parts. There were the most luminous coruscations I ever saw ; the whole hemisphere as it were in a blaze.</p>
<i>Dec.</i>	68	28		<p>Very variable weather : many high winds, and much rain.</p>