

in many places on the earth and enveloped them in fog. Such was the case all over Arabia, in a part of India, in Crete, in the plains and valleys of Macedonia, in Hungary, Albania, and Sicily. Should the same thing occur in Sardinia not a man will be left alive. The like will continue so long as the sun remains in the sign of Leo, on all the islands and adjoining countries to which this corrupted sea wind extends or has extended from India. If the inhabitants of those parts do not employ and adhere to the following or similar means and precepts we announce to them inevitable death unless the grace of Christ preserve their lives.

"We are of opinion that the constellations, with the aid of Nature, strive, by virtue of their Divine right, to protect and heal the human race; and to this end, in union with the rays of the sun, acting through the power of fire, endeavour to break through the mist. Accordingly, within the next ten days and until the 17th of the ensuing month of July, this mist will be converted into a stinking deleterious rain, whereby the air will be much purified. Now, as soon as this rain shall announce itself by thunder or hail, every one of you shall protect himself from the air; and, as well before as after the rain, kindle a large fire of vine wood, green laurel, or other green wood. Wormwood and chamomile should also be burnt in great quantity in the market-places, in other densely-inhabited localities, and in the houses, until the earth is again completely dry, and for three days after no one ought to go abroad in the fields."

Then follow a series of sanitary rules to be observed relating to diet and to the general management of the body during this critical period. They throw a good deal of light upon the state of sanitary science and practice at that day. Some of the directions are good, sound general maxims; such, for instance, as to use a simple diet, to avoid exposure to cold at night, to abstain from immoderate eating, to drink nothing but clear, light wine mixed with water. Others, again, are purely arbitrary, and are stated dogmatically, without any reason assigned, so that it is often impossible to guess on what grounds they were based. Others, again, are obviously based upon the theory of the disease having its origin in corrupt vapours.

Thus, "poultry, water-fowl, young pork, old beef, and fat meat in general are interdicted."

"Broth should be taken, seasoned with ground pepper, ginger, and cloves." "Sleep in the day-time is detrimental; it should be taken at night until sunrise, or somewhat longer." "Beetroot and other vegetables, whether eaten pickled or fresh, are hurtful." "On the contrary, spicy pot-

herbs, as sage or rosemary, are wholesome." "Cold, moist, watery food is in general prejudicial." "Only small river fish should be used." "Olive oil as an article of food is fatal." "If it rain, a little fine treacle should be taken after dinner." "Too much exercise is hurtful." "Bathing is injurious." "Fat people should not sit in the sunshine."*

Such was the view taken in the fourteenth century by the scientific authorities of the time of the causes of plague, and the hygienic measures to be adopted to arrest its ravages.

The Black Death was in reality a malignant contagious fever, bred and nurtured by filth.

But all were agreed that diseases were produced by witchcraft, sorcery, magic, or the evil conjunction of planets, and they were combated accordingly.

Monks, witches, conjurers, and fortune tellers were the chief advisers on questions of health.

Diseases were prevented or cured by relics or cabalistic words or the magic influence of special substances. Thus, the yellow powder turmeric was the remedy for jaundice, simply because it was yellow; saffron the remedy for measles, because of similar colour to the eruption; and the use of saffron tea for this complaint still survives amongst the poor. Scarlet bed curtains were a remedy for scarlet fever or any disease accompanied by a red eruption, and the grandfather of Maria Theresa died of small-pox, wrapped, by order of his physicians, in twenty yards of scarlet broadcloth. The lung of the long-winded fox was the remedy for asthma and shortness of breath. The heart of a nightingale, the bird which forgetteth not her song, was prescribed for loss of memory. The royal touch was the specific for scrotula or king's evil, and John Brown, Surgeon to King Charles II., wrote a treatise on the royal gift of healing strumae by the imposition of hands. Charles II. touched 92,107 diseased persons altogether during his reign, or an average of about 4,386 a year. This delusion actually held its ground until the eighteenth century, when the great lexicographer, Dr. Samuel Johnson, was in his boyhood touched by Queen Anne.

As late as 1623 Sir Kenelm Digby, the admirable Crichton of his time, and friend of the great French philosopher Descartes, produced a sympathetic powder, which, being laid upon the weapon which inflicted a wound, cured the patient even at a distance.

In 1665, the Great Plague year, Defoe, who wrote a journal of that time, which, although a fiction, is probably studiously correct in details,

* Babington's translation of Herder's "Epidemics of the Middle Ages," quoted by Meryon, vol. i., page 211.

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