

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE MALIGNANT FEVER

Lately Prevalent in

PHILADELPHIA

With a Statement of the

PROCEEDINGS

That took place on the subject, in different parts of the

UNITED STATES

To which are added,

ACCOUNTS

Of the Plague in London and Marseilles;

AND A LIST OF THE DEAD

From August 1, to the middle of December, 1793

~~~~~

By MATHEW CAREY

~~~~~

Fourth Edition, Improved

~~~~~

PHILADELPHIA: Printed by the Author

January 16, 1794

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**CHAP. I** State of Philadelphia previous to the appearance of the malignant fever—with a few observations on some of the probable consequences of that calamity. .... 7

**CHAP. II** Symptoms – A slight sketch of the mode of treatment..... 9

**CHAP. III** First alarm in Philadelphia. Flight of the citizens. Guardians of the poor borne down with labour..... 12

**CHAP. IV** General despondency. Deplorable scenes. Frightful view of human nature. A noble and exhilarating contrast..... 15

**CHAP. V** Distress increases. Benevolent citizens invited to assist the guardians of the poor. Ten volunteers. Appointment of the committee for relief of the sick. State of Philadelphia. .... 19

**CHAP. VI** Magnanimous offer. Wretched state of Bushhill. Order introduced there. ... 20

**CHAP. VII** Proceedings of the committee—Loans from the bank of North-America. Establishment of an orphan house. Relief of the poor. Appointment of the assistant committee. .... 24

**CHAP. VIII** Repeated addresses of the committee on the purification of houses. — Assistant committee undertake to inspect infected houses personally. Extinction of the disorder. Governor's proclamation. Address of the clergy. A new and happy state of affairs..... 26

**CHAP. IX** Extravagant Letters from Philadelphia. Credulity put to the test. .... 29

**CHAP. X** Proceedings at Chestertown—At New-York —At Trenton and Lambertown—At Baltimore..... 31

**CHAP. XI** Proceedings at Havre de Grace—At Hagerstown -- Alexandria—at Winchester—At Boston—at Newburyport—In Rhode Island—At New Bern—At Charlestown—In Georgia – Fasting and Prayer..... 34

**Chap. XII** Conflict between the law of self-preservation and the law of charity. The law of charity victorious..... 38

**CHAP. XIII** Disorder fatal to the doctors—to the clergy—to drunkards—to filles de joie—to maid servants— to the poor—and in close streets.—Less destructive to the French—and to the negroes. .... 39

**C H A P. XIV** State of the weather. Attempt to refute the opinion that cold and rain extinguished the disorder. Average-table of mortality..... 41

**C H A P. XV**—Origin of the disorder..... 44

**C H A P. XVI** Desultory facts and reflexions. A collection of scraps..... 47

**C H A P. XVII** Another collection of scraps. .... 54

**An account of the plague in London, in the year 1665.**..... 65

**Account of The Plague at Marseilles, in 1720.** ..... 71

To the American Philosophical Society.

GENTLEMEN,

With due deference, I presume to dedicate to you the following pages, in which I have endeavored to give as faithful an account as possible, of the dreadful calamity we have just experienced.

I am, gentlemen, With esteem, Your obedt. Humble servant,  
MATHEW CAREY

NUMBER XLVII

District of Pennsylvania, to wit—

(L. S.) Be it remembered, that on the thirteenth day of November, in the eighteenth year of the independence of the united states of America, Mathew Carey, of the said district, hath deposited in this office, the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as author, in the words following, to wit:

“A Short account of the malignant fever lately prevalent in Philadelphia, with a statement of the proceedings that took place on the subject in different parts of the united states. By Mathew Carey”.

In conformity to the act of the congress of the united states, intituled, “An act for the encouragement of learning; by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned.”

SAMUEL CALDWELL, Clerk of the district of Pennsylvania.

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

Philadelphia, Nov. 13, 1793.

THE favourable reception given to the imperfect account of the fever which I lately published, and the particular desire of some of my friends, have induced me to undertake a more satisfactory history of it, in order to collect together, while facts are recent, as many of the most interesting occurrences as I could, for the information of the public.

I have not attempted any embellishment or ornament of style; but have merely aimed at telling plain facts in plain language. I have taken every precaution to arrive at the truth; and hope the errors in the account, will not be found numerous.

For the desultory plan of some part of the pamphlet, I have to offer the following apology; many of the circumstances and reflections towards the conclusion, which would have come with more propriety in the beginning, did not occur, until some Of the first half-sheets were not only written, but printed. I had no choice, therefore, but either to omit them, or place them somewhat out of order. I preferred the latter.

Most of the facts mentioned have fallen under my own observation. Those of a different description, I have been assiduous to collect from every person of credibility, possessed of information.

Desirous of having this account correct and complete, I have printed off but a small number of copies of the present edition: and shall esteem myself most particularly obliged to any person who will be so kind to point out errors, to be corrected in, or suggest facts, to be added to, a new edition, which I propose to put to press very soon, and which will, I hope, be found more ample than the present one.

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

November 23, 1793.

WHEN I published the first edition of this pamphlet, it was my intention to have greatly enlarged it for a second one, and to have new-modelled it, so as to preserve a connection between its several parts, in which it is extremely deficient. But its speedy sale, and the demand for more copies, render it impossible for me to do more, at present, than make such corrections as the kindness of few friends has led them to point out.

In giving an account of the proceedings that took place on the subject of the disorder, throughout the union, I have suppressed many a harsh comment, which was forcing itself on me; from the reflexion, that in similar circumstances, we might perhaps, have been equally severe. And to perpetuate animosities, is performing a very unfriendly office. They are easily generated; but their extinction is a work of time and difficulty. Let us, therefore, (especially when we “hold the mirror up to nature” at home,) not only forgive, but even forget, if possible, all the unpleasant treatment our citizens have experienced.

I have heard more than one person object to the account of the shocking circumstances that occurred in Philadelphia, as portraying the manner of the people in an unfavourable light. If that be the case, the fault is not mine. I am conscious I have not exaggerated the matter. But I do not conceive it can have that effect; for it would be as unjust and injudicious to draw the character of Philadelphia from the proceedings of a period of horror and affright, when all the “mild charities of social life” were suppressed by regard for self, as to stamp eternal infamy on a nation, for the atrocities perpetrated in times of civil broils, when all the “angry passions” are roused into dreadful and ferocious activity.

#### PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION,

November 30, 1793.

THIS pamphlet comes before the public a third time, and, in some measure, in a new form. I have reduced it to as methodical a state, as in my power, but not as much so as I could wish, nor, I fear, as the reader may expect. To one merit only do I lay claim in the compilation; that is, of having meant well. If, on a fair perusal, the candid allow me that, I am satisfied to have the execution censured with all the severity of which criticism is capable. However, I beg leave to inform the reader, that this day ends one month, since the writing of the pamphlet commenced. I know that the shortness of the time employed, is no justification of a bad performance; but it may somewhat extenuate the defects of a middling one.

I have found several objections made to parts of it. Most of them I have removed. Some few, resting on the sentiments of individuals, directly contrary to my own judgment, I have passed over. For, until my reason is convinced, I cannot change my opinion for that of any person whatever.

To those gentlemen who have been so kind to furnish me with facts to enlarge and improve the work, I profess myself under great obligations. I request them to continue their kindness; as, if public favour should give this trifle a fourth edition, I shall add all that may be communicated in the interim; otherwise I shall probably publish separately what may be worthy of the public eye.

## PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

Jan. 16, 1794

THE uncommon degree of favour which this pamphlet has experienced, has impressed me with lively sentiments of gratitude. As the only proper return in my power, I have, in each successive edition, used every endeavor to improve it.

In the number of victims to the late calamity, there were many strangers,—among whom were probably some, by whose death, estates have fallen to heirs at a distance. It being; therefore, of great importance to extend and improve the list of the dead, and to remedy the extreme inaccuracy of the sextons' returns, I employed. suitable persons to go thro' the city and liberties, and make enquiry at every house, without exception, for the names and occupations of the dead. The disobliging temper of some; and the fears of others, that an improper use would be made of the information they could have given, have, in various instances, defeated my purpose. Imperfect as the list still remains, I hope it will be found useful in removing anxious doubts, and conveying to persons in different countries, the melancholy information of the decease of relatives, which, but for such a channel of communication, would, in many cases, be difficult, if not impossible to acquire for years to come.

To the present edition, I have added a short account of the plague at London, and at Marseilles. On a comparison, the reader will be struck with astonishment, at the extraordinary similarity between many of the leading and most important circumstances that occurred in those two places, and the events of September and October, 1793, in Philadelphia.

A SHORT ACCOUNT, Etc.

*CHAP. I State of Philadelphia previous to the appearance of the malignant fever---with a few observations on some of the probable consequences of that calamity.*

**(Page 9 – of the original book)**

BEFORE I enter on the consideration of this disorder, it may not be improper to offer a few introductory remarks on the situation of Philadelphia previous to its commencement, which will reflect the light on some of the circumstances mentioned in the course of the narrative.

The manufactures, trade, and commerce of this city, had, for a considerable time, been improving and extending with great rapidity. From the period of the adoption of the federal government, at which time America was at the lowest ebb of distress, her situation had progressively become more and more prosperous. Confidence, formerly banished, was universally restored. Property of every kind, rose to, and in some instances beyond, its real value: and a few revolving years exhibited the interesting spectacle of a young country, with a new form of government, emerging from a state which approached very near to, anarchy, and acquiring all the flexibility and nerve of the best-toned and oldest of nations.

In this prosperity, which revived almost extinguished hopes of four millions of people, Philadelphia participated in an eminent degree. Numbers of new houses, in almost every street, built in a very neat, elegant style, adorned, at the same time that they greatly enlarged, the city. Its population was extending fast. House-rent had risen to an extravagant height; it was in many cases double, and in some (**Page 10**) treble what it had been a year or two before; and, as is generally the case, when a city is advancing in prosperity, it far exceeded the real increase of trade. The number of applicants for houses, exceeding the number of houses to be let, one bid over another; and affairs were in such a situation, that many people, though they had a tolerable run of business, could hardly do more than clear their rents, and were, literally, toiling for their landlords alone.\* Luxury, the usual, and perhaps inevitable concomitant of prosperity, was gaining ground in a manner very alarming to those who considered how far the virtue, the liberty, and the happiness of a nation depend on its temperance and sober manners. Many of our citizens had been, for some time, in the improvident habit of regulating their expenses by prospects formed in sanguine hours, when every probability was caught at as a certainty, not by their actual profits, or income. The number of coaches, coachees, chairs, etc., lately set up by men in the middle rank of life, is hardly credible. Not to enter into a minute detail, let it suffice to remark, that extravagance, in various forms, was gradually

---

\* The distress arising from this source, was perhaps the only exception to the general observation of the flourishing situation of Philadelphia.

eradicating the plain and wholesome habits of the city. And although it were presumption to attempt to scan the decrees of heaven, yet few, I believe will pretend to deny, that something was wanting to humble the pride of a city, which was running on in full career, to the goal of prodigality and dissipation.

However, from November 1792, to the end of last June, the difficulties of Philadelphia were extreme. The establishment of the bank of Pennsylvania, in embryo for the most part of that time, had arrested in the two other banks such a quantity of the circulating specie, as embarrassed almost every kind of business; to this was added the distress arising from the very numerous failures in England, which had (**Page 11**) extremely harassed several of our capital merchants. During this period, many men experienced as great difficulties as were ever known in this city.\* But the commencement, in July, of the operations of the bank of Pennsylvania, conducted on the most generous and enlarged principles, placed business on its former favourable footing. Every man looked forward to this fall as likely to produce a vast extension of trade. But how sleeting are all human views! How uncertain all plans sounded on earthly appearances! All these flattering prospects vanished like the baseless fabric of a vision.

In July, arrived the unfortunate fugitives from Cape François. And on this occasion, the liberality of Philadelphia was displayed in a most respectable point of light. Nearly 12,000 dollars were in a few days collected for their relief. Little, alas! Did many of the contributors, then in easy circumstances, imagine, that a few weeks would leave their wives and children dependent on public charity, as has since unfortunately happened. An awful instance of the rapid and warning vicissitudes of affairs on this transitory stage.

About this time, this destroying scourge, the malignant fever, crept in among us, and nipped in the bud the fairest blossoms that imagination could storm. And oh! What a dreadful contrast has since taken place! Many women, then in the lap of ease and contentment, are bereft of beloved husbands, and left with numerous families of children to maintain, unqualified for the arduous task – many orphans are destitute of parents to foster and protect them – many entire families are swept away, without leaving a trace behind – many of our first commercial houses are totally dissolved, by the death of the parties, and (**Page 12**) their affairs are necessarily left in so deranged a state that the losses and distresses, which must take place, are beyond estimation. The protests of notes for a few weeks past, have exceeded all former examples; for a great proportion of the merchants and traders having left the city, and been totally unable, from the

---

\* It is with great pleasure, I embrace this opportunity of declaring, that the very liberal conduct of the bank of the united states, at this trying season, was the means of saving many a deserving and industrious man from ruin. No similar institution was ever conducted on a more favourable, and at the same time, prudent plan, than this bank adopted at the time here mentioned.



stagnation of business, and diversion of all their expected resources, to make any provision for payment, most of their notes have been protested, as they became due.\*

For these prefatory observations, I hope I shall be pardoned. I now proceed to the melancholy subject I have undertaken. May I be enabled to do it justice; and lay before the reader a complete and correct account of the most awful visitation that ever occurred in America. At first view, it would appear that Philadelphia alone felt the scourge; but its effects have spread in almost every direction through a greater portion of the union. Many parts of Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia, exclusive of the back settlements of Pennsylvania, drew their supplies, if not wholly, at least principally, from Philadelphia, which was of course the mart whither they sent their produce. Cut off from this quarter, their merchants have had to seek out other markets, which being unprepared for such an increased demand, their supplies have been imperfect; and, owing to the briskness of the sales, the prices have been, naturally enough, very considerably enhanced. Besides, they went to places in which their credit was not established – and had in most cases to advance cash. And many country dealers have had no opportunity of sending their produce to market, which has consequently remained unsold. Business, therefore, has languished in many parts of the union; and it is (Page 13) probably, that, considering the matter merely in a commercial point of light, the shock caused by the fever, has been felt to the southern extremity of the United States.

## *CHAP. II – Symptoms – A slight sketch of the mode of treatment.*

THE symptoms which characterised the first stage of the fever, were, in the greatest number of cases, after a chilly fit of some duration, a quick, tense pulse—hot skin—pain in the head, back and limbs—flushed countenance—inflamed eye—moist tongue—oppression and sense of soreness at the stomach, especially upon pressure—frequent sick qualms, and retchings to vomit, without discharging any thing, except the contents last taken into the stomach—costiveness,† etc. And when stools were procured, the first generally showed a defect of bile, or an obstruction to its entrance into the intestines. But brisk purges generally altered this appearance.

These symptoms generally continued with more or less violence from one to three, four, or even five days; and then gradually abating, left the patient free from every complaint, except general debility. On the febrile symptoms suddenly subsiding, they were immediately succeeded by a yellow tinge in the opaque cornea, or whites of the eyes – and increased oppression at the præcordia – a constant puking of every thing taken into the stomach, with much straining, accompanied with a hoarse, hollow noise.

---

\* The bank of the united states, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October, passed a resolve, empowering the cashier to renew all discounted notes, when the same drawers and indorsers were offered, and declaring that no notes should be protested, when the indorsers bound themselves in writing, to be accountable in the same manner as in cases of protest.

† Constipation (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition*)

If these symptoms were not soon relieved, a vomiting of matter, resembling coffee grounds in color and consistence, commonly called the black vomit, sometimes accompanied with, or succeeded by haemorrhages from the nose, sauces,\* gums, and other parts of the body – a yellowish purple colour, and putrescent appearance of the whole body, hiccup, agitations, deep and distressed sighing, comatose delirium, and finally, death. When the disease proved fatal, it was generally between the sixth and eighth days. **(Page 14)** This was the most usual progress of this formidable disease, through its several stages. There were, however, very considerable variations in the symptoms, as well as in the duration of its different stages, according to the constitution and temperament of the patient, the state of the weather, the manner of treatment, etc.

In some cases, signs of putrescency appeared at the beginning, or before the end of the third day. In these, the black vomiting, which was generally a mortal symptom, and universal yellowness, appeared early. In these cases, also, a low delirium, and great prostration of strength, was constant symptoms, and coma came on very speedily.

In some, the symptoms inclined more to the nervous than the inflammatory type. In these, the jaundice colour of the eye and skin, and the black vomiting, were more rare. But in the majority of cases, particularly after the nights became sensibly cooler, all the symptoms indicated violent irritation and inflammatory diathesis.† In these cases, the skin was always dry, and the remissions very obscure.

The febrile symptoms, however, as has been already observed, either gave way on the third, fourth, or sixth day, and then the patient recovered; or they were soon after succeeded by a different, but much more dangerous train of symptoms, by debility, low pulse, cold skin, (which assumed a tawny colour, mixed with purple) black vomiting, haemorrhages, hiccup, anxiety, restlessness, coma, etc. Many, who survived the eighth day, though apparently out of danger, died suddenly in consequence of an haemorrhage.‡

This disorder having been new to nearly all our physicians, it is not surprising, although it has been exceedingly fatal, that there arose such a discordance of sentiment on the proper mode of treatment, and even with respect to its name. Dr. Rush has acknowledged, **(Page 15)** with a candour that does him honour, that in the commencement, he so far mistook the nature of the disorder, that in his early essays, having depended on gentle purges of salts to purify the bowels of his patients, they all died. He then tried the mode of treatment adopted in the West Indies, viz. bark, wine,

---

\* Basically, the throat. (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition*).

† (1)A constitutional predisposition toward an abnormality of disease; (2) a disposition toward or aptitude for a particular mental development. (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition*)

‡ For this account of the symptoms of the disorder, I am indebted to the kindness of Dr. Currie, from whose letter to Dr. Senter, it is extracted.

laudanum, and the cold bath, and sailed in three cases out of four. After wards he had recourse to strong purges of calomel\* and jalap†, and to bleeding, which he found attended with singular success.

The honour of the first essay of mercury in this disorder, is by many ascribed to Dr. Hodge and Dr. Carson, who are said to have employed it a week before Dr. Rush. On this point, I cannot pretend to decide. But whoever was the first to introduce it, one thing is certain, that its efficacy was great, and rescued many from death. I have known, however, some persons, who, I have every reason to believe, fell sacrifices to the great reputation this medicine acquired; for in several cases it was administered to persons of a previous lax habit, and brought on a speedy dissolution.

I am credibly informed that the demand for purges of calomel and jalap, was so great, that some of the apothecaries could not mix up every dose in detail; but mixed a large quantity of each, in the ordered proportions; and afterwards divided it into doses; by which means, it often happened that one patient had a much larger portion of calomel, and another of jalap, than was intended by the doctors. The fatal consequences of this may be easily conceived.

An intelligent citizen, who has highly distinguished himself by his attention to the sick, says, that he found the disorder generally come on with costiveness; and unless that was removed within the first twelve hours, he hardly knew any person to recover; on the contrary, he says, as few died, on whom the cathartics operated within that time.

The efficacy of bleeding, in all cases not attended with putridity, was great. The quantity of blood taken was in many cases astonishing. Dr. Griffiths was (**Page 16**) bled seven times in five days, and appears to ascribe his recovery principally to that operation. Dr. Mease, in five days, lost seventy-two ounces of blood, by which he was recovered when at the lowest stage of the disorder. Many others were bled still more, and are now as well as ever they were.

Dr. Rush and Dr. Wistar have spoken very favorably of the salutary effects of cold air, and cool drinks, in this disorder. The latter says, that he found more benefit from cold air, than from any other remedy. He lay delirious, and in severe pain, between a window and door, the former of which was open. The wind suddenly changed, and blew full upon him, cold and raw. Its effects were so grateful, that he soon recovered from his delirium – his pain left him – in an hour he became perfectly reasonable – and his fever abated.

---

\* Calomel: A white tasteless compound  $\text{Hg}_2\text{Cl}_2$  used as a purgative and fungicide, AKA *mercurous chloride*. (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition*)

† jalap: a powdered drug prepared from the dried purgative tuberous root of a Mexican plant of the morning-glory family, that contains resinous glycosides. (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition*)

A respectable citizen who had the fever himself, and likewise watched its effects on eleven of his family, who recovered from it, has informed me, that a removal of the sick from a close, warm room to one a few degrees cooler, which practice he employed several times daily, produced a most extraordinary and favourable change in their appearance, in their pulse, and in their spirits.

***CHAP. III – First alarm in Philadelphia. Flight of the citizens. Guardians of the poor borne down with labour.***

IT was some time before the disorder attracted public notice. It had in the mean while swept off many persons. The first death that was a subject of general conversation was that of Peter Aston on the 19th of August, after a few days illness. Mrs. Lemaigre's on the day following, and Thomas Miller's on the 25th, with those of some others, after a short sickness, spread an universal terror.

The removals from Philadelphia began about the 25th or 26th of this month: and so great was the general terror, that, for some weeks, carts, waggons, coachees, and chairs, were almost constantly transporting (**Page 17**) families and furniture to the country in every direction. Many people shut up their houses wholly; others left servants to take care of them. Business then became extremely dull. Mechanics and artists were unemployed; and the streets wore the appearance of gloom and melancholy.

The first official notice taken of the disorder, was on the 22d of August, on which day the mayor of Philadelphia, Matthew Clarkson, Esq. Wrote to the city commissioners, and after acquainting them with the state of the city, gave them the most peremptory orders, to have the streets properly cleansed and purified by the scavengers, and all the filth immediately hawled away. These orders were repeated on the 27th, and similar ones given to the clerks of the market.

The 26th of the same month, the college of physicians had a meeting, at which they took into consideration the nature of the disorder, and the means of prevention and of cure. They published an address to the citizens, signed by the president and secretary, recommending to avoid all unnecessary intercourse with the infected; to place marks on the doors or windows where they were; to pay great attention to cleanliness and airing the rooms of the sick; to provide a large and airy hospital in the neighbourhood of the city for their reception; to put a stop to the tolling of the bells; to bury those who died of the disorder in carriages, and as privately as possible; to keep the streets and wharves clean; to avoid all fatigue of body and mind, and standing or sitting in the sun, or in the open air; to accommodate the dress to the weather, and to exceed rather in warm than in cool clothing; and to avoid intemperance; but to use fermented liquors, such as wine, beer and cider, with moderation. They likewise declared their opinion, that fires in the streets were very dangerous, if not ineffectual means of stopping the progress of the fever, and that they placed more dependence on the burning of gunpowder. The benefits of vinegar and camphor, they added, were confined chiefly to infected rooms; and they could not be

too often (**Page 18**) used on handkerchiefs, or in smelling bottles, by persons who attended the sick.

In consequence of this address, the bells were immediately stopped from tolling. The expedience of this measure was obvious; as they had before been constantly ringing almost the whole day, so as to terrify those in health, and drive the sick, as far as the influence of imagination could produce that effect, to their graves. An idea had gone abroad, that the burning of fires in the streets, would have a tendency to purify the air, and arrest the progress of the disorder. The people had, therefore, almost every night, large fires lighted at the corners of the streets. The 29th, the mayor, conformably with the opinion of the college of physicians, published a proclamation, forbidding this practice. As a substitute, many had recourse to the firing of guns, which they imagined was a certain preventative of the disorder. This was carried so far, and attended with such danger, that it was forbidden by an ordinance of the mayor.

The 29th, the governor of the state wrote a letter to the mayor, strongly enforcing the necessity of the most vigorous and decisive exertions to prevent the extension of, and to destroy, the evil. He desired that the various directions given by the college of physicians, should be carried into effect. The same day, in his address to the legislature, he acquainted them, that a contagious disorder existed in the city; and that he had taken every proper measure to ascertain the origin, nature, and extent of it. He likewise assured them that the health-officer and physician of the port, would take every precaution to allay and remove the public inquietude.

The number of the infected daily increasing, and the existence of an order against the admission of persons labouring under infectious diseases into the almshouse, precluding them from a refuge there\*, some (**Page 19**) temporary place was requisite; and three of the guardians of the poor, about the 26th of August, took possession of the circus, in which Mr. Ricketts had lately exhibited his equestrian seats, being the only place that could be then procured for the purpose. Thither they sent seven persons afflicted with the malignant fever, where they lay in the open air for some time, and without any assistance.† Of these, one crawled out on the commons, where he died at a distance from the houses. Two died in the circus, one of whom was seasonably removed; the other lay in a state of putrefaction for above forty eight hours, owing to the difficulty of procuring any person to remove him. On this occasion occurred an instance of courage in a servant girl, of which at that time few men were capable. The carter, who finally undertook to remove the corpse, having no assistant, and being unable alone to put it into the coffin, was on the point of relinquishing his design, and quitting the place. The

---

\* At this period, the number of paupers in the alms-house was between three and four hundred; and the managers, apprehensive of spreading the disorder among them, enforced the abovementioned order, which had been entered into a long time before. They, however, supplied beds and bedding, and all the money in their treasury, for their relief, out of that house.

† High wages were offered for nurses for these poor people – but none could be procured.

girl perceived him, and understanding the difficulty he laboured under, offered her services, provided he would not inform the family with whom she lived.\* She accordingly helped him to put the body into the coffin, tho' it was, by that time, crawling with maggots, and in the most loathsome state of putrefaction. It gives me pleasure to add, that she still lives, notwithstanding her very hazardous exploit.

The inhabitants of the neighbourhood of the circus took the alarm, and threatened to burn or destroy it, unless the sick were removed; and it is believed they would have actually carried their threats into execution, had compliance been delayed a day longer. The 19th, seven of the guardians of the poor had a conference with some of the city magistrates on the **(Page 20)** subject of the fever, at which it was agreed to be indispensably necessary, that a suitable house, as an hospital, should be provided near the city, for the reception of the infected poor.

In consequence, in the evening of the same day, the guardians of the poor agreed to sundry resolutions, viz. To use their utmost exertions to procure a house, of the above description, for an hospital, (out of town, and as near thereto as might be practicable, consistent with the safety of the inhabitants,) for the poor who were or might be afflicted with contagious disorders, and be destitute of the means of providing necessary assistance otherwise; to engage physicians, nurses, attendants, and all necessaries for their relief in that house; to appoint proper persons in each district, to enquire after such poor as might be afflicted; to administer assistance to them in their own houses, and, if necessary, to remove them to the hospital. They reserved to themselves, at the same time, the liberty of drawing on the mayor for such sums as might be necessary to carry their plans into effect.

Conformably with these resolves, a committee of the guardians was appointed, to make enquiry for a suitable place; and on due examination, they judged that a building adjacent to Bushhill, the mansion house of William Hamilton, Esq. Was the best calculated for the purpose. That gentleman was then absent, and had no agent in the city; and the great urgency of the case admitting no delay, eight of the guardians, accompanied by Hilary Baker, Esq. One of the city aldermen, with the concurrence of the governor, proceeded, on the 31st of August, to the building they had fixed upon; and meeting with some opposition from a tenant who occupied it, they took possession of the mansion-house itself, to which, on the same evening, they sent the four patients who remained at the circus.

Shortly after this, the guardians of the poor for the city, except James Wilson, Jacob Tomkins, Jr., and William Sansom, ceased the performance of their duties, nearly the whole of them having **(Page 21)** removed out of the city. Before this virtual vacation of office, they passed a resolve against the admission of any paupers whatever into the

---

\* Had they known of the circumstance, an immediate dismissal would have been the consequence.

alms-house during the prevalence of the disorder.\* The whole care of the poor of the city, the providing for Bushhill, sending the sick there, and burying the dead, devolved, therefore on the above three guardians.

***CHAP. IV. General despondency. Deplorable scenes. Frightful view of human nature. A noble and exhilarating contrast.***

THE consternation of the people of Philadelphia, at this period, was carried beyond all bounds. Dismay and affright were visible in almost every person's countenance. Most of those who could, by any means, make it convenient, fled from the city. Of those who remained, many shut themselves up in their houses, and were afraid to walk the streets. The smoke of tobacco being regarded as a preventative, many persons, even women and small boys, had secars [cigars] almost constantly in their mouths. Others placing full confidence in garlic, chewed it almost the whole day; some kept it in their pockets and shoes. Many were afraid to allow the barbers or hair-dressers to come near them, as instances had occurred of some of them having shaved the dead, and many having engaged as bleeders. Some, who carried their caution pretty far, bought lancets for themselves, not daring to be bled with the lancets of the bleeders. Many houses were hardly a moment in the day, free from the smell of gunpowder, burned tobacco, nitre, sprinkled vinegar, etc. Some of the churches were almost deserted, and others wholly closed. The coffee-house was shut up, as was the city library, and most of the public offices – three, out of the four, daily (**Page 22**) papers were discontinued† as were some of the others. Many were almost incessantly employed in purifying, scouring, and whitewashing their rooms. Those who ventured abroad, had handkerchiefs or sponges impregnated with vinegar or camphor at their noses, or smelling-bottles full of the thieves' vinegar. Others carried pieces of tarred rope in their hands or pockets, or camphor bags tied round their necks. The corpses of the most respectable citizens, even of those who did not die of the epidemic, were carried to the grave, on the shafts of a chair, the horse driven by a Negro, unattended by a friend or relations, and without any sort of ceremony. People hastily shifted their course at the sight of a hearse coming towards them. Many never walked on the foot-path, but went into the middle of the streets, to avoid being infected in passing by houses wherein people had died. Acquaintances and friends avoided each other in the streets, and only signified their regard by a cold nod. The old custom of shaking hands, fell into such general disuse, that many shrunk back with affright at even the offer of the hand. A person with a crape, or any appearance of mourning, was shunned like a viper. And many valued themselves highly on the skill and address with which they got to windward of every person whom

---

\* The reason for entering into this order, was, that some paupers, who had been admitted previous thereto, with a certificate from the physicians, of their being free from the infection, had, nevertheless, died of it.

† It would be improper to pass over this opportunity of mentioning, that the federal gazette, printed by Andrew Brown, was uninterruptedly continued, and with the usual industry, during the whole calamity, and was of the utmost service, in conveying to the citizens of the united states, authentic intelligence of the state of the disorder, and of the city.

they met. Indeed it is not probable that London, at the last stage of the plague, exhibited stronger marks of terror, than were to be seen in Philadelphia, from the 25th or 26th of August, till pretty late in September. When people summoned up resolution to walk abroad, and take the air, the sick-cart conveying patients to the hospital, or the hearse carrying the dead to the grave, which were traveling almost the whole day, soon damped their spirits, and plunged them again into despondency. **(Page 23)** While affairs were in this deplorable state, and people at the lowest ebb of despair, we cannot be astonished at the frightful scenes that were acted, which seemed to indicate a total dissolution of the bonds of society in the nearest and dearest connections. Who, without horror, can reflect on a husband, married perhaps for twenty years, deserting his wife in the last agony – a wife, unfeelingly, abandoning her husband on his death bed – parents forsaking their only children – children ungratefully flying from their parents, and resigning them to chance, often without an enquiry after their health or safety – masters hurrying off their faithful servants to Bushhill, even on suspicion of the fever, and that at a time, when, like Tartarus, it was open to every visitant, but never returned any – servants abandoning tender and humane masters, who only wanted a little care to restore them to health and usefulness – who, I say, can think of these things, without horror? Yet they were daily exhibited in every quarter of our city; and such was the force of habit, that the parties who were guilty of this cruelty, felt no remorse themselves – nor met with the execration from their fellow-citizens, which such conduct would have excited at any other period. Indeed, at this awful crisis, so much did *self* appear to engross the whole attention of many, that less concern was felt for the loss of a parent, a husband, a wife, or an only child, than, on other occasions, would have been caused by the death of a servant, or even a favorite lap-dog.

This kind of conduct produced scenes of distress and misery, of which few parallels are to be met with, and which nothing could palliate, but the extraordinary public panic, and the great law of self-preservation, the dominion of which extends over the whole animated world. Many men of affluent fortunes, who have given daily employment and sustenance to hundreds, have been abandoned to the care of a Negro, after their wives, children, friends, clerks, and servants, had fled away, and left them to their fate. In many cases, no money could procure **(Page 24)** proper attendance. With the poor, the case was, as might be expected, infinitely worse than with the rich. Many of these have perished, without a human being to hand them a drink of water, to administer medicines, or to perform any charitable office for them. Various instances have occurred, of dead bodies found lying in the streets, of persons who had no house or habitation, and could procure no shelter.

A man and his wife, once in affluent circumstances, were found lying dead in bed, and between them was their child, a little infant, who was sucking its mother's breasts. How long they had lain thus, was uncertain.

A woman, whose husband had just died of the fever, was seized with the pains of labour, and had nobody to assist her, as the women in the neighbourhood were afraid to go into the house. She lay, for a considerable time, in a degree of anguish that will not bear description. At length, she struggled to reach the window, and cried out for



assistance. Two men, passing by, went up stairs; but they came at too late a stage. – She was striving with death – and actually, in a few minutes, expired in their arms.

Another woman, whose husband and two children lay dead in the room with her, was in the same situation as the former, without a midwife, or any other person to aid her. Her cries at the window brought up one of the carters employed by the committee for the relief of the sick. With his assistance, she was delivered of a child, which died in a few minutes, as did the mother, who was utterly exhausted by her labour, by the disorder, and by the dreadful spectacle before her. And thus lay, in one room, no less than five dead bodies, an entire family, carried off in an hour or two. Many instances have occurred, of respectable women, who, in their lying-in, have been obliged to depend on their maid-servants, for assistance – and some have had none but from their husbands. Some of the midwives were dead – and others had left the city.

A servant girl, belonging to a family in this city, (**Page 25**) in which the fever had prevailed, was apprehensive of danger, and resolved to remove to a relation's house, in the country. She was, however, taken sick on the road, and returned to town, where she could find no person to receive her. One of the guardians of the poor provided a cart, and took her to the almshouse, into which she was refused admittance. She was brought back, and the guardian offered five dollars to procure her a single night's lodging, but in vain. And in sine [in time], after every effort made to provide her shelter, she absolutely expired in the cart.

To relate all the frightful cases of this nature that occurred, would fill a volume. To pass them over wholly would have been improper – to dwell on them longer would be painful. Let these few, therefore, suffice. But I must observe, that most of them happened in the first stage of the public panic. Afterwards, when the citizens recovered a little from their fright, they became rare.

These horrid circumstances having a tendency to throw a shade over the human character, it is proper to reflect a little light on the subject, wherever justice and truth will permit. Amidst the general abandonment of the sick that prevailed, there were to be found many illustrious instances of men and women, some in the middle, others in the lower spheres of life, who in the exercises of the duties of humanity, exposed themselves to dangers, which terrified men, who have hundreds of times faced death without fear, in the field of battle. Some of them, alas! Have fallen in the good cause! But why should they be regretted? Never could they have fallen more gloriously. Foremost in this noble group stands Joseph Inskip, a most excellent man in every of the social relations of citizen, brother, husband, and friend. – To the sick and forsaken has he devoted his hours, to relieve and comfort them in their tribulation, and his kind assistance was dealt out with equal freedom to an utter stranger as to his bosom friend. Numerous are the instances of men restored, by his kind cares and attention, to their families, from the very jaws (**Page 26**) of death.—In various cases has he been obliged to put dead bodies into coffins, when the relations fled from the mournful office. The merit of Andrew Adgate, Joab Jones, and Daniel Ossley, in the same way, was conspicuous, and of the last importance to numbers of distressed creatures, bereft of every other comfort. Of those

worthy men, Wilson and Tomkins, I have already spoken. The Rev. Mr. Fleming and the Rev. Mr. Winkhause, exhausted themselves by a succession of labours, day and night, attending on the sick, and ministering relief to their spiritual and temporal wants.

Of those who have happily survived their dangers, and are preserved to their fellow citizens, I shall mention a few. They enjoy the supreme reward of a self-approving conscience; and I readily believe, that in the most secret recesses, remote from the public eye, they would have done the same. But next to the sense of having done well, is the approbation of our friends and fellow men; and when the debt is great, and the only payment that can be made is applause, it is surely the worst species of avarice, to withhold it. We are always ready, too ready, alas! To bestow censure – and, as if anxious lest we should not give enough, we generally heap the measure. When we are so solicitous to deter by reproach from folly, vice, and crime, why not be equally disposed to stimulate to virtue and heroism, by freely bestowing the well-earned plaudit? Could I suppose, that in any future equally-dangerous emergency, the opportunity I have seized of bearing my feeble testimony, in favour of these worthy persons, would be a means of exciting others to emulate their heroic virtue, it would afford me the highest consolation I have ever experienced.

The Rev. Henry Helmuth's merits are of the most exalted kind. His whole time, during the prevalence of the disorder, was spent in the performance of the works of mercy, visiting and relieving the sick, comforting the afflicted, and feeding the hungry. Of his congregation, some hundreds have paid the last debt to nature, since the malignant fever began; and, I (**Page 27**) believe he attended nearly the whole of them. To so many dangers he was exposed, that he stands a living miracle of preservation. The Rev. C. V. , the Rev. Mr. , and the Rev. Mr. Dickens, have been in the same career, and performed their duties to the sick with equal fidelity, and with equal danger. The venerable old citizen, Samuel Robeson, has been like a good angel, indefatigably performing, in families where there was not one person able to help another, even the menial offices of the kitchen, in every part of his neighbourhood. Thomas Allibone, Lambert Wilmer, Levi Hollingsworth, John Barker, Hannah Paine, John Hutchinson, and great numbers of others have distinguished themselves by the kindest offices of disinterested humanity. Magnus Miller, Samuel Coates, and other good citizens, in that time of pinching distress and difficulty, advanced sums of money to individuals whose resources were cut off, and who, though accustomed to a life of independence, were absolutely destitute of the means of subsistence. And as the widow's mite has been mentioned in scripture with so much applause, let me add, that a worthy widow, whose name I am grieved I cannot mention, came to the city-hall, and, out of her means, which are very moderate, offered the committee twenty dollars for the relief of the poor. John Connelly has spent hours beside the sick, when their own wives and children had abandoned them. Twice did he catch the disorder – twice was he on the brink of the grave, which was yawning to receive him – yet, unappalled by the imminent danger he had escaped, he again returned to the charge. I feel myself affected at this part of my subject, with emotions, which I fear my unanimated stily [style] is ill calculated to transfuse into the breast of my reader. I wish him to dwell on this part of the picture, with a degree of exquisite pleasure equal to which I feel in the description. When we view man in this light, we lose sight of his feebleness,

his imperfection, his vice – he resembles, in a small degree, that divine being, who is an exhaustible mine of mercy and goodness. **(Page 28)** And, as a human being, I rejoice, that it has fallen to my lot, to be a witness and recorder of a magnanimity, which would alone be sufficient to rescue the character of mortals from obloquy and reproach.

***CHAP. V. Distress increases. Benevolent citizens invited to assist the guardians of the poor. Ten volunteers. Appointment of the committee for relief of the sick. State of Philadelphia.***

In the mean time, the situation of affairs became daily more and more serious. Those of the guardians of the poor, who continued to act, were quite oppressed with the labours of their office, which increased to such a degree, that they were utterly unable to execute them. I have already mentioned, that for the city there were but three who persevered in the performance of their duty.\* It must give the reader great concern to hear, that two of them, James Wilson, and Jacob Tomkins, excellent and indefatigable young men, whose services were at that time of very great importance, fell sacrifices in the cause of humanity. The other, William Sansom, was likewise, in the execution of his dangerous office, seized with the disorder, and on the brink of the grave, but was so fortunate as to recover. The deceased persons became daily more numerous. Owing to the general terror, nurses, carters, and attendants could hardly be procured. Thus circumstanced, the mayor of the city, on the 10th of September, published an address **(Page 29)** to the citizens, announcing that the guardians of the poor, who remained, were in distress for want of assistance, and inviting such benevolent people, as felt for the general distress, to lend their aid. In consequence of this advertisement, a meeting of the citizens was held in the city-hall, on Thursday, the 12th of September, at which very few attended, from the universal consternation that prevailed. The state of the poor was fully considered; and ten citizens, Israel Israel, Samuel Wetherill, Thomas Wistar, Andrew Adgate, Caleb Lownes, Henry Deforest, Thomas Peters, Joseph Inskeep, Stephen Girard, and John Mason, offered themselves to assist the guardians of the poor. At this meeting, a committee was appointed to confer with the physicians who had the care of Bushhill, and make report of the state of that hospital. This committee reported next evening, that it was in very bad order, and in want of almost every thing.

On Saturday, the 14th, another meeting was held, when the alarming state of affairs being fully considered, it was resolved to borrow fifteen hundred dollars of the bank of North-America, for the purpose of procuring suitable accommodations for the

---

\* With respect to the guardians of the poor, I have been misunderstood. I only spoke of those for the city. Those for the liberties, generally, continued at their post; and two of them, Wm. Peter Sprague and William Gregory, performed, in the northern liberties, the very same kind of services as the committee did in the city, viz. attended to the burial of the dead and the removal of the sick. In Southwark, the like tour of duty was executed by Clement Humphreys, John Cornish, and Robert Jones. Far be it from me to deprive any man of applause so richly and hazardously earned. I only regret, that want of leisure prevents me from collecting the names of all those who have nobly distinguished themselves, by their attention to the alleviation of the general calamity.

use of persons afflicted with the prevailing malignant fever. At this meeting, a committee was appointed to transact the whole of the business relative to the relief of the sick, and the procuring of physicians, nurses, attendants, etc. This is the committee, which, by virtue of that appointment, has, from that day to the present time, watched over the sick, the poor, the widow, and the orphan. It is worthy of remark, and may encourage others in time of public calamity, that this committee consisted originally of only twenty-six persons, men mostly taken from the middle walks of life; of these, four, Andrew Adgate, Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant, Daniel Ossley, and Joseph Inskeep, died, the two first at an early period of their labours – and four never attended to the appointment. The heat and burden of the day have therefore been borne by eighteen persons, whose **(Page 30)** exertions have been so highly favoured by providence, that they have been the instruments of averting the progress of destruction, eminently relieving the distressed, and restoring confidence to the terrified inhabitants of Philadelphia. It is honourable to this committee, that they have conducted their business with more harmony than is generally to be met with in public bodies of equal number. Probably there never was one, of which the members were so regular in their attendance; the meetings, at the worst of times – those times, which, to use Paine's emphatic language, tried men's souls, were composed in general, of twelve, thirteen, and fourteen members.

Never, perhaps, was there a city in the situation of Philadelphia at this period. The president of the United States, according to his annual custom, had removed to Mount Vernon with his household. Most, if not all of the other officers of the federal government were absent. The governor, who had been sick, had gone, by directions of his physician, to his country-seat near the falls of Schuylkill – and nearly the whole of the officers of the state had likewise retired. – The magistrates of the city, except the mayor\* and John Barclay, Esq.† were away, as were most of those of the liberties. Of the situation of the guardians of the poor‡, I have already made mention. In fact, government of every kind was almost wholly vacated, and seemed, by tacit, but universal consent, to be vested in the committee.(Page 31)

### ***CHAP. VI Magnanimous offer. Wretched state of Bushhill. Order introduced there.***

---

\* This magistrate deserves particular praise. He was the first who invited the citizens to rally round the standard of charity, and convened the meeting at which the committee for relief of the sick was appointed, as well as the preceding ones; of this committee he was appointed president, and punctually fulfilled his duty during the whole time of the distress.

† This gentleman, late mayor of the city, acted in the double capacity of alderman and president of the bank of Pennsylvania, to the duties of which offices he devoted himself unremittingly, except during an illness which threatened to add him to the number of valuable men of whom we have been bereft.

‡ The managers of the almshouse attended to the duties imposed on them, and met regularly at that building every week.

AT the meeting on Sept. 15th, a circumstance occurred, to which the most glowing pencil could hardly do justice. Stephen Girard, a wealthy merchant, a native of France, and one of the members of the committee, touched with the wretched situation of the sufferers at Bushhill, voluntarily and unexpectedly offered himself as a manager, to superintend that hospital. The surprise and satisfaction, excited by this extraordinary effort of humanity, can be better conceived than expressed. Peter Helm, a native of Pennsylvania, also a member, actuated by the like benevolent motives, offered his services in the same department. Their offers were accepted; and the same afternoon they entered on the execution of their dangerous and praise-worthy office\*

To storm a just estimate of the value of the offer of these men, it is necessary to take into full consideration the general consternation, which at that period pervaded every quarter of the city, and which made attendance on the sick be regarded as little less than a certain sacrifice. Uninfluenced by any reflexions of this kind, without any possible inducement but the purest motives of humanity, they came forward and offered themselves as the forlorn hope of the committee. I trust that the gratitude of their fellow-citizens will remain as long as the memory of their beneficent conduct, which I hope will not die with the present generation.

On the 16th, the managers of Bushhill, after personal inspection of the state of affairs there, made report of its situation, which was truly deplorable. It exhibited as wretched a picture of human misery as ever existed. A profligate, abandoned set of nurses and attendants (hardly any of good character could at that time be procured,) rioted on the provisions and comforts prepared for the sick, who (**Page 32**) (unless at the hours when the doctors attended) were left almost entirely destitute of every assistance. The sick, the dying, and the dead were indiscriminately mingled together. The ordure and other evacuations of the sick were allowed to remain in the most offensive state imaginable. Not the smallest appearance of order or regularity existed. It was, in fact, a great human slaughter-house, where numerous victims were immolated at the altar of riot and intemperance. No wonder, then, that a general dread of the place prevailed through the city, and that a removal to it was considered as the seal of death. In consequence, there were various instances of sick persons locking their rooms, and resisting every attempt to carry them away. At length, the poor were so much afraid of being sent to Bushhill, that they would not acknowledge their illness, until it was no longer possible to conceal it. for it is to be observed, that the fear of the contagion was so prevalent, that as soon as any one was taken ill, an alarm was spread among the neighbours, and every effort was used to have the sick person hurried off to Bushhill, to avoid spreading the disorder. The cases of poor people forced in this way to that hospital, though labouringly under only common colds, and common fall fevers, were numerous and afflicting. There were not wanting instances of persons, only slightly ill, being sent to Bushhill, by their panic-struck neighbours, and embracing the first opportunity of running back to Philadelphia.

---

\* The management of the interior department was assumed by Stephen Girard – the exterior by Peter Helm.

The regulations adopted at Bushhill, were as follow[s]

One of the rooms in the mansion house (which contains fourteen, besides three large entries) was allotted to the matron, and an assistant under her – eleven rooms and two entries to the sick. Those who were in a very low state were in one room – and one was appointed for the dying. The men and women were kept in distinct rooms, and attended by nurses of their own sexes. Every sick person was furnished with a bedstead, clean sheet, pillow, two or three blankets, (**Page 33**) porringer, plate, spoon, and clean linen, when necessary. In the mansion house were one hundred and forty bedsteads. The new frame house, built by the committee, when it was found that the old buildings were inadequate to contain the patients commodiously, is sixty feet front, and eighteen feet deep, with three rooms on the ground floor; one of which was for the head nurses of that house, the two others for the sick. Each of these two last contained seventeen bedsteads. The loft, designed for the convalescents, was calculated to contain forty.

The barn is a large, commodious stone building, divided into three apartments; one occupied by the resident doctors and apothecary; one, which contained forty bedsteads, by the men convalescents—and the other by the women convalescents, which contained fifty-seven.

At some distance from the west of the hospital, was erected a frame building to store the coffins, and deposite the dead until they were sent to a place of interment.

Besides the nurses employed in the house, there were two cooks, four labourers, and three washerwomen, constantly employed for the use of the hospital.

The sick were visited twice a day by two physicians, Dr. Deveze and Dr. Benjamin Duffield\*, whose prescriptions were executed by three resident physicians and the apothecary.

One of the resident doctors was charged with the distribution of the victuals for the sick. At eleven o'clock, he gave them broth with rice, bread, boiled (**Page 34**) beef, veal, mutton, and chicken, with cream of rice to those whose stomachs would not bear stronger nourishment. Their second meal was at six o'clock, when they had broth, rice, boiled prunes, with cream of rice. The sick drank at their meals porter, or claret and water. Their constant drink between meals was centaury tea, and boiled lemonade.

---

\* Very soon after the organization of the committee, Dr. Deveze, a respectable French physician from Cape-Françoise, offered his services in the line of his profession at Bushhill. Dr. Benjamin Duffield did the same. Their offers were accepted, and they have both attended with great punctuality. Dr. Devize renounced all other practice, which, at that period, would have been very lucrative, when there was such general demand for physicians. The committee, in consideration of the services of these two gentlemen, have lately presented Dr. Duffield with five hundred, and Dr. Deveze with fifteen hundred dollars.

These regulations, the order and regularity introduced, and the care and tenderness with which the patients, were treated, soon established the character of the hospital; and in the course of a week or two, numbers of sick people, who had not at home proper persons to nurse them, applied to be sent to Bushhill. Indeed, in the end, so many people, who were afflicted with other disorders, procured admittance there, that it became necessary to pass a resolve, that before an order of admission should be granted, a certificate must be produced from a physician, that the patient laboured under the malignant fever; for had all the applicants been received, this hospital, provided for an extraordinary occasion, would have been filled with patients whose cases entitled them to a reception in the Pennsylvania hospital.

The number of persons received into Bushhill, from the 16th of September to this time, is about one thousand; of whom nearly five hundred are dead; there are now (Nov. 30,) in the house, about twenty sick, and fifty convalescents. Of the latter class, there have been dismissed about four hundred and thirty.

The reason why so large a proportion died of those received, is, that in a variety of cases, the early fears of that hospital had got such firm possession of the minds of some, and others were so much actuated by a foolish pride, that they would never consent to be removed till they were past recovery. And in consequence of this, there were many instances of persons dying in the cart on the road to the hospital. I speak within bounds, when I say that at least a third of the whole number of those received, did not survive heir entrance into the hospital two days. Were it not for the operation of these two motives, the number of ( **Page 35** ) the dead in the city and in the hospital would have been much lessened; for many a man, whose nice feelings made him spurn at the idea of a removal to the hospital, perished in the city for want of that comfortable assistance he would have had at Bushhill\*.

Before I conclude this chapter, let me add, that the perseverance of the managers of that hospital has been equally meritorious with their original beneficence. During the whole calamity to this time, they have attended uninterruptedly, for six, seven, or eight hours a day, renouncing almost every care of private affairs. They have had a laborious tour of duty to perform. Stephen Girard, whose office was in the interior part of the hospital, has had to encourage and comfort the sick—to hand them necessaries and medicines—to wipe the sweat off their brows—and to perform many disgusting offices of kindness for them, which nothing could render tolerable, but the exalted motives that impelled him to this heroic conduct. Peter Helm, his worthy coadjutor, displayed, in his department, equal exertions, to promote the common good.

---

\* I omitted in the former editions to mention the name of a most excellent and invaluable woman, Mrs. Saville, the matron in this hospital, whose services in the execution of her office, were above all price. Never was there a person better qualified for such a situation. To the most strict observance of system, she united all the tenderness and humanity which are so essentially requisite in an hospital, but which habit so very frequently and fatally extinguishes: should the wisdom of our legislature decree the permanent establishment of a lazaretto, no person can be found more deserving, or better qualified to be entrusted with the care of it.

***CHAP. VII. Proceedings of the committee—Loans from the bank of North-America. Establishment of an orphan house. Relief of the poor. Appointment of the assistant committee.***

The committee, on its organization, resolved that three of the members would attend daily at the city hall, to receive applications for relief; to provide for the burial of the dead, and for the conveyance (**Page 36**) of persons labouring under the malignant fever, to Bushhill. But three being found inadequate to the execution of the multifarious and laborious duties to be performed, this order was rescinded, and daily attendance was given by nearly all of the members.

A number of carts and carters were engaged for the burial of the dead, and removal of the sick. And it was a melancholy sight to behold them incessantly employed through the whole day, in their mournful offices.

The committee borrowed fifteen hundred dollars from the bank of North-America, agreeably to the resolves of the town meeting by which they were appointed. Several of the members entered into security to repay that sum, in case the corporation or legislature should refuse to make provision for its discharge. This sum being soon expended, a farther loan of five thousand dollars was negotiated with the same institution.\*

In the progress of the disorder, the committee found the calls on their humanity increase. The numerous deaths of heads of families left a very large body of children in a most abandoned, forlorn state. The bettering house, in which such helpless objects have been usually placed heretofore, was barred against them, by the order which I have already mentioned. Many of these little innocents were actually suffering for want of even common necessaries. The deaths of their parents and protectors, which should have been the strongest recommendation to public charity, was the very reason of their distress, and of their being shunned as a pestilence. The children of a family once in easy circumstances, were found in a blacksmith's shop, squalid, dirty, and half starved, having been for a considerable time without even bread to eat. Various instances of a similar nature occurred. This evil early caught the attention of the committee, and on the 19th of September, they hired a house in (**Page 37**) Fifth-street, in which they placed thirteen children. The number increasing, they on the 3d of October, procured the Loganian library, which was generously given up by John Swanwick, esq. for the purpose of an orphan house. A further increase of their little charge, rendered it necessary to build some additions to the library, which are nearly half as large as that building. At present, there are in the house, under the care of the orphan committee, about sixty children, and above forty are out with wet nurses. From the origin of the institution, one hundred and ninety children have fallen under their care, of whom fifteen are dead, and about seventy have been delivered to their relations or friends. There are instances of five and six

---

\* It ought to be mentioned, that on the payment of these sums, the directors generously declined accepting interest for the use of them.



children of a single family in the house. To these precious deposits the utmost attention has been paid. They are well fed, comfortably clothed, and properly taken care of Mary Parvin, a very suitable person for the purpose, has been engaged as matron, and there are, besides, sufficient persons employed to assist her. Various applications have been made for some of the children; but in no instance would the committee surrender any of them up, until they had satisfactory evidence that the claimants had a right to make the demand. Their relations are now publicly called upon to come and receive them. For such as may remain unclaimed, the best provision possible will be made; and so great is the avidity of many people to have some of them, that there will be no difficulty in placing them to advantage.

Another duty soon attracted the attention of the committee. The slight of so many of our citizens, the consequent stagnation of business, and the almost total cessation of the labours of the guardians of the poor, brought on among the lower classes of the people, a great degree of distress, which loudly demanded the interposition of the humane. In consequence, on the 20th of September, a committee of distribution, of three members, was appointed, to furnish such assistance to deserving objects as their respective cases might require, and the funds allow, This was at first administered (**Page 38**) to but few, owing to the confined state of the finances. But the very extraordinary liberality of our fugitive fellow citizens, of the citizens of New York, and of those of various towns and townships, encouraged the committee to extend their views. In consequence, they increased the distributing committee to eight, and afterwards to ten.

Being, in the execution of this important service, liable to imposition, they, on the 14th of October, appointed an assistant committee, composed of forty-five citizens, chosen from the several districts of the city and liberties. The duty assigned this assistant committee, was to seek out and give recommendations to deserving objects in distress, who, on producing them, were relieved by the committee of distribution, (who sat daily at the City Hall, in rotation,) with money, provisions, or wood, or all three, according as their necessities required. The assistant committee executed this business with such care, that it is probable so great a number of people were never before relieved, with so little imposition. Some shameless creatures, possessed of houses, and comfortable means of support, have been detected in endeavouring to partake of the relief destined solely for the really indigent and distressed.

Besides those who came forward to ask assistance in the way of gift, there was another class, in equal distress, and equally entitled to relief, who could not descend to accept it as charity. The committee, disposed to foster this laudable principle, one of the best securities from debasement of character, relieved persons of this description with small loans weekly, just enough for immediate support, and took acknowledgments for the debt, without ever intending to urge payment, if not perfectly convenient to the parties.

The number of persons relieved weekly, was about twelve hundred; many of whom had families of four, five, and six persons.

The gradual revival of business has rescued those who are able and willing to work, from the humiliation of depending on public charity. And the organization of the overseers of the poor has thrown the **(Page 39)** support of the proper objects of charity into its old channel. The distribution of money, etc. ceased therefore on Saturday, the 23d of November.

***CHAP. VIII. Repeated addresses of the committee on the purification of houses. —Assistant committee undertake to inspect infected houses personally. Extinction of the disorder. Governor's proclamation. Address of the clergy. A new and happy state of affairs.***

THE committee exerted its cares for the welfare of the citizens in every case in which its interference was at all proper or necessary. The declension of the disorder induced many persons to return to the city at an earlier period, than prudence dictated. On the 26th of October, therefore, the committee addressed their fellow citizens, congratulating them on the very flattering change that had taken place, which afforded a cheering prospect of being soon freed from the disorder entirely. They, however, recommended to those who were absent, not to return till the intervention of cold weather, or rain\* should render such a step justifiable and proper, by totally extinguishing the disease.

The 29th, they published another address, earnestly exhorting those whose houses had been closed, to have them well aired and purified; to throw lime into the privies, etc.

The 4th of November, they again addressed the public, announcing that it was unsafe for those who had resided in the country, to return to town with too much precipitation, especially into houses not properly prepared. They added, that though, the disorder had considerably abated, and though there was reason to hope it would shortly disappear, yet they could not say it was totally eradicated; as there was reason to fear it still lurked in different parts of the city. They reiterated their representations on the subject of cleansing houses.

**(Page 40)** The 14th, they once more addressed their fellow Citizens, informing them of the restoration to our long afflicted city, of as great a degree of health as usually prevails at the same season; of no new cases of the malignant fever having occurred for many days; of their having reason to hope that in a few days not a vestige of it would remain in the city or suburbs; of applications for admission into the hospital having ceased; of the expectation of the physicians at the hospital, that no more than three or four would die out of ninety-one persons remaining there; of the number of convalescents increasing daily. They at the same time most earnestly recommended that houses in which the disorder had been, should be purified; and that the clothing or bedding of the

---

\* I shall in some of the following pages attempt to prove, that the idea here held out, was erroneous.

sick, more especially of those who had died of the disorder, should be washed, baked, buried, or destroyed. They added, that the absent citizens of Philadelphia, as well as those strangers who had business in the city, might safely come to it, without fear of the disorder.

Notwithstanding all these cautions, many persons returned from the country, without paying any attention to the cleansing of their houses, thereby sporting not only with their own lives, but with the safety of their fellow citizens. The neglect of some people, in this way, has been so flagrant, as to merit the severest punishment. This dangerous nuisance attracted the notice of the committee; and after a conference with the assistant committee, they, on the 15th of November, in conjunction with them, resolved, that it was highly expedient to have all houses and stores in the city and liberties, wherein the malignant fever had prevailed, purified and cleansed as speedily and completely as possible; to have all those well aired, which had been closed for any length of time; to have lime thrown into the privies; to call in, when the district would be too large for the members to enforce compliance with those resolves, such assistants as might be necessary; and when any person, whose house required to be cleansed, and who was able to defray the expense thereof, should refuse or neglect to comply (**Page 41**) with the requisition of the members appointed to carry those resolves into effect, to report him to the next grand jury for the city and county, as supporting a nuisance dangerous to the public welfare. The assistant committee undertook to exert themselves to have these salutary plans put into execution; they have gone through the city and liberties for the purpose; and in most cases have found a readiness in the inhabitants to comply with a requisition of such importance\*.

This was the last act of the committee that requires notice. Their business has since gone on in a regular, uniform train, every day like the past. They are now settling their accounts, and are preparing to surrender up their trust, into the hands of a town meeting of their fellow citizens, the constituents by whom they were called into the unprecedented office they have filled. To them they will give an account of their stewardship, in a time of distress, the like of which heaven avert from the people of America forever. Doubtless, a candid construction will be put upon their conduct, and it will be believed, that they have acted in every case that came under their cognizance, according to the best of their abilities.

On the 14th, governor Mifflin published a proclamation, announcing, that as it had pleased Almighty God to put an end to the grievous calamity which recently afflicted the city of Philadelphia, it was the duty of all who were truly sensible of the divine mercy, to employ the earliest moments of returning health, in devout expressions of penitence, submission, and gratitude. He therefore appointed Thursday, the (**Page 42**)

---

\* The utmost exertions of the magistrates, and of the citizens generally, are necessary to guard against the deplorable consequences that may arise in the spring from the neglect of a few whose supineness renders them deaf to every call of duty in this respect. The beds secreted by the nurses who attended the sick, are likewise a fruitful source of danger, and demand the greatest vigilance from every person invested with authority to watch over the public safety.

12th of December\*, as a day of general humiliation; thanksgiving, and prayer, and earnestly exhorted and intreated his fellow citizens to abstain, on that day, from all worldly avocations, and to unite in confessing, with contrite hearts, their manifold sins and transgressions — in acknowledging, with thankful adoration, the mercy and goodness of the Supreme Ruler of the universe, more especially manifested in our late deliverance; and in praying, with solemn zeal, that the same mighty, power would be graciously pleased to instill into our minds the just principles of our duty to him and to our fellow creatures; to regulate and guide all our actions by his Holy Spirit, to avert from all mankind the evils of war, pestilence, and famine; and to bless and protect us in the enjoyment of civil and religious liberty.

The 18th, the clergy of the city published an elegant and pathetic address, recommending that the day appointed by the governor, should be set apart and kept holy to the Lord, not merely as a day of thanksgiving, for that, in all appearance, it had pleased him, of his infinite mercy, to stay the rage of the malignant disorder, (when we had well nigh said, hath God forgot to be gracious ?)—but also as a day of solemn humiliation and prayer, joined with the confession of our manifold sins, and of our neglect and abuse of his former mercies; together with sincere resolutions of future amendment and obedience to his holy will and laws; without which our prayers, praises, and thanksgivings will be in vain.

The 26th the assistant committee passed several very judicious and salutary resolves, requiring their members in their several districts through the city and liberties, immediately to inspect the condition of all taverns, boarding houses, and other buildings (**Page 43**) in which the late contagious disorder is known to have been; to notify the owners or tenants, to have them purified and cleansed; to report the names of such as should refuse compliance, and also make report of every house shut up, in which any person is known to have lately sickened or died. They cautioned the vendue masters not to sell, and the public not to buy any clothes or bedding belonging to persons lately deceased, until they know that the same has been sufficiently purified and aired.

~~~~~

I have not judged it necessary to enter into a minute detail of the business of the committee from day to day. It would afford little gratification to the reader. It would be, for several weeks, little more than a melancholy history of fifteen, twenty, or thirty, applications daily, for coffins and carts to bury the dead, who had none to perform that last office for them—or as many applications for the removal of the sick to Bushhill. There was little variety. The present day was as dreary as the past—and the prospect of the approaching one was equally gloomy. This was the state of things for a long time. But at length brighter prospects dawned. The disorder decreased in violence. The

* The pious observance of this day, by an almost total cessation of business (except among the Friends, whose stores generally remained open) and by the churches being universally filled with people pouring forth the effusions of their gratitude for the cessation of the dreadful scourge, exceeded that of any other day of thanksgiving I have ever known.

number of the sick diminished. New cases became rare. The spirits of the citizens revived—and the tide of migration was once more turned. A visible alteration has taken place in the state of affairs in the city. Our friends return in crowds. Every hour, long-absent and welcome faces appear—and in many instances, those of persons, whom public same has buried for weeks past. The stores, so long closed, are nearly all opened again. Many of the country merchants, bolder than others, are daily venturing in to their old place of supply. Market-street is as full of waggons as usual. The customhouse, for weeks nearly deserted by our mercantile people, is thronged with citizens entering their vessels and goods. The streets, too long the abode of gloom and despair, have assumed the bustle suited to the season. Our wharves are filled with vessels, loading and unloading their respective cargoes. And, in sine [in time] as **(Page 44)** every thing, in the early stage of the disorder, seemed calculated to add to the general consternation; so now, on the contrary, every circumstance has a tendency to revive the courage and hopes of our citizens. But we have to lament, that the same spirit of exaggeration and lying, that prevailed at a former period, and was the grand cause of the harsh measures adopted by our sister states, has not ceased to operate; for at the present moment, when the danger is entirely done away, the credulous, of our own citizens still absent, and of the country people, are still alarmed with frightful rumours, of the disorder raging with as much violence as ever; of numbers carried off, a few hours after their return; and of new cases daily occurring. To what design to attribute these shameful tales, I know not. Were I to regard them in a spirit of resentment, I should be inclined to charge them to some secret, interested views of their authors, intent, if possible, to effect the entire destruction of our pity. But I will not allow myself to consider them in this point of light—and will even suppose they arise from a proneness to terrific narration, natural to some men. But they should consider, that we are in the situation of the frogs in the fable—while those tales, which make the hair of the country people stand on end, are sport to the fabricators, they are death to us. And I here assert, and defy contradiction, that of the whole number of our fugitive citizens, who have already returned, amounting to some thousands, not above two persons are dead—and these owe their fate to the most shameful neglect of airing and cleansing their houses, notwithstanding the various cautions published by the committee. If people will venture into houses in which infected air has been pent up for weeks together, without any purification, we cannot be surprized at the consequences, however fatal they maybe. But let not the catastrophe of a few incautious persons operate to bring discredit on a city containing above fifty thousand people. **(Page 45)**

CHAP. IX- Extravagant Letters from Philadelphia. Credulity put to the test.

That I might not interrupt the chain of events in Philadelphia, I have deferred, till now, giving an account of the proceedings in the several states, respecting our fugitives. As an introduction thereto, I shall prefix a short chapter respecting those letters, which excited the terror of our neighbours, and impelled them to more severe measures than they would otherwise have adopted.

Great as was the calamity of Philadelphia, it was magnified in the most extraordinary manner. The hundred tongues of rumour were never more successfully employed, than on this melancholy occasion. The terror of the inhabitants of all the neighbouring states was excited by letters from this city, distributed by every mail, many of which told tales of woe, whereof hardly a single circumstance was true, but which were every where received with implicit faith. The stresses of the city, and the fatality of the disorder, were exaggerated as it were to see how far credulity could be carried. The plague of London was, according to rumour, hardly more fatal than our yellow fever. Our citizens died so fast, that there was hardly enough of people to bury them. Ten, or fifteen, or more were said to be cast into one hole together, like so many dead beasts*. One man, whose feelings were so composed, as to be facetious on the subject, (**Page 46**) acquainted a correspondent, in New York, that the only business carrying on, was grave digging, or rather pit digging†. And at a time when the deaths did not exceed from forty to fifty daily, many men had the modesty to write, and others, throughout the continent, the credulity to believe, that we buried from one hundred to one hundred and fifty‡. Thousands were swept off in three or four weeks§. And the nature (**Page 47**) and danger of the disorder, were as much misrepresented, as the number of the dead. It was said, in defiance of every day's experience, to be as inevitable by all exposed to the contagion, as the stroke of fate.

* The following extract appeared in a Norfolk paper about the middle of September: *Extract of a letter from Philadelphia, to a gentleman in Norfolk, Sept. 9.* "Half the inhabitants of this city have already fled to different parts, on account of the pestilential disorder that prevails here. The few citizens who remained in this place, die in abundance, so fast, that they drag them away, like dead beasts, and put ten or fifteen, or more, in a hole together. All the stores are shut up. I am afraid this city will be ruined: for nobody will come near it hereafter. I am this day removing my family from this fatal place." I (Ed., the writer of the book) am strongly inclined to imagine that this letter was the cause of the Virginia proclamation.

† *From a New York paper of October 2. Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Philadelphia, dated Sept. 23.* "The papers must have amply informed you of the melancholy situation of this city for five or six weeks past. *Grave-digging* has been the only business carrying on; and indeed I may of late, *pit-digging*, where people are interred indiscriminately in three tiers of coffins. from the most accurate observations I can make upon matters, I think I speak within bounds, when I say, eighteen hundred persons have perished (I do not say all of the yellow fever) since its first appearance."

‡ *From the Maryland Journal, of Sept. 27. Extract of a letter from Philadelphia, dated Sept. 20.* "The disorder seems to be much the same in this place as when I last wrote you: about, 1500 have fallen victims to it. Last Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, there were not less than 350 died with this severe disorder. As I informed you before, this is the most distressed place I ever beheld. Whole families go in the disorder, in the course of twelve hours. for your own sakes, use all possible means to keep it out of Baltimore."

Extract of a letter from 'Philadelphia, of the same date. "The malignant fever which prevails here, is still increasing. Report says, that above one hundred have been buried per day for some time past. It is now thought to be more infectious than ever. I think you ought to be very careful with respect to admitting persons from Philadelphia into your town."

§ *From a Chestertown [Maryland] paper, of Sept. 10. Extract of a letter from a respectable young mechanic, in Philadelphia, to his friend in this town, dated the 5th inst.* "It is now a very mortal time in this city. The yellow fever hath killed some thousands of the inhabitants. Eight thousand mechanics, besides other people, have left the town. Every master in the city, of our branch of business, is gone." [Comment by Carey: The 'some thousands' that were killed at that time, did not amount to three hundred. The authentic information in this letter, was circulated in every state in the union, by the newspapers. From the date, I suspect this letter to have been the occasion of the Chestertown Revolues.]

The credulity of some, the proneness to exaggeration of others, and I am sorry, extremely sorry to believe, the interested views of a few^{*}, will account, for these letters.

CHAP. X. Proceedings at Chestertown—At New-York —At Trenton and Lambertton—At Baltimore.

THE effects produced by those tales were such as might be reasonably expected. The consternation spread through the several states like wild-fire. The first public act that took place on the subject, as far as I can learn, was at Chestertown, in Maryland. At this place, a meeting was held on the 10th of September, and several resolves entered into, which, after specifying that the disorder had extended to Trenton, Princeton, Woodbridge, and Elizabeth-town, on the post-road to New-York, directed, that notice should be sent to the owners of the stages not to allow them pass through the town, while there should be reason to expect danger therefrom; and that a committee of health and inspection should be appointed, to provide for the relief of such poor inhabitants as might take the disorder, and likewise for such strangers as might be infected with it. In consequence of these resolves, the eastern shore line of stages was stopt [Ed. stopped] in the course of a few days afterwards.

The alarm in New-York was first officially announced by a letter from the mayor to the practicing (**Page 48**) physicians, dated Sept. 11th, in which he requested them to report to him in writing the names of all such persons as had arrived, or should arrive from Philadelphia, or any other place, by land or water, and were or would be sick; and that such as should be deemed subjects of infectious diseases might be removed out of the city. He notified them, that the corporation had taken measures to provide a proper place as an hospital, for such persons as might unhappily become subjects of the fever in New-York. In this letter the mayor declared his opinion clearly, that the intercourse with Philadelphia, could not be lawfully interrupted by any power in the state. The 12th appeared a proclamation from governor [of New York] Clinton, which, referring to the act to prevent the bringing in, and spreading of infectious disorders, prohibited in the terms of that act, all vessels from Philadelphia, to approach nearer to the city of New-York, than Bedlow's island, about two miles distant, till duly discharged. The silence of this proclamation, respecting passengers by land, seemed to imply that the governor's opinion on the subject was the same as that of the mayor.

The same day, at a meeting of the citizens, the necessity of taking some precautions was unanimously agreed upon, and a committee of seven appointed to report a plan to a meeting to be held next day. Their report, which was unanimously agreed to, the 13th recommended to hire two physicians, to assist the physician of the port in his

* As this charge is extremely pointed, it may be requisite to state the foundation of it, for the reader to form his opinion upon. Some of the letters from Philadelphia about this time, were written by persons, whose interest it was to injure the city; and gave statements so very different, even from the very worst rumours prevailing here, that it was morally impossible the writers themselves could have believed them.

examination of vessels; to check, as much as possible, the intercourse by stages; to acquaint the proprietors of the southern stages, that it was the earnest wish of the inhabitants, that their carriages and boats should not pass during the prevalence of the disorder in Philadelphia; and to request the practitioners of physic to report, without fail, every case of fever, to which they might be called, occurring in any person that had or might arrive from Philadelphia, or have intercourse with them. Not satisfied with these measures, the corporation, on the 17th, came to resolution to stop all intercourse (**Page 49**) between the two cities; and for this purpose guards, were placed at the different landings, with orders to send back every person coming from Philadelphia; and if any were discovered to have arrived after that date, they were to be directly sent back. Those who took in lodgers were called upon to give information of all people of the above description, under pain of being prosecuted according to law. All good citizens were required to give information to the mayor, or any member of the committee, of any breach in the premises.

These strict precautions being eluded by the fears and the vigilance of the fugitives from Philadelphia, on the 23d there was a meeting held, of delegates from the several wards of the city, in order to adopt more; effectual measures. At this meeting, it was resolved to establish a night watch of not less than ten citizens in each ward, to guard against every attempt to enter under cover of darkness. Not yet eased of their fears, they next day published an address, in which they mentioned, that notwithstanding their uttermost vigilance many persons had been clandestinely landed upon the shores of New-York island. They therefore again called upon their fellow, citizens to be cautious how they received strangers into their houses; not to fail to report all such to the mayor immediately upon their arrival; to remember the importance of the occasion; and to consider what reply they should make to the just resentment of their fellow citizens, whose lives they might expose by a criminal neglect, or infidelity. They likewise declared their expectation, that those who kept the different ferries on the shores of New-Jersey and Staten island would pay such attention to their address, as not to transport any person but to the public landings, and that in the day time, between sun and sun. The 30th they published a lengthy address, recapitulating the various, precautions they had taken—the nature of the disorder -- and the numbers who had died out of Philadelphia, without communicating it to any one. They at the same time resolved, that goods, bedding, and (**Page 50**) clothing, packed up in Philadelphia, should, previous to their being brought into New York, be unpacked and exposed to the open air in some well ventilated place, for at least 48 hours; that all linen or cotton clothes, or bedding, which had been used, should be well washed in several waters; and afterwards, that the whole, both such as had been and such as had not been used, should be hung up in a close room, and well smoked with the fumes of brimstone for one day, and after that again exposed for at least twenty four hours to the open air; and that the boxes, trunks, or chests, in which they had been packed, should be cleaned and aired in the same manner; after which, being repacked, and such evidence given of their purification, as the committee should require, permission might be had to bring them into the city.

The 11th of October, they likewise resolved, that they would consider and publish to the world, as enemies to the welfare of the city, and the lives of its inhabitants, all

those who should be so selfish and hardy, as to attempt to introduce any goods, wares, merchandize, bedding, baggage, etc. imported from, or packed up in Philadelphia, contrary to the rules prescribed by that body, who were, they said, deputed to express the will of their fellow citizens. They recommended to the inhabitants to withstand any temptation of profit, which might attend the purchase of goods in Philadelphia, as no emolument to an individual, they added, could warrant the hazard to which such conduct might expose the city. Besides all these resolves, they published daily statements of the health of the city, to allay the fears of their fellow citizens.

On the 14th of November, the committee resolved that passengers coming from Philadelphia to New York, might be admitted, in future, together with their wearing apparel, without restriction, as to time, until further orders from the committee.

The 20th, they declared that they were happy to announce to their fellow citizens, that health was restored (**Page 51**) to Philadelphia; but that real danger was still to be apprehended from the bedding and clothing of those who had been ill of the malignant fever and that they had received satisfactory information, that attempts had been made to ship on freight considerable quantities of beds and bedding from Philadelphia for their city. They therefore resolved that it was inexpedient, to admit the introduction of beds or bedding of any kind, or feathers in bags, or otherwise; also, second-hand wearing apparel of every species, coming from places infected with the yellow fever; and that whosoever should attempt so high-handed an offence as to bring them in, and endanger the lives and health of the inhabitants, would justly merit their resentment and indignation.

The inhabitants of Trenton and Lambertton associated on the 13th of September, and on the 17th passed several resolutions to guard themselves against the contagion. They resolved that a total stop should be put to the landing of all persons from Philadelphia, at any ferry or place from Lambertton to Howell's ferry, four miles above Trenton; that the intercourse by water should be prohibited between Lambertton, or the head of tide water, and Philadelphia; and that all boats from Philadelphia, should be prevented from landing either goods or passengers any where between Bordentown and the head of tide water, that no person whatever should be permitted to come from Philadelphia, or Kensington, while the fever continued, that all persons who should go from within the limits of the association, to either of those places, should be prevented from returning during the continuance of the fever; and finally, that their standing committee should inquire whether any persons, not inhabitants, who had lately come from places infected, and were therefore likely to be infected themselves, were within the limits of the association, and if so, that they should be obliged instantly to leave the said limits

The 12th of September, the governor of Maryland published a proclamation, subjecting all vessels from Philadelphia to the performance of a quarantine, (**Page 52**) not exceeding forty days, or as much less as be judged safe by the health officers. It further ordered, that all persons going to Baltimore, to Havre de Grace, to the head of Elk [River], or, by any other route, making their way into that state from Philadelphia, or any other place known to be infected with the malignant fever, should be subject to be

examined, and prevented from proceeding, by persons to be appointed for that purpose, and who were to take the advice and opinion of the medical faculty in every case, in order that private affairs and pursuits might not be unnecessarily impeded. This proclamation appointed two health officers for Baltimore.

The people of Baltimore met the 13th of September, and resolved that none of their citizens should receive into their houses any persons coming from Philadelphia, or other infected place, without producing a certificate from the health officer, or officer of patrol; and that any person who violated that resolve, should be held up to the public view, as a proper object for the resentment of the town. The 14th, a party of militia was dispatched to take the possession of a pass on the Philadelphia road, about two miles from Baltimore, to prevent the entrance of any passengers from Philadelphia without license. Dr. Worthington, the health officer stationed at this pass, was directed to refuse permission to persons afflicted with any malignant complaint, or who had not been absent from Philadelphia, or other infected place, at least seven days. The western shore line of Philadelphia stages was stopped about the 18th or 19th.

The 30th, the committee of health resolved that no inhabitant of Baltimore, who should visit persons from Philadelphia, while performing quarantine, should be permitted to enter the town, until the time of quarantine was expired, and until it was certainly known that the persons he had visited were free from the infection; and that thenceforward no goods capable of conveying infection, that had been landed or packed up in Philadelphia, or other infected place, should be permitted to enter the town—nor should **(Page 53)** any baggage of travellers he admitted, until it had been exposed to the open air such length of time as the health officer might direct.

CHAP. XI Proceedings at Havre de Grace—At Hagerstown -- Alexandria—at Winchester—At Boston—at Newburyport—In Rhode Island—At New Bern—At Charlestown—In Georgia. – Fasting and Prayer.

THE 25th of September, the inhabitants of Havre de Grace resolved that no person should be allowed to cross the Susquehannah river at that town, who did not bring a certificate of his not having lately come from Philadelphia, or any other infected place and that the citizens of Havre would embody themselves to prevent any one from crossing without such a certificate.

At Hagerstown, on the 3d of October, it was resolved, that no citizen should receive into his house any person coming from Philadelphia, supposed to be infected with the malignant fever, until he or she produced a certificate from a health officer; that should any citizen contravene the above resolution, he should be proscribed from all society with his fellow citizens; that the clothing sent to the troops then in that town, should not be received there, nor suffered to come within seven miles thereof; that if any person from Philadelphia, or other infected place, should arrive there, he should be

required instantly to depart, and in case of refusal or neglect, be compelled to go without delay; that no merchant, or other person, should be suffered to bring into the town, or open therein, any goods brought from Philadelphia, or other infected place, until permitted by their committee; and that the citizens of the town, and its vicinity, should enrol themselves as a guard, and patrole such roads and passes as the committee should direct.

The governor of Virginia, on the 17th of September, issued a proclamation, ordering all vessels from Philadelphia, the Grenades, and the island of Tobago, to perform a quarantine of twenty days, at the anchorage (**Page 54**) ground, off Craney island, near the mouth of Elizabeth river.

The corporation of Alexandria stationed a look-out boat, to prevent all vessels bound to that port, from approaching nearer than one mile, until after examination by the health officer.

The people of Winchester placed guards at every avenue of the town leading from the Patowmac to stop all suspected persons, packages, etc. coming from Philadelphia, till the health officers should inspect them, and either forbid or allow them to pass.

The legislature of Massachusetts were in session, at the time the alarm spread; and they accordingly passed an express act for guarding against the impending danger. This act authorized the selectmen in the different towns to stop and examine any persons, baggage, merchandize, or effects, coming or supposed to be coming into the towns respectively, from Philadelphia, or other place infected, or supposed to be infected; and should it appear to them, or to any officers whom they should appoint, that any danger of infection was to be apprehended from such persons, effects, baggage, or merchandize, they were empowered to detain or remove the same to such places as they might see proper, in order that they might be purified from infection; or to place any persons so coming, in such places, and under such regulations as they might judge necessary for the public safety. In pursuance of this act, the governor issued a proclamation to carry it into effect, the 21st of September.

The selectmen of Boston, on the 24th, published their regulations of quarantine, which ordered, that on the arrival of any vessel from Philadelphia, she should be detained at, or near Rainsford's Island, to perform a quarantine not exceeding thirty days, during which time she should be cleansed with vinegar, and the explosion of gunpowder between the decks and in the cabin, even though there were no sick persons on board; that in case there were, they should be removed to an hospital, where they should be detained till they recovered or were long enough (**Page 55**) to ascertain that they had not the infection; that every vessel, performing quarantine, should be deprived of its boat, and no boat suffered to approach it, but by special permission; that if any person should escape from vessels performing quarantine, he should be instantly advertised, in order that he might be apprehended; that any persons coming by land from Philadelphia, should not be allowed to enter Boston, until twenty one days after their arrival, and their effects,

baggage, and merchandize should be opened, washed with vinegar, and fumigated with repeated explosions of gunpowder. In the conclusion, the selectmen called upon the inhabitants "to use their utmost vigilance and activity to bring to condign punishment, any person who should be so daring and lost to every idea of humanity, as to come into the town from any place supposed to be infected, thereby endangering the lives of his fellow men.

The 23d of September, the selectmen of Newburyport notified the pilots not to bring any vessels from Philadelphia, higher up Merrimack river, than the black rocks, until they should be examined by the health officer, and a certificate be obtained from him, of their being free from infection.

The governor of Rhode Island, the 21st of September, issued a proclamation, directing the town councils and other officers, to use their utmost vigilance to cause the law to prevent the spreading of contagious disorders to be most strictly executed, more especially with respect to all vessels which should arrive in that state, from the West Indies, Philadelphia, and New-York; the extension to the latter place was owing to the danger apprehended from the intercourse between it and Philadelphia.

The 28th of September, the governor of North Carolina published his proclamation; requiring the commissioners of navigation in the different ports of the said state, to appoint certain places, where all vessels from the port of Philadelphia, or any other place in which the malignant fever might prevail, (Page 56) should perform quarantine for such number of days as they might think proper.

The commissioners of New Bern, on the 30th of September, ordered that until full liberty should be given, vessels arriving from Philadelphia, or any other place in which an infectious disorder might be, should, under a penalty of five hundred pounds, stop and come to anchor at least one mile below the town, and there perform a quarantine or at least ten days, unless their captains should produce from inspectors appointed for the purpose, a certificate that in their opinion the vessels might, with safety to the inhabitants proceed to the town or harbour, and there land their passengers or cargo. The 18th of October, they ordered, that if any free man should go on board any vessel from Philadelphia, etc. or should bring from on board such vessel, any goods or merchandize, before she was permitted to land her cargo or passengers, he should, for every offence forfeit, five pounds; and if any slave should offend as above, he should be liable to be whipped not exceeding fifty lashes, and his master to pay five pounds.

The governor of S. Carolina, published a proclamation, subjecting Philadelphia vessels to quarantine, the date of which I cannot ascertain. The inhabitants of Charleston, on the 8th of October, had a meeting, at which they resolved, that no vessel from the river Delaware, either directly or after having touched at any other port of the United States, should be permitted to pass Charleston bar, till the citizens had again assembled, and declared themselves satisfied that the disorder had ceased in Philadelphia. If any vessel, contrary thereto, should cross the bar, the governor should be requested to compel it to quit the port, and return to sea.

The governor of Georgia, on the 4th of October, published a proclamation, ordering all vessels from Philadelphia, which should arrive in Savannah river, to remain in Tybee creek, or in other parts like distant from the town, until the health officer of the port should, on examination, certify, that no malignant or contagious disease was on board. All persons (**Page 57**) contravening this proclamation, were to be prosecuted, and subjected to the pains and penalties by law pointed out.

The people of Augusta, in that state, were as active and vigilant as their northern neighbours, to guard against the threatening danger.

The inhabitants of Reading, in Pennsylvania, had a meeting the 4th of September, and passed sundry resolutions, viz., that no dry goods should be imported into that borough from Philadelphia, or any other place infected with a malignant fever, until the expiration of one month from that date, unless permission was had from the inhabitants convened at a town-meeting; that no person from Philadelphia, or any other infected place, should be allowed to enter, until they should have undergone the examination of a physician, and obtained his opinion of their being free from infection; that no stage-waggon should be permitted to bring passengers from Philadelphia, or other place infected, into the borough; and that all communication, by stages, should be discontinued for one month, unless sooner permitted by the inhabitants.

At Bethlehem, a meeting was held on the 26th of September; at which it was resolved, that persons from Philadelphia, should perform a quarantine of twelve days, before their entrance into the town. A similar resolve was soon after entered into at Nazareth. But at neither place was it observed with any strictness. No guard was appointed. And the assertion of any decent traveller, apparently in health, with respect to the time of his absence from Philadelphia, was considered as sufficient to be relied on, without resorting to formal proof.

Various precautions were observed in other places; but I am not able to give a statement of them, not having procured an account of their resolves or proceedings.

The calamity of Philadelphia, while it roused the circumspection of the timid in various places, excited the pious to offer up their prayers to Almighty God for our relief, comfort, and support. Various days were appointed for humiliation, fasting, and prayer (**Page 58**) for this purpose. In New York, the 20th of September; in Boston, September 26th; in Albany, the 1st of October; in Baltimore the 3d; in Richmond, the 9th, in Providence, the same day; the synod of Philadelphia fixed on the 24th of October; the protestant episcopal churches in Virginia, November 6; the Dutch synod of New York, November 13; the synod of New York and New Jersey, November 20. At Hartford, daily prayers were offered up for our relief for some time.

C H A P. XII. Conflict between the law of self-preservation and the law of charity. The law of charity victorious.

WHILE our citizens were proscribed in several cities and towns—hunted up like felons in some—debarred admittance and turned back in others, whether sound or infected—it is with extreme satisfaction I have to record a conduct totally different, which cannot fail to make an indelible impression on the minds of the people of Philadelphia, and call forth the most lively emotions of gratitude.

At Woodbury, in New Jersey, at an early period of the disorder, a meeting was held for the purpose of determining on what steps were requisite to be taken. A motion was made to stop all intercourse with Philadelphia. But, four persons only having risen to support it, it dropped, and our citizens were allowed free entrance.

A respectable number of the inhabitants of Springfield, in New Jersey, met the first day of October, and after a full consideration of the distresses of our citizens, passed a resolve, offering their town as an asylum to the people flying from Philadelphia, and directing their committee to provide a suitable place as an hospital for the sick. The Rev. Jacob V. Artsdalen, Matthias Meeker, and Matthias Denman, took the lead in this honourable business.

I have been informed, by a person of credit, that the inhabitants of Elizabeth town have pursued the same liberal plan, as those of Springfield, but have not (**Page 59**) been able to procure a copy of their resolves or proceedings on the subject.

At Chestertown in Maryland, a place was appointed, at a distance from the town, for the reception of such travelers and others, as might have the disorder. It was provided with every necessary—and a physician engaged to attend the sick.

An asylum has likewise been offered to Philadelphians, by several of the inhabitants of Elkton, in Maryland; and the offer was couched in terms of the utmost sympathy for our sufferings. A place on the same plan as that at Chester, was fitted up near the town.

At Easton, in Pennsylvania, the only precaution observed, was to direct the emigrants from Philadelphia, to abstain for a week from intercourse with the inhabitants.

The people of Wilmington have acted in the most friendly manner towards our distressed citizens. At first they were a little feared, and resolved on the establishment of a quarantine and guards. But they immediately dropped these precautions, and received the people from Philadelphia with the most perfect freedom. They erected an hospital for the reception of our infected citizens, which they supplied with necessaries. Yet of eight or ten persons from Philadelphia, who died in that town, with the malignant fever, only one was sent to the hospital. The others were nursed and attended in the houses where they fell sick. Humane, tender, and friendly, as were the worthy inhabitants of

Wilmington in general, two characters have distinguished themselves in such a very extraordinary manner, as to deserve particular notice. These are Doctor Way, and Major Bush, whose houses were always open to the fugitives from Philadelphia, whom they received without the smallest apprehension, and treated with a degree of genuine hospitality, that reflects the highest honour on them. In the exercise of this virtue, they were not confined by a narrow regard to their particular friends or acquaintance—but entertained, with equal humanity, whole **(Page 60)** families of persons who were utter strangers to them. This was of the more importance, and operated as a heavier tax on them, as, I believe, there was only one tavern-keeper, Brinton, whose house was open for people from Philadelphia: and it was consequently so crowded, in general, as frequently to render it difficult to procure admittance.

The instances of this kind, through this extensive country, have been very few; but they are therefore only the more precious, and ought to be held up to public approbation. May they operate on people, at a future day, in similar cases of dreadful calamity, and teach them to temper their caution with as much humanity and tenderness to the distressed fugitives, as prudence will allow—and not involve, in one indiscriminate proscription, the healthy and infected.

C H A P. XIII. Disorder fatal to the doctors—to the clergy—to drunkards—to filles de joie—to maid servants—to the poor—and in close streets.—Less destructive to the French—and to the negroes.

RARELY has it happened, that so large a proportion of the gentlemen of the faculty have sunk beneath the labours of their very dangerous profession, as on this occasion. In five or six weeks, exclusive of medical students, no less than ten physicians have been swept off, doctors Hutchinson, Morris, Linn, Pennington, Dodds, Johnson, Glentworth, Phile, Graham and Green. Scarcely one of the practicing doctors that remained in the city, escaped sickness. Some were three, four, and five times confined.

To the clergy it has likewise proved very fatal. Exposed, in the exercise of the last duties to the dying, to equal danger with the physicians, it is not surprising that so many of them have fallen. Their names are, the Rev. Alexander Murray, of the protestant episcopal church—the Rev. F. A. Fleming and the Rev. Laurence Graessl of the Roman catholic—the Rev. John Winkhause, of the German reformed—the **(Page 61)** Rev. James Sproat, of the Presbyterian—the Rev. William Dougherty, of the Methodist church—and likewise four noted preachers of the Friends society, Daniel Offley, Huson Langstroth, Michael Minier, and Charles Williams. Seven clergymen have been in the greatest danger from this disorder, the Rev. R. Blackwell, Rev. Joseph Pilmore,. Rev. William Rogers, Rev. Christopher V. Keating, Rev. Frederic Schmidt, the Rev. Joseph Turner, and the Rev. Robert Annan; but they have all recovered.

Among the women, the mortality has not, by any means, been so great, as among the men,* nor among the old and infirm as among the middle-aged and robust.

To tipplers and drunkards, and to men who lived high, and were of a corpulent habit of body, this disorder was very fatal. Of these, many were seized, and the recoveries were very rare.

To the *filles de joie*, it has been equally fatal. The wretched, debilitated state of their constitutions, rendered them an easy prey to this dreadful disorder, which very soon terminated their miserable career.

To hired servant maids it has been very destructive. Numbers of them fled away—of those who remained, very many fell, who had behaved with an extraordinary degree of fidelity.

It has been dreadfully destructive among the poor. it is very probable, that at least seven-eighths of the number of the dead, were of that class. The inhabitants of dirty houses have severely expiated their neglect of cleanliness and decency, by the numbers of them that have fallen sacrifices. Whole families, in such houses, have sunk into one silent, undistinguishing grave.

The mortality in confined streets, small allies, and close houses, debarred of a free circulation of air, has exceeded, in a great proportion, that in the large streets and well-aired houses. In some of the allies, a third (**Page 62**) or fourth of the whole of the inhabitants are no more. In 30 houses, the whole number in Pewter Platter alley, 32 people died: and in a part of Market-Street, containing 170 houses, only 39. The streets in the suburbs, that had the benefit of the country air, especially towards the west part of the city, have suffered little. Of the wide, airy streets, none lost so many people as Arch, near Water-street, which may be accounted for, by its proximity to the original seat of the disorder. It is to be particularly remarked, that in general, the more remote the streets were from Water street, the less of the calamity they experienced.

From the effects of this disorder, the French newly settled in Philadelphia, have been in a very remarkable degree exempt.† To what this may be owing, is a subject deserving particular investigation.‡ By some it has been ascribed to their despising the

* In many congregations, the deaths of men have been nearly twice as numerous as those of women.

† The French who had been long established here, were nearly as much affected as the natives.

‡ The frequent use the French make of *lavements*, [Enema – Larousse's French-English Dictionary – Pocket Book Edition pub. May 1971] at all times, may probably account for their escaping so very generally as they did. These purify the bowels, help to discharge the foul matter, and remove costiveness [constipation], which is one of the most certain supports of this and other disorders.

danger. But, though this may have had some effect, it will not certainly account for it altogether; as it is well known that many of the most courageous persons in Philadelphia, have been among its victims. By many of the French, the great fatality of the disorder has been attributed to the vast quantities of crude and unwholesome fruits brought to our markets, and consumed by all classes of people.

When the yellow fever prevailed in South Carolina, the negroes, according to that accurate observer, Dr. Lining, were wholly free from it. "There is something very singular in the constitution of the negroes," says he, "which renders them not liable to this fever; for though many of them were as much exposed as the nurses to this infection, yet I never knew one instance of this fever among them, though they are equally subject with the white people (**Page 63**) to the bilious fever"*. The same idea prevailed for a considerable time in Philadelphia; but it was erroneous. They did not escape the disorder; however, there were scarcely any of them seized at first, and the number that were finally affected, was not great; and, as I am informed by an eminent doctor, it yielded to the power of medicine in them more easily than in the whites. The error that prevailed on this subject had a very salutary effect; for, at an early period of the disorder, hardly any white nurses could be procured; and, had the negroes been equally terrified, the sufferings of the sick, great as they actually were, would have been exceedingly aggravated. At the period alluded to, the elders of the African church met, and offered their assistance to the mayor, to procure nurses for the sick, and aid in burying the dead. Their offers were accepted; and Absalom Jones, Richard Allen, and William Gray, undertook the management of these two-several services. The great demand for nurses, afforded an opportunity for imposition, which was eagerly seized by some of the vilest of the blacks.† They extorted two, three, four, and even five dollars a night for such attendance, as would have been well paid by a single dollar. Some of them were even detected in plundering the houses of the sick. But it is unjust to cast a censure on the whole, for this sort of conduct, as many people have done. The services of Jones, Allen, and Gray, and others of their colour, have been very great, and demand public gratitude.

On examining the books of the hospital at Bushhill, it appears, that there were nearly twenty blacks received there, of whom about three-fourths died. (**Page 64**)

C H A P. XIV. State of the weather. Attempt to refute the opinion that cold and rain extinguished the disorder. Average-table of mortality.

THE weather, during the whole of the months of August and September, and most part of October, was remarkably dry and sultry. Rain appeared as if entirely at an end.

* Essays and observations, vol. II. page 407.

† The extortion here mentioned, was very far from being confined to the negroes: many of the white nurses behaved with equal rapacity.

Various indications, which in scarcely any former instance had failed to produce wet weather, disappointed the expectations, the wishes, and the prayers of the citizens. The disorder raged with increased violence as the season advanced towards the fall months. The mortality was much greater in September, than in August— and still greater in the beginning and till the middle of October, than in September. It very particularly merits attention, that though nearly all the hopes of the inhabitants rested on cold and rain, especially the latter, yet the disorder died away with hardly any rain, and a very moderate degree of cold. Its virulence may be said to have expired on the 23d, 24th, 25th, and 26th of October. The succeeding deaths were, mostly, of those long sick. Few persons took the disorder afterwards. Those days were nearly as warm as many of the most fatal ones; in the middle stage of the complaint, the thermometer being at 60, 59, 71, and 72. To account for this satisfactorily, is above our feeble powers. In fact, the whole of the disorder, from its first appearance to its final close, has set human wisdom and calculation at defiance.

The idea held up in the preceding paragraph, has been controverted by many; and, as the extinction of malignant disorders, generated in summer or the early part of fall, has been universally ascribed to the severe cold and heavy rains of the close of the fall, or the winter, it is asserted that ours must have shared the same fate. It therefore becomes necessary to state the reasons for the contrary opinion.

The extinction of these disorders, according to the generally-received idea on this subject, arises from cold, (**Page 65**) or rain, or both together. If from the former, how shall we account for a greater mortality in September, than in August, whereas the degree of heat was considerably abated? How shall we account for a greater mortality in the first part of October than in September, although the heat was still abating,? If rain be the efficient cause of arresting the disorder, as is supposed by those who attribute its declension to the rain on the evening of the 15th* of October, how shall we account for the inefficacy of a constant rain during the whole terrible twelfth of October, when One hundred and eleven souls were summoned out of this world, and a hundred and four the day following? To make the matter more plain, I request the reader's attention to the following statement :—

		Thermom. at 3 P.M.	Deaths	Wind	Weather
Sept.	19	70	61	SW	Fair
	20	69	67	SE	Hazy
	21	78	57		Fair
	22	83	76		Fair
Oct.	10	74	93	NW	Fair
	11	74	119	W	Fair
	12	64	111	NW	Rain
	13	69	104	NW	Fair

* The rain on this evening was not by any means so great as that on the 11th.

	23	60	54	W	Fair
	24	59	38	NW	Fair
	25	71	35	S	Fair, high wind
	26	72	23	SW	Cloudy

An examination of this table, by any man unbiased by the received opinion, will, I think, convince him of the justice of the hypothesis which I have advanced—that the increase or abatement of the violence of the disorder, depended on other causes than the degrees of heat, cold, rainy or dry weather. Here is the most palpable proof. The average of the thermometer, the four first quoted days, was 75°—the average of the deaths 65.5. The second four days, the thermometer averaged 70.25°, although the frightful average of deaths was, 106.75. And on the last four (**Page 66**) days, the thermometer averaged 65.5, whereas the deaths were only 37.5. To facilitate the comparison, I subjoin an abstract of the preceding statement.

Average of	Thermom.	Deaths
Sept. 19, 20, 21, and 22	75	65
Oct. 10, 11, 12, and 13	70.25	106.75
Oct. 23, 24, 25, and 26	65.5	37.5

Thus, those days on which the mortality was at its highest stage, were five degrees colder than those when the deaths had been only five eighths. And the difference of five degrees between the second and the third four days, will not be pretended to account for a decrease of very nearly two thirds. To try the system of heat, cold, and rain, still further, let us examine the four last days of August. On those days the thermometer averaged 79.5 yet the deaths were only 20.75.

I here annex the weekly average of the thermometer and of the deaths from the first of August to the 7th of November, for the reader's inspection

		Average of Thermometer	Average of Deaths
August	1 to 7	84	9
	8 to 14	85	7
	15 to 21	83	7
	22 to 28	77	15
	29 to 31	85	17
Sept.	1 to 7	81	19
	8 to 14	74	35
	15 to 21	75	65
	22 to 28	76	70
	29 and 30	74	60
Oct.	1 to 7	71	72
	8 to 14	71	100
	15 to 21	58	67

	22 to 28	58	39
	29 to 31	46	18
Nov.	1 to 7	58	15

*From the above table it appears, that during the (**Page 67**) month of September, there was a rapid increase regularly of deaths, except on the 29th and 30th, although the weather was growing cooler nearly the whole time. Let any advocate of the theory of cold and rain, compare the first week in September with the second week in October. He will see that the former was ten degrees warmer than the latter, yet the mortality of the one, was only a fifth part of the other. If he will, after this, say that the difference of 13 degrees between the second week in October and the 3d and 4th, will account for a reduction of the mortality from 100 to 67, and then to 39, I can only answer, that an inveterate prejudice too often clouds the reason, and renders it impossible to see the truth, however evident.

In opposition to what I have advanced, it has been observed, that the unfavourable effects of very sultry days were felt for several succeeding ones. This is a weak resource, as will appear from examining the table. The heat of the first and second weeks in October was the same: yet the mortality in the second was nearly one half more than in the first. The heat of the fourth was equal to that of the third, although in the former the deaths were nearly double what they were in the latter.

I hope, therefore, the reader will acknowledge, that the Great Disposer of winds and rains, took his own time, and without the means, either moral or physical, on which we placed our chief reliance, to rescue the remnant of us from destruction.

C H A P. XV.—Origin of the disorder.

THIS disorder has most unquestionably been imported from the West Indies. As yet, however, owing to various obvious reasons, it is difficult to fix, with absolute precision, on the vessel or vessels, (for it is very probable it came in several, from the different infected islands) by which it was introduced. That it is an imported disorder, rests on the following reasons, each of which, singly, justifies the theory, but (**Page 68**) all, collectively, established it to the satisfaction of every candid and reasonable man.

1st The yellow fever existed in several of the West India islands a long time before its appearance here†.

* When the fractions exceed half, an unit is added; when they are below half, they are rejected.

† *Extract from a London paper, of August 13, 1793:* “The plague, brought from Bulam, which first made its appearance at Grenada, has spread most alarmingly. Eighty persons died in one day at Grenada of this epidemic. The hurricane months just coming on, are not likely to make it less violent in its effects.” (It appears by a subsequent paragraph in the same paper that the disease was ascertained to be the yellow fever.)

2nd Various vessels from those islands arrived here in July.

3rd Scarcely any precautions were used to guard against the disorder.

4th A respectable citizen of Philadelphia, supercargo of one of our vessels, saw, in July, six or seven people sick of this fever on board a brig at Cape François bound for our port.*

(Page 69)

5th A vessel from Cape François, which arrived here in July lost several of her people with this fever, on her passage.

6th A person from Cape François, died of this fever at Marcus Hook[†]—and another at Chester.[‡]

7th The vessels in which those persons arrived, and which were infected with the effluvia of the sick and dead, came freely to our wharves, and particularly to that very one where the disorder made its first appearance.

8th Persons sick of the yellow fever have been landed in our city from vessels arrived from the West Indies.§

9th Dead bodies have been seen deposited secretly on board some of those vessels.

Extract from the Courier a London paper, of August 24. “Before the fleet left Antigua so great was the apprehension, entertained there of the plague, that all vessels from Grenada, were obliged to perform quarantine; and all letters from the latter island, were smoked at the former. The infection was reported to have reached Dominica.”

Extract from the Observer, a London paper, of August 25. “The plague, we are distressed to hear, has made its appearance in several of our West India islands. At Grenada, and Dominica, the symptoms are said to be highly alarming.”

Extract from a Kingston paper, of October 12. “The islands of Barbadoes and Dominica continue to be afflicted with a malignant fever; about 300 white inhabitants have perished in the former, and near 500 in the latter.

To any enquirer I am ready to communicate the name of the supercargo, and the name of the brig.”

* To any enquirer I am ready to communicate the name of the supercargo, and the name of the brig.

† I do hereby declare, that I was at Marcus Hook late in July, when a woman, who had been landed there from one of the vessels lately from Cape Francois, died; that I was informed by a French person, a neighbour, that she died of the yellow fever; that this person burned a quantity of tar at the door, for the purpose, as he informed me, of purifying the air. JOHN MASSEY

‡ My information of the death of this person is derived from a letter written by Dr. William Martin to Dr. Currie.

§ Major Hodgdon and others can testify to the truth of this.

10th There is the strongest reason to believe, that the beds and bedding of the sick and dead were not destroyed, but, on the contrary, brought into our city.

11th This disorder had every characteristic symptom that marked it on former occasions, when its importation was unquestioned.

Lately, of all the reasons advanced to support the opinion of its having been generated here, the only one, that has even the appearance of plausibility, viz. the influence of a tropical season, such as we had last summer, is unanswerably refuted by the concurring testimony of Lind, Lining, Warren, and Bruce, who, in the most unequivocal manner, have declared that it does not depend on the weather.

“It does not appear, from the most accurate observations of the variations of the weather, or any difference of the seasons, which I have been able to make for several years past, that this fever is *any way caused*, or much influenced by them; for I have seen it *at all times*, and in *all seasons*, in the **(Page 70)** *coolest, as well* as in the hottest time of the year.*

“This fever *does not* seem to take its origin from *any particular constitution* of the weather, independent of infectious miasmata, *as Dr. Warren has formerly well observed*; for within these twenty-five years, it has been only four times epidemical in this town, namely in the autumns of the years 1732, 39, 45, and 48, though none of those years, (excepting that of 1739, whose summer and autumn were remarkably rainy) were either warmer or more rainy, (and some of them less so) than the summers and autumns were in several other years, in which we had not one instance of any one seized with this fever: which is contrary to what would have happened, *if particular constitutions of the weather, were productive of it*, without infectious miasmata”.†

“In *omni anni tempestate*, sese essert hic morbus; symptomata autem graviora observantur, ubi calor magnus cum multa humiditate conjungitur .” Oslisli anni tenipe/late, sese essert hic morbus; symptornata autem graviora observantur, ubi calor magnus cum multa humiditate conjungitur.” ‡

* Hillary on diseases of Barbadoes, page 146.

† Lining, Essays and observations, political and literary, vol. II. page 406.

‡ Bruce, quoted by Lind on hot climates, 227.

*C H A P. XVI. Desultory facts and reflexions. A collection of scraps.**

THE want of a lazaretto, whither persons labouring under contagious disorders, might be sent, and of a proper law on the subject, empowering the civil authority to interpose with the necessary energy, (**Page 71**) at the first inroad of such a dreadful destroyer, has been the cause of our late sufferings; for, humanly speaking, had decisive measures been adopted any time before the first of September, while the disorder existed only in one street, and in a few houses in that street, there can be little doubt, that it might have been very soon extinguished. But the former sufferings of this place in 1762, were soon forgotten—and no steps taken to provide for the removal of such an evil in future, after it should invade the city. It is to be hoped our legislature, as well as that of every state in the union, will see the propriety of giving this important subject the consideration it so amply deserves, and of making provision against like calamities in future. In Italy, at Spalato, where the plague raged fifteen or twenty years ago, if the infected did not reveal their situation to the proper authority, they were subjected to capital punishment; and the same penalty was denounced against such as did not inform of infected persons, when they knew of them. This is too severe for the paternal mildness of our criminal code; but some penalties ought to be denounced in such cases. Indeed, were lazarettos on a proper establishment, it would be an object of desire with the sick, to be transported to them.

~~~~~

It is hardly conceivable that the funeral of entire strangers could afford subject of satisfaction. Yet they have produced that effect. After being so long accustomed to behold the bodies of the dead, drawn to the grave on the shafts of a chair, the sight of a corpse carried by men to be interred, afforded something like the appearance of former times; and I believe the satisfaction excited by that consideration absorbed every thought of the deceased.

~~~~~

The appearance of most of the grave yards in Philadelphia is extremely awful. They exhibit a strong likeness of ploughed fields and were any thing capable (**Page 72**) of stamping on our breasts indelible impressions of the uncertainty of the tenure by which we hold our very precarious existence, a turn though one of our burial grounds could not possibly fail to produce that effect. But it is to be feared, that with the danger will vanish all recollection of the distressing scenes we have passed through.

~~~~~

It has been denied that a person is twice susceptible of the yellow fever. The opinion, as it has a good tendency, to inspire confidence in convalescents, and in those who have quite recovered, might perhaps as well be suffered to pass uncontroverted, were not truth the object. Several persons in this city, have been twice sick with this

---

\* This and the succeeding chapter calls for some apology. Many of the anecdotes herein related, are of little importance except from their having a tendency to reflect light on the state of the public mind during a time in which men were most completely taken by surprise. Considering the subject in this point of view, hardly any occurrence, of so eventful a period, ought to be suffered to sink in oblivion. Some, of a ludicrous turn, are introduced as a relief to the sombre complexion of a narrative, in which the predominant characters are death and destruction and a cold regard for self alone.

disorder. I know it is usual to call this a relapse. But relapse or not, those people whom I mean, have been ill—have recovered entirely—and been a second time taken down. Some of them are now no more, witness Mr. Fleming. Mr. William Young was worse the second time than the first.

~~~~~

One observation, of great importance to the cause of humanity, escaped me in the former editions, and ought to be very particularly attended to in every such dreadful crisis as we have experienced. Of the very large number of persons who have fallen under this disorder, it is not improbable that a half or a third have perished merely for want of necessary care and attention, owing to the extraordinary panic. Almost all the remarkable cases of recovery are to be ascribed, under providence, to the fidelity of husbands, wives, children, and servants, who braved the danger, and determined to obey the dictates of humanity. There are various instances of persons who may be said to have been by these means snatched from the grasp of death having been so far reduced, as to have their coffins made.—And for the encouragement of those who may, at any other time, or in any other place, have friends or relatives in this disorder, let it be (**Page 73**) remarked, that few of those who discharged their duty to their families, have suffered by it. There are instances of individuals, who have nursed and attended on six, eight and ten persons unremittingly, in their own houses, without ever taking the infection. Others, before their own illness, and after their recovery, nursed and restored their families. William Young had no less than ten in his house sick, and nearly all at one time. He attended on them till he was taken ill; and, during his sickness, gave directions for the management of them, as effectually as if he was well. After his recovery, he again attended them himself. Of his whole family, his wife only died; and it is supposed her death was accelerated by her being in an advanced stage of pregnancy. There are cases of single persons having the disorder in large families of eight, ten, and twelve, and none catching it from them. In the family of David Clarke, who died of the malignant fever, there were no less than twenty-two persons, not one of whom caught the infection, altho' he had the same attention paid him by all his family, as if he had been in any other disorder. Not one of the carters employed by the committee in the very dangerous office of removing the sick and burying the dead, ever had it.* The nurses at Bushhill have all escaped, except two; as have the worthy managers. Thomas Boyles, the tenant, who occupied the building at Bushhill, at the time it was taken as an hospital, that is, the 31st of August, lived there until (**Page 74**) the 29th of October, with his wife and six children, none of whom were ever affected with the malignant fever. Let these instances suffice at all future times to

* Let not the humble sphere of life in which he moves, prevent me from here mentioning a worthy and faithful man, Thomas Wilkinson, employed by the committee, in burying the dead, and removing the sick, from their organization till the extinction of the disorder. Such was the noxious situation of many dead bodies, that he frequently returned vomiting from the performance of his duty. In one instance, in raising the corpse of a woman several days dead, he was covered with putrescent blood. Yet he still persevered in the most unwearied manner, through dangers, that render his preservation equally astonishing with that of Girard, Helmuth, Mrs. Saville, and others. It is to be hoped the corporation will find some comfortable situation for him, in which to pass the remainder of his days.

prevent fear from totally overpowering the understanding, and producing scenes of cruelty that make a feeling being blush for his species.

~~~~~

Among the country people, large quantities of wild pigeons in the spring are regarded as certain indications of an unhealthy summer. Whether or not this prognostic has ever been verified before, I cannot tell. But it is very certain, that during the last Spring, the numbers of those birds brought to market, were immense. Never, perhaps, were there so many before

~~~~~

Several classes of people were highly benefited by the public distress. Coffin-makers had full employment, and in general high prices for their work. Most of the retail stores being shut up, those that remained open, had an uncommon demand; as the whole of the business was divided among a few. Those who had carriages to hire, to transport families to the country, received whatever they pleased to require. The holders of houses at from three, to twenty miles from the city, who chose to rent the whole or part of them, had high rents. The two notaries, who protested for the banks, profited highly by the absence of the merchants and traders.

~~~~~

I have learned with great pleasure, that a few landlords, commiserating the distresses of their tenants, have come to the very humane resolution of remitting the payment of rents due during the prevalence of the disorder. Were they to enter into resolutions generally to do the same, it would reflect honour on them. But there are some, whose hardened hearts know no compassion, and who will have “the pound of flesh—the penalty of the bond.” Indeed, when the disorder was at the highest stage, some landlords (**Page 75**) seized the small property of poor roomkeepers, who were totally unable to pay their rent. A man wrote to the committee, informing them that the poverty of his tenants rendered it impossible for them to pay him; he therefore begged the committee would, as they were appointed to relieve the poor, pay the arrears due him! Another person, a wealthy widow, procured recommendations for some poor roomkeepers, her tenants; and the committee gave them each a small sum. As soon as they had received it, she seized the money and their clothes!

~~~~~

A man lost his wife with the disorder. He had it himself, lost his sight totally, and was left penniless, with two infant children. Yet his landlord, before his convalescence was complete, seized his clothes and furniture, and turned him out of doors! !

~~~~~

“You may as well use question with the wolf,  
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb,  
As seek to soften that (than which what’s harder ?)  
His flinty heart.” ----- Shakespeare.

~~~~~

I hope the reader takes more pleasure in perusing cases reflecting honour on human nature, than those of a different description. An amiable woman in New York, feeling for the situation of the numerous orphans in this city, wrote to a member of the committee, to choose her one of them as nearly resembling a child she had lost, as possible. She particularly desired one without connections, if such could be procured.

She proposes to adopt it, and, with her husband, to bestow on it all the tenderness one of her own would have had. Would it not be unjust to withhold her name? Every reader answers, yes—and I will therefore reveal it,—Susan Willet. Several applications of a similar nature have been made by some of our own citizens.

~~~~~

In the summer of 1791, the yellow fever prevailed in New York, in a part of Water Street, and in proportion to the sphere of its action, was as fatal there as **(Page 76)** it has been here. It began in August, and continued till the middle of September, when it totally disappeared, and has never since visited that place. This should ease the fears of many among us, who, always viewing the black side of every thing, terrify people with their prognostications, that we shall have it again next spring or summer. All the symptoms were full as dangerous and alarming in New York, as in Philadelphia. Many persons died in three days; “stupor, delirium, yellowness, the black vomit, and death, rapidly succeeding each other.”\* It spread no farther at that time, than the one street, although no precautions, as far as I can learn, were taken to prevent its extension. The same species of disorder raged in this city in 1762, with great violence. It disappeared in the month of November and has not from that time until this year visited Philadelphia.

~~~~~

The summer and fall of this year have been unhealthy in many parts of the union, as well as in Philadelphia. At Lynn, in Massachusetts, I have been Informed, but have no means of ascertaining the truth or falsehood of the report, that a malignant fever, not unlike ours, prevailed in August. In many of the towns of Virginia, intermittent fevers have been much more prevalent and mortal than they have been at former periods. Georgetown and its vicinity, which are in general very healthy, lost, in the course of a few weeks in summer, an unexampled number of people by the flux, which disorder has raged with great violence in many parts of America. the influenza has generally spread through the union, and been very fatal. It has been twice in Vermont, where likewise the putrid sore throat has carried off numbers. At Harrisburg and Middletown, in this state, the flux and a putrid fever have been extremely destructive, and swept away I am credibly informed, a fifteenth **(Page 77)** part of the inhabitants. Delaware state, particularly Kent county, has suffered much from fall fevers, which have produced a very great mortality. At Dover, in the same state, a bilious colic raged with great violence, during last summer, and was extremely fatal. At Pauling’s Kill, in Suffex county, New Jersey, a bilious and remittent fever has made very great havoc. And various other places have experienced a mortality, very uncommon, and which, but for the calamity of Philadelphia absorbing public attention every where, and being the standard of comparison, would have created great alarms and uneasiness.

~~~~~

Of the number of citizens who fled away, it is difficult to form any accurate estimate. In the city, from Vine to South Street, which has been surveyed by a man employed by the committee, of 21,000 inhabitants, the number of absent people is stated to be 8,600. But as this business was several weeks performing, considerable variations must necessarily have taken place. The emigration was not finished in those streets

---

\* Letter from a physician, in New York, to his friend in New Jersey. Federal Gazette, Sept. 21, 1793.

examined in the early part of his progress,—and towards the latter part, the returns had been already considerable. One may be supposed to balance the other, and the removals in the liberties to have been equal to those in the city. We shall therefore probably not err much, when we estimate the number who left the city at about 17,000. This is not so many as I formerly supposed, having estimated them at 23,000. Which of the two is accurate, or whether either of them is so, I leave the reader to determine.

~~~~~

The effect of fear in predisposing the body for the yellow fever and other disorders, and increasing their malignance, when taken, is well known. The following exception to the general rule, which may be depended on, is curious and interesting. A young woman, whose fears were of very prevalent, as not only to render her unhappy from the commencement of the disorder but even to interfere with the happiness (**Page 78**) of the family with whom she lived, had to attend on seven persons, all of whom were in a very dangerous state, and one of whom died. Her attendance was assiduous and unremitted for nearly three weeks. Yet she has never been in the slightest degree affected.

~~~~~

The watches and clocks in this city, during the disorder, were almost always wrong. Hardly any of the watchmakers remained—and few people paid attention how time passed. One night, the watchmen cried ten o'clock when it was only nine, and continued the mistake all the succeeding hours.

~~~~~

The Hope, a vessel from Londonderry, arrived in our river towards the end of August. The passengers had a malignant disorder among them, in consequence of which, orders were issued to have them landed at State Island, that they might undergo examination. Nevertheless, several of them came to the city, and added to the dangers already existing. The mayor, on the 3d of September, issued a proclamation, calling upon the citizens not only to use their endeavors to detect such as had arrived, and to prevent others from coming, without procuring the proper certificates; but to make report to one of the magistrates, of the names of those by whom they were harboured, that they might be prosecuted according to law. On this subject an obvious reflexion arises, which I will not suppress. Our citizens have generally been in the habit of severely censuring the inhabitants of those places in which very strict precautions were taken, to prevent the spreading of the disorder that prevailed here; and yet we see that our own conduct, in a case nearly similar, has not been very different. I would not wish to be understood as if I meant to justify the whole of the proceedings that took place everywhere; far from it; some of them have been to the last degree severe, and unnecessarily so; for all the cautions requisite, were compatible with a small (**Page 79**) degree of attention to the comfort and convenience of fellow citizens, in good health, travelling for business, for pleasure, or the preservation of health, and even of life.—Whereas in many places it would appear as if the harshest mode of carrying harsh measures into effect, was purposely adopted. My intention is merely to show, that such as indiscriminately vilify those who have resorted to precautions dictated by prudence, do not weigh the matter in the scales of impartial justice.

~~~~~

Governor Moultrie's proclamation, announcing the existence of the malignant fever in the Grenadas, etc. and ordering a quarantine, is dated the 7th of June

~~~~~

Some of the postmasters, in the different states, used the precaution to dip Philadelphia letters into vinegar with a pair of tongs, before they handled them. Several of the subscribers for Philadelphia papers, made their servants sprinkle them with vinegar, and dry them at the fire, before they would venture to touch them.

~~~~~

Joseph Inskip attended several sick persons in a family near him. When he was ill himself, he wanted assistance, and sent for some of them to attend him— but they ungratefully refused! O Shame ! where is thy blush?\*

~~~~~

Many of our citizens who fled from the city, neglected or forgot to leave their servants money enough for their support; so that some of these poor creatures had to depend for sustenance on the charity of their neighbours.

~~~~~

Some of our unemployed tradesmen wished to procure work at the new roads now making. But the (**Page 80**) people who were employed, agreed, that if they were engaged, that they would all abandon their work; so that the overseers were obliged to renounce the idea.

~~~~~

The incautious security of the citizens of Philadelphia, at the first stage of the disorder, is highly to be regretted. Most of those who died of the malignant disorder, before the 26th of August, were carried to burial with the accustomed parade of attendants which so generally prevails in this city. The chief of the persons who at that time carried the dead to the grave, and several of those who attended the funerals, were speedily taken sick, and hurried into eternity.

~~~~~

Sebastian Ale, an old gravedigger, who had long lost the sense of smelling, fancied he could not take the disorder, and followed his business without apprehension. A husband and his wife who lay sick together, wished to be interred in the same grave. Their deaths happened within a few days of each other. When the latter of the two was to be buried, Sebastian was employed to dig open the other's grave. He struck upon and broke the coffin, and in stooping down, received into his mouth such an intolerable and deadly stench, that he was taken sick immediately, and in a day or two died.

~~~~~

The scourge of the yellow fever has fallen with extreme severity on some families. There are various instances of five and six, and some of eight, ten, and of Godfrey Gebler's family no less than eleven were swept off the face of the earth. Dr. Sproat, his wife, son and daughter—Michael Hay, his wife, and three children—David Flickwir and five of his family—Samuel Weatherby, wife, and four grown children, are no more. And there are numberless instances of a havoc equally great in particular

* His wife was ill at the same time.

families. There is one house in this city, from which above twenty persons (**Page 81**) were carried, some to Bushhill, but the most of them to the grave.

~~~~~

There is one fact respecting this disorder, which renders it probable, that the exercise of the duties of humanity towards the fugitive Philadelphians, would not have been attended with the danger universally imagined. In defiance of all the resolutions entered into by the inhabitants of various towns, many of our infected citizens evaded their vigilance, and took refuge among them; and in very few cases is it known that they communicated the infection.—Three persons died of this disorder, in one house near Woodbury, in New Jersey; they had been attended during their illness, by the family, none of whom caught the disease. Six or seven died at Darby, as many at Germantown, and eight at Haddonfield, without communicating it to any of the inhabitants. A man from Philadelphia, of the name of Cornell, died in New York, about two days after his arrival. The place of his death was a boarding house, in which were several boarders, one of whom slept in the same bed with him. Two of the family only were lightly affected—but not in such a degree as to require medical aid. Several other infected persons from our city, died there, and no one caught the infection from them. A man died at one of the principal taverns in Baltimore, of the same disorder. Many people had visited and attended him during the whole of his illness, without injury. No person was affected but his doctor, whose indisposition was not of long continuance. A great number of similar instances have occurred at Burlington, Bordenton [Ed. Bordentown], Lamberton, Princeton, Brunswic [Brunswick], Woodbridge, Newark, Lancaster, and various other places.

Since the first edition appeared, I have had information from a number of creditable persons, that the idea that the disorder has not been communicated out of Philadelphia, is erroneous. A family, of the name of Hopper, near Woodbury, took it from some of our infected citizens and three of them died. A woman (**Page 82**) in Chester county, who had boarded and lodged some of the sick, died of the malignant fever. Three people, of one family in Trenton took it from a sick person from Philadelphia, and died of it. A negro servant belonging to Mr. Morgan, of Pennsauken creek, in New Jersey, took up an infected bed floating in the Delaware, which spread the disorder in the family, and Mrs. Morgan and her girl both died of it. It was introduced by his son from Philadelphia, into the family of Mr. Cadwallader, at Abington, some of whom died with it. Some others in different places caught the infection, and died. But the cases of this kind have been extremely few, considering the numbers, who carried the disorder from hence, and died with it in the country.

### ***C H A P. XVII. Another collection of scraps.***

THOSE who reflect on the many shocking cases of cruelty and desertion of friends and relations which occurred in Philadelphia, however they may regret, cannot be surprised, that in the country, and in various towns and cities, inhumanity should be experienced by Philadelphians, from strangers. The universal consternation extinguished in people's breasts the most honourable feelings of human nature; and in this case, as in various others, the suspicion operated as injuriously as the reality. Many travellers from this city, exhausted with fatigue and with hunger, have been refused shelter and

sustenance, and have fallen victims to the fears, not to the want of charity, of those to whom they applied for relief.\* Instances of this kind have occurred on almost every road leading from Philadelphia. People under suspicion of having this disorder, have been forced by their fellow travellers to quit the stages, and perished in the woods without a possibility of procuring any assistance. At Easton, in Maryland, a waggon-load of goods from Philadelphia (**Page 83**) was actually burned; and a woman, who came with it, was, it is said, tarred and feathered!

~~~~~

In a town in Jersey, an association was entered into to prevent all intercourse with Philadelphia, and the inhabitants agreed to mount guard, alternately. One man, who was principled against this severity, refused to do duty, or join in the combination. He was advertised, and all people forbidden to have any communication with him—indeed he was absolutely refused the necessaries of life—a butcher, who passed his door, told him, when applied to for provisions, that he had meat enough, but none for him. Having gone, for a short time, from home, in the direction towards Philadelphia, but not within thirty miles of the city, the centinel on duty stopped him on his return—and he persisting in his determination to proceed, the other presented his firelock, and it is supposed would have shot him, but for the interference of a third person.

~~~~~

The son of a citizen of Philadelphia arrived at a town in Virginia fourteen days before the time of fixing the quarantine, which was for twenty days. However, he was still obliged to undergo the full quarantine after that time, which made thirty-four days, exclusive of above six days spent on the road.

~~~~~

An emigrant from Philadelphia, who had been away nearly three weeks, had to cross a ferry in a neighbouring state, and was provided with proper certificates of the length of time he was absent. He got into the scow, with his wife, and carriage, and was rowed over to the opposite side. There he was refused permission to land, as he had not a certificate from a particular magistrate in that part of the country. He leaped out of the scow, on a rock, and the centinel swore he would blow his brains out, if he advanced a step farther. His wife, who was in the boat, was under the most dreadful apprehensions, as the ferrymen were drunk, the horses in the carriage (**Page 84**) fretful, and the wind high. In spite of his intreaties and his offers to prove the length of his absence, he was obliged to return in quest of the magistrate pointed out. When he arrived at his house, which was several miles from the ferry, the justice concealed himself, though fear of catching the disorder. He then went to another, some miles further back. By the time he returned to the ferry, it was nine o'clock, and he had to wait till next morning.

~~~~~

A poor man was taken sick on the road at a village not far from Philadelphia. He lay calling for water a considerable time in vain. At length, an old woman brought a pitcher full, and not daring to approach him, she laid it at a distance, desiring him to crawl to it, which he did. After lying there about forty-eight hours, he died; and the body lay in a state of putrefaction for some time, until the neighbours hired two black butchers

---

\* The fugitive Philadelphians were in general as strict in their precautions against them who fled later than they, as any of the country people.

to bury him, for twenty-four dollars. They dug a pit to windward—with a fork, hooked a rope about his neck---dragged him into it--and, at as great a distance as possible, cast earth into the pit to cover him.

~~~~~

One of our citizens lost his brother in the country with the malignant fever; and, owing to the fears of the neighbours, could not prevail on any person even to make him a coffin. He was obliged to wrap him up in a blanket, to dig a grave for him, and bury him with his own hands.

~~~~~

In a small town not far distant from Philadelphia, very arbitrary attempts were unfeelingly made to oblige one of our fugitives to mount guard against his own fellow citizens. He refused; and finding him resolute against every effort, they were obliged to desist.

~~~~~

In one of the American ports, a Philadelphia vessel, just arrived, was forced to return to sea with only (**Page 85**) two gallons of water for each man. In the same port, one of the captains from our city had his boat stove to pieces.

~~~~~

The 17th of September, the western shore Baltimore stage was stopped about two miles from that town, by an armed guard. The hour of arrival was about eight o'clock at night. There was a tavern at pistol-shot from the place. But the tavern keeper refused to receive the passengers, twelve in number. They were detained on the road all night without any shelter but the stage, in which they dozed a part of the night; during the remainder of it, they lay before a fire which they had kindled in the woods. Next morning, the tavern-keeper, one Murray, an inhuman Goth, when they sent to him for breakfast, refused to give them any. But about two hours afterwards, he let them have some bread, cheese, wine, and cider, with which they breakfasted on the road. In this situation they remained until the afternoon, that is, for eighteen hours. A captain in the French navy, with his wife, and several French gentlemen were among the passengers.

~~~~~

A respectable citizen of Philadelphia left the city on the 17th of September, intending to reside on Long Island till the disorder ceased. He was taken ill on the road and prevented from proceeding, near Newark. He took lodgings at a captain Littel's near Second river. The alarm spread of an man being in the house-- the neighbours assembled--fixed a fence on each side of Littel's house, and obliged the people to remove out of a house near to it, which the fence likewise enclosed. The road and river lay before Littel's door; the former was entirely cut off by the fence, which run clear to the river. At the distance a hundred yards, was a church, in which public worship was intermitted for three or four weeks, through fear. Travellers took a circuitous route of above a mile, to avoid danger. (**Page 86**) At length he died—and his son, about nine years old, had to assist in performing the last melancholy rites for him. The fence remained for ten days after his death, to ascertain whether or not his family had taken the disorder.

Justice requires me to add, that they were not suffered to be in want of any necessaries. They were directed to write what they had occasion for, on a paper and

fasten it on the fence. Persons were appointed to supply them with whatever was requisite.

~~~~~

An artful girl, just from Philadelphia, completely deceived the centinel stationed near Bordentown. She asked him, with much earnestness, as if afraid to venture in, was *that there* confounded yellow fever got into the town?—"No," says he, "you may go in with as much safety as to your own home." I need not add, that she went forward.

~~~~~

A Philadelphian, in a small town near this city, lost his child in the fever, and went to bury it. On his return, he found all his furniture on the road, and the doors locked : and no intreaties could again procure him admittance.

~~~~~

When tar was in use among the various preventatives, a boy was determined to secure himself by night as well as by day; and accordingly tied a tarred rope twice about his neck, and afterwards buttoned his collar with some difficulty. He woke in the night, half strangled, and black in the face. He may with justice be said to have nearly choked himself, to save his life.

~~~~~

It would be extraordinary if so very favourable an opportunity of inventing marvellous stories, should have been suffered to pass over without some prodigies being recorded. Mankind are ever prone to the **(Page 87)** extravagant, especially when their passions are warmed. And pity and terror, two passions particularly calculated to foster this disposition, being roused into action to the highest degree, the marvellous stories, which were every where current, and which even stole into print, can be easily accounted for. Some of the Maryland papers relate, that "a voice had been heard in the streets of Philadelphia, warning the inhabitants to prepare for their doom, as written in the prophet Ezekiel, ch. 27." The Marylander who heard this voice, was certainly gifted with a most extraordinary ear, as, at the distance of above a hundred miles, he heard what we could not hear on the spot. And it would appear that his *sight* was equally good with his hearing; for he *saw* two angels conversing with the watch. It is true, he is too modest to say, he saw them himself—he only says "two angels were seen conversing with the watch at midnight, about the subject of what the voice had previously proclaimed." But no person here having ever seen them—it is fairly presumable, as it would be highly criminal to doubt of facts resting on such authority, that he must have been the eye-witness himself.

~~~~~

A merchant of Philadelphia, who had been absent or several weeks, was returning to the city in the second week of November, having heard that the danger was no more. He met a man on the road going from Philadelphia; and naturally enquired into the state of affairs. The other told him, that a coffin maker, who had been employed by the committee for relief of the sick, had found such a decrease of demand two weeks before, that he had a large supply of coffins on hand; but that the mortality had again so far increased, that he had sold all, and had seven journeymen employed day and night. This so alarmed the Philadelphian, that he again returned with his family, to wait a more favourable issue.

~~~~~  
(Page 88) A drunken sailor lay in the street, in the northern liberties, for a few hours asleep, and was supposed by the neighbours to be dead with the disorder; but they were too much afraid, to make personal examination. They sent to the committee at the city hall for a cart and a coffin. The carter took the man by the heels, and was going to put him into the coffin. Handling him roughly, he awoke, and damning his eyes, asked him what he was about? the carter let him drop in a fright, and ran off as if a ghost was at his heels.

~~~~~  
A lunatic, who had the malignant fever, was advised, by his neighbours, to go to Bushhill. He consented, and got into the cart; but soon changing his mind, he slipt out at the end, unknown to the carter, who, after a while, missing him, and seeing him at a distance running away, turned his horse about, and trotted hard after him, The other doubled his pace and the carter whipped his horse to a gallop; but the man turned a corner, and hid himself in a house, leaving the mortified carter to return, and deliver an account of his ludicrous adventure.

~~~~~  
Several instances have occurred of the carters on their arrival at Bushhill, and proceeding to deliver up their charge, finding, to their amazement, the carts empty.

~~~~~  
A woman, whose husband died, refused to have him buried in a coffin provided for her by one of her friends, as too paltry and mean. She bought an elegant and costly one—and had the other laid by in the yard. In a week, she was herself a corpse—and was buried in the very coffin she had so much despised.

~~~~~  
The wife of a man who lived in Walnut-street, was seized with the malignant fever, and given over by the doctors. The husband abandoned her, and (Page 89) next night lay out of the house for fear of catching the infection. In the morning, taking it for granted, from the very low state she had been in, that she was dead, he purchased a coffin for her; but on entering the house, was surprised to see her much recovered. He fell sick shortly after, died, and was buried in the very coffin, which he had so precipitately bought for his wife, who is still living.

~~~~~  
The powers of the god of love might be imagined to lie dormant amidst such scenes of distress as Bushhill exhibited. But we find that his sway was felt there with equal force as any where else. John Johnson and Priscilla Hicks, two of the patients, who had recovered, and officiated as nurses to the sick, were smitten with each other's charms—and, procuring leave of absence for an hour or two, they came to the city on the 23d of September, were joined in the bands of matrimony, and returned to their avocation at the hospital. A long chasm took place in the hymeneal records; for no adventure of the same kind occurred, until the 5th of November, when Naffy, a Portuguese mulatto, took to wife Hannah Smith, a bouncing German girl, who, as well as himself, was employed as nurse.

~~~~~  
The state of the police and of society in Philadelphia, appears to no small advantage, when we confider one circumstance. Notwithstanding the absence of the

magistrates, and the immense value of property left unprotected through the fears of the owners, and the deaths of the persons left to take care of it, there was only one or two burglaries committed.—One was attempted but the rogues were discovered and taken. A hardened villain from a neighbouring state, formed a plot with some negroes to plunder houses. He was a master rogue, had digested a complete system, and formed a large partnership for the more successful execution of his schemes. However, he was soon seized, and the company dissolved.

(Page 90) The jail of Philadelphia is under such excellent regulation, that the disorder made its appearance there only in two or three instances, although such abodes of misery are the places where contagious disorders are most commonly generated. When the yellow fever raged most violently in the city, there were in the jail one hundred and six French soldiers and sailors, confined by order of the French consul; besides eighty convicts, vagrants, and persons for trial; all of whom, except two or three, remained purely free from the complaint. Several circumstances conspired to produce this salutary effect. The people confined were frequently cleansed and purified by the use of the cold bath—they were kept constantly employed—vegetables formed a considerable part of their diet—in the yard, vegetation flourished and many of them being employed in stone-cutting, the water, constantly running, kept the atmosphere in a moist state, while the people of Philadelphia were almost uninterruptedly parched up by unceasing heat. Elijah Weed, the late jailor, caught the disorder in the city, and died in the jail, without communicating it to any of the people confined. I hope I shall be excused for paying a tribute to the memory of this valuable citizen, under whose government of the jail, and with whose hearty co-operation, most of the regulations in that institution have been effected, which, with the successful experiments made in England, prove that jails may be easily converted from sinks of human depravity and wretchedness, into places of reformation; so that, instead of rendering the idle vagrant, confined merely on suspicion, or for want of friends to protect him, obdurate, wicked, and ripe for rapine and spoil,—the profligate and abandoned may be so reclaimed in them, as, on their liberation, to become useful members of society. For the honour of human nature it ought to be recorded, that some of the convicts in the jail, apart of the term of whose confinement had been remitted, a reward for their peaceable, orderly behaviour, voluntarily offered themselves as nurses, to attend the sick at Bush-hill, and have in **(Page 91)** that capacity conducted themselves with great fidelity. Among them are some who were formerly regarded, and with justice, as hardened, abandoned villains, which the old system usually rendered every tenant of a jail, who remained there a few weeks. According to the same summary system, these men's lives would have been long since offered up as an atonement to society for the injury they had done it. That is, in plain English, because society had suffered one injury by rapine, it was necessary it should suffer another by law. But by the present improved and humane plan, they and great numbers of others are restored to society and usefulness once more. So much better, although a little more troublesome, is it, to reform men, than to butcher them under colour of law and justice.

~~~~~

The sympathy for our calamities, displayed in various places, and the very liberal contributions raised for our relief, reflect the highest honour on their inhabitants, and

demand our warmest gratitude, The inhabitants of Gloucester county, in New jersey, have the honour of being first in this laudable race. So early as the 30th of September, they had a considerable sum collected, with which they purchased a quantity of provisions for the use of the hospital at Bushhill. They have, from that time, regularly continued copious supplies twice a week. In addition to this, they have made, and are now making, considerable purchases of wood, for the relief of the poor during the winter. From a few citizens of Philadelphia, near Germantown, there have been received two thousand dollars; from others near Darby, fourteen hundred; from New York, five thousand; from a person unknown, five hundred; from Bucks county, sixteen hundred; from Delaware county, twelve hundred, from Franklin county, nearly five hundred, from Boston, sundry articles, which have been sold for nearly two thousand; and from sundry other persons and places, contributions equally liberal and honorable.

**(Page 92)** There has been a very strong analogy between the state of Philadelphia, and that of an army. About the close of August, and till the middle of September, when the dangers were few, and, by prudent management, might have been easily surmounted, an universal trepidation benumbed people's faculties; and flight and self-preservation seemed to engross the whole attention of a large proportion of the citizens. Just so, with an army of recruits. Every breath of wind terrifies them. Vague rumours are heard with fear and trembling. In every tree at a distance is beheld a formidable enemy, to whom they are ready to lay down their arms, and surrender at discretion. But when the "din of arms, and cannon's rattle" have familiarized them with the horrid trade of death, the obstinate phalanx beholds, unmoved, its ranks mowed down, and death advancing, with rapid strides to terminate their (as it is falsely termed) *glorious* career, —Even thus was it here. Towards the close of September, and during the first part of October, when the horrors of the scene were constantly increasing, and from fifty to a hundred were interred daily, then people cast away their various preventatives—thieves' vinegar, tarred ropes, garlic, camphor bags, smelling bottles, etc.—And then it was, that they assumed a manly fortitude, tempered with the sober, serious pensiveness, befitting such an awful scene.

A friend, to whom I communicated this idea, has endeavored to explain the matter differently. He says, that those who were terrified at first, generally fled away—and left behind such as were possessed of a stronger frame of mind. This is an error; as many men, who were among the most striking instances of the influence of terror at first, behaved, in the end, with the moil exemplary fortitude.

~~~~~

Shall I be pardoned for passing a censure on those whose mistaken zeal led them, during the most dreadful stages of the calamity, to crowd some of our churches, and aid this frightful enemy in his work of destruction? who, fearful, lest their prayers and adoration **(Page 93)** at home would not find acceptance before the Deity, resorted to churches filled with bodies of contagious air, where, with every breath, they inhaled noxious miasmata? To this single cause I am bold in ascribing a large proportion of the mortality—And it is remarkable, that those congregations, whose places of worship were most crowded, have suffered the most dreadfully. Will men never acquire wisdom? Are we yet to learn, that the Almighty architect of the heavens and earth, does not require “

temples made with men's hands?" that going to a place of worship, against the great law of self-preservation, implanted in indelible characters by his divine hand, on the breast of every one of his creatures, constitutes no part of the adoration due to the maker and preserver of mankind? that a "meek and humble heart" is the temple wherein he delights to be worshipped? I hope not—I hope the awful lesson some of our congregations hold forth on this subject, by a mortality out of all proportion to their numbers, will serve as a memento, at all future times, in the like critical emergencies !*

~~~~~

Some of those who remained in the city, have, for reasons not very easy to justify, been in the habit of reproaching those who fled, with criminality, as deserters, who abandoned their posts.† I believe, on the (Page 94) contrary, that as the nature of our government did not allow the arbitrary measures to be pursued, which, in despotic countries, would probably have extinguished the disorder at an early period—it was the duty of every person to avoid the danger, whose circumstances and situation allowed it. The effects of the desertion were, moreover, salutary‡. The sphere of action of the disorder was diminished. Two or three - empty houses arrested the disease in its progress, as it was slowly, but surely travelling through a street, and probably rescued a neighborhood from its ravages. We shall long have to mourn the severe loss our city has felt, in being bereft of so many valuable citizens: and had the 17,000, who retired, been in the city during the prevalence of the disorder, and lost as large a proportion of their number, as those did who remained, we should, instead of 4,000 dead, have lost nearly 6,000; and perhaps had to deplore in the number, another Clow, a Cay, a Lea, a Sims, a Dunkin, a Strawbridge, men of extensive business, whose loss will be long felt—a Pennington, a Glentworth, a Hutchinson, a Sergeant, a Howell a Waring, men endowed by heaven with eminent abilities—a Fleming, a Graessl, a Sproat, men of exalted piety and virtue—a Wilson, an Adgate, a Baldwin, a Carroll, a Tomkins, an Offley[/Ed. AKA Osley], citizens of most estimable characters. Let those then who have remained, regard their long-absent friends, as if preserved from death by their flight, and rejoice at their return in health and safety. Let those who have been absent, acknowledge the exertions of those who maintained their ground. Let us all unite in the utmost vigilance to prevent the return of this fell§ destroyer, by the most scrupulous attention to cleansing and

---

\* This paragraph, although erroneous, is retained, that I may have an opportunity, which I cheerfully embrace, of acknowledging the mistake I have committed. On a revision of the bills of mortality, it appears, that those congregations who kept up religious worship regularly, did not lose more than, and some not so many as, their usual proportions. In one year, ending July 31, 1793, the German Lutherans buried more than a sixth of the whole number of the dead in the city—the German Reformed, a fifteenth—the Friends, a tenth—and St. Mary's, an eighth. From August 1, to Nov. 9, 1793, the burials among the German Lutherans were not quite a sixth—among the German Reformed, nearly a sixteenth—among the Friends, an eleventh— and in St. Mary's grave-yard, a sixteenth. These were the congregations I alluded to, in the above remarks.

† If they were even guilty of a crime, it brought its own punishment; as I am fully convinced, that those who were absent, and a prey to anxiety caused by the frightful reports current, suffered as much as those who remained in the city.

‡ Perhaps had all our citizens remained, famine would have been added to our calamity; whereas, the markets were abundantly supplied during the whole time. The prices, too, were in general not far beyond what they usually are at the same season of the year.

§ [Ed.] *fell* – Cruel; fierce. Middle English - (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition*)

purifying our scourged city—and let us join in thanksgiving to that Supreme Being, who has, in his own time, stayed the avenging form, ready to devour us, after it had laughed to scorn all human efforts.

**(Page 95)**

*Committee for relieving the sick and distressed, appointed by a meeting of the citizens of Philadelphia, summoned by advertisement in the public papers, Sept. 13, 1793.*

|                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PRESIDENT                                                          | Matthew Clarkson                                                                                                                                |
| SECRETARY                                                          | Caleb Lowne                                                                                                                                     |
| TREASURER                                                          | Thomas Wistar                                                                                                                                   |
| MANAGERS OF BUSHHILL HOSPITAL                                      | Stephen Girard, Peter Helm                                                                                                                      |
| ORPHAN COMMITTEE                                                   | Israel Israel, John Letchworth, James Kerr, James Sharfwood                                                                                     |
| COMMITTEE OF DISTRIBUTION                                          | Israel Israel, John Haworth, James Swaine, Mathew Carey, Thomas Savery, James Kerr, Jacob Witman John Letchworth, James Sharfwood, Samuel Benge |
| SUPERINTENDANT OF THE BURIALS OF THE DEAD, AND REMOVAL OF THE SICK | Samuel Benge                                                                                                                                    |
| DISTRIBUTOR OF SUPPLIES                                            | Henry Deforest                                                                                                                                  |
| COMMITTEE OF ACCOUNTS                                              | James Sharfwood, John Conelly                                                                                                                   |
| COMMITTEE ON THE PUBLICATION OF LETTERS                            | Caleb Lownes, Mathew Carey                                                                                                                      |

*Assistant committee, chosen October 14*

SAMUEL COATES, Chairman  
JOHN OLDEN, Secretary

Northern Liberties

William Peter Spragues  
William Gregory  
Jacob Witman  
James Swaine  
Joseph Burns  
George Forepaugh  
Casper Snyder  
Peter Smith

Vine to Race Street

Richard Whitehead  
Joseph Kerr  
John Ettries

Race to Arch

Thomas Willis  
Daniel Dawson  
Peter Thomson  
Thomas Allibone  
Lambert Wilmer

Arch to Market

William Sansom  
Justinian Fox  
Amos Wickersham

Market to Chestnut

Arthur Howell  
Alexander Cochran  
Thomas Dobson

Chestnut to Walnut

Jeremiah Paul  
James Cummins  
Casper W. Morris  
Thomas Castiere

Walnut to Spruce

George Rutter  
Benjamin W. Morris

Spruce to Pine

Samuel Pancoast, jun.  
John Woodside  
Levi Hollingsworth  
William Watkins

Pine to South

John Wood  
Adam Brittle  
William Eckard  
Thomas Disksey  
Fergus M'Elwaine

Southwark

William Innis  
Richard Mosely  
William Robinson, sen.  
John Grantham  
John Savadge  
John Pattison



*An account o f the plague in London, in the year 1665.*

ABOUT the close of the year 1664, the plague was brought over to London in some Levant goods, that came from Holland.

The narrowness of the streets and lanes in London; the closeness of the houses, and their being crowded with families, rendered the inhabitants very liable to suffer by infectious disorders in sickly seasons; and the plague was almost continually among the diseases enumerated in the bills of mortality. The goods above mentioned, were carried to a house in Long-acre, near Drury-Lane, where they were first opened. There two Frenchmen died; the disorder communicated to other houses in the neighbourhood, and infected the parish officers who were employed about the dead. Another Frenchman, who lived near the infected houses, removed, for fear of the distemper, into Bearbinderlane, where he died: and thus the plague got into the city.

The further progress of this cruel disorder was stopped during a hard frost which set in this winter, and continued till March, 1665,—when its virulence was revived, by the advance of the spring. At first it seized one here, then another a mile or more distant, after which it appeared again where it was observed before, just as accident furnished it with conveyance, and according to the time when persons contracted the distemper.

The usual symptoms of infection, for it is not proposed to enter into a strict medical consideration of the plague, are thus enumerated by Dr. Hodges, who lived then in London, and attended patients in all stages of the disorder. First, a horror, vomiting, delirium, dizziness, head-ach, and stupefaction; then a fever, watching, palpitation of the heart, bleeding at the nose, and a great heat about the præcordia but the signs more peculiar to the pestilence, were, those pustules, which the common people called blains, (Page 97) buboes, carbuncles, spots, and those marks called tokens. The buboes were hard, painful tumours, with inflammation and gatherings upon the glands, behind the ears, the armpits, and the groin. These tumours, at their first appearance, were hard, and the event of the disorder was prognosticated from their sudden or slow increase, from their genuine or untoward suppuration, and from the virulence of' their contents. The pestilential spots appeared chiefly on the neck, breast, and back, and were not easily distinguishable from flea-bites. The genuine pestilential characters, commonly called tokens, as being the forewarnings of death, were minute distinct blasts, which had their origin from within, and rose up in little pyramidal protuberances sometimes as small as pin-heads, other times as large as a silver penny, having the pestilential poison chiefly collected at their bases, gradually tainting the neighbouring parts, and reaching the surface as the configuration of the vessels and pores favoured their spreading. They were also derivable from external causes, as from the injuries of air, when the pestilential *miasmata* were pent up and condensed; and by that means their virulence increased, so that life was immediately extinguished when they reached the noble organs.

In the treatment of the sick, all the physicians agreed in throwing out the pestilential malignity as soon as possible by alexipharmics, and to these, as soon as the belly was loosened, recourse was had as to a sacred refuge: in extremity some had recourse to mineral preparations, as mineral *bezoar, sulphur, auratum, aura vitæ, etc.* in order to drive out the petulance by mere force. For external applications, they used blisters and cataplasms; the buboes were opened by incision; and the efchar formed by the virulent ichor [thin, watery, blood-tinged], discharged by the carbuncles, was chiefly got off by actual cautery; nor were the blisters, ulcers, or incisions, suffered to heal until the malignity of the disease was spent. But such was the delusory appearance of this pestilence, that many patients were lost, when they were thought in safe recovery, whereas, others survived, who were (**Page 98**) given over for lost, much to the discredit of the medical art.

The apprehensions of the people were greatly increased, by the crafty predictions of fortune-tellers, cunning-men, astrologers, and quacks, who hung out their signs in every street, and found their account in heightening the general terror; nor was their trade stopped, until these men of superior knowledge in the decrees of providence, were themselves swept away in the common calamity. As soon as the magistrates found that the contagion extended into several parishes, an order was issued for shutting up infected houses, to stop the communication of the disorder. These houses had red crosses painted on the doors, with this inscription, *Lord, have mercy upon us!* and watchmen were placed before them, who were daily relieved, to hand necessaries and medicines into the confined families, and to refrain them from coming abroad until forty days after recovery. But though these regulations were strictly executed, the propriety of them was much controverted, and the hardship universally complained of; for if a fresh person was seized in the same house, but a day before this quarantine expired, it was again renewed; which intolerable tedious imprisonment of the healthy with the sick, frequently ended with the deaths of whole families. Neither did this confinement of the sick prove effectual for each house having but one guard, and many houses having avenues behind, it was impossible to secure all passages; so that, some would amuse the watchmen with discourse on one side of the house, while the rest of the family made their escape at the other; until, at length, the men were left to watch empty houses. Some watchmen were publicly whipped through the streets, for taking bribes to let persons out privately; and where such opportunities did not offer, the watchmen were sometimes ill treated. One near Coleman Street was blown up by gunpowder; and while he lay disabled by the explosion, those who had strength, escaped out of the house. Some persons also would let themselves down from the windows, armed with swords (**Page 99**) and pistols, in the fight of the watchmen, and threaten them with instant death, if they called out or stirred. Many of them were even killed in disputes with those they were charged with the care of guarding.

It is a sad, though true character of human nature, to remark, that there are always miscreants ready to take advantage of public calamities; and what greatly contributed to the loss of persons thus shut up, was the villainous behaviour of some nurses. These wretches from an inhuman greediness to plunder the dead, would not only strangle their

patients and charge their deaths to the distemper in their throats; but would secretly convey the pestilential taint from the sores of the sick to those who were well. Yet though they were without witness in these diabolical practices, they often fell themselves, the just victims of their own unguarded presumption.

Dogs and cats, being domestic animals, apt to run from house to house, and being supposed to convey the noxious effluvia in their fur or hair; an early order was made by the lord-mayor and other magistrates by the advice of the physicians, that they should all be immediately killed; and an officer was appointed for that purpose. It was computed that 40,000 dogs, and five times as many cats, were massacred in consequence of this prescription; and all possible endeavors were used to exterminate rats and mice by poison, on the same account.

It was inconceivable, as the plague increased with what precipitation such inhabitants of the city as were able to leave it, deserted into the country; for some weeks it was difficult to get to the lord-mayor's door, for the throngs that crowded in to get passes and certificates of health; without which none were permitted to travel through, or lodge in, any towns on the road. The nobility, gentry, and richer tradesmen retired first, and in the broad streets leading out of town, nothing was to be seen but waggons and carts loaded with goods, and servants; coaches full of families—and horsemen, all hurrying away; with empty carriages returning for fresh loads.

Some families that had no country retreats, laid up stores of provisions and shut themselves up so carefully (**Page 100**) as not to be heard of nor seen, until the plague ceased; when they came abroad safe and well;—among these were several Dutch merchants, who kept their houses like garrisons besieged, suffering no one to go out or come in, and thus preserved themselves in health.—Many merchants and ship owners shut themselves up on board ships, and as the plague increased, removed down the river, nor was it heard that the disorder reached any vessels below Deptford. Poorer persons took refuge in hoys, smacks, and fishing boats; but these took the infection; others went up the river in boats, lodging by night in tents made of their sails, on shore; for though the country people would supply them with provisions, they would not receive them into their houses. The poor who ran abroad in their extremities into the country, were often ill used and driven back, which caused great exclamation against the cruelty of the country towns; but self-preservation extinguished humanity; and yet notwithstanding all their care, there was not a town within twenty miles but suffered more or less by the disorder.

Thus the distemper was felt chiefly to prey on the common people; which it did to such a degree as to obtain the name of the *poor's plague*. The lord-mayor, sheriffs, aldermen, or their deputies, with many of the common council, very humanely to compose the minds of the people as much as possible, published their resolution not to quit the city, but to be always ready at hand to preserve order, and to do justice on all occasions. The lord-mayor held councils every day, making necessary dispositions for preserving the public peace; the people were treated with all the gentleness circumstances would allow, while presumptuous rogues, housebreakers, and plunderers of the sick or dead, were duly punished, and severe declarations issued against them.

It was one of their principal concerns to see the regulations for the freedom and good supply of the markets, observed—and every market-day the lord-mayor, Sir John Lawrence, or the sheriffs, attended vigilantly on horseback, to see their orders executed. The necessity of going to market was greatly contributory to the **(Page 101)** ruin of the city, as there the people caught the infection one of another, and it was suspected that even the provisions were tainted; all imaginable precautions were however used in these negotiations for customers took the meat from off the hooks themselves, that they might not receive it from the butcher—and for his security dropped their money into pans of vinegar, always carrying small money with them, that they might receive no change. Every one that could procure them, carried scents and perfumes about them, while the poorest inhabitants were forced on all occasions to run all hazards.

The infection, notwithstanding every caution, continued through the months of May and June, with more or less severity--sometimes raging in one part, and then in another--about the latter end of June, above twenty parishes were infected, and the King removed from Whitehall to Hampton court. Government was not however inattentive to the distresses of the metropolis—for beside appointing a monthly fast for public prayer, the king commanded the college of physicians to compose and publish an English directory of general advice in this calamitous season. Some of the college were appointed to attend the sick on all occasions; and two out of the court of aldermen were required to see this hazardous duty performed : nor were there eminent physicians wanting who voluntarily and courageously gave their assistance in so dangerous an employment; eight or nine of whom were destroyed in the duty.

In the first week of July, the bill rose to 725, the next week to 1089, the third week to 1843, and the next week to 2010. About the middle of the month, the disorder, which had chiefly raged in St.Giles's Holburn, and toward Westminster, began to travel eastward, and over the river to Lambeth and Southwark; but kept principally in the out parishes which were fullest of poor. When it abated in the western parishes, it exerted its violence in Clerkenwell, Cripplegate, Shoreditch, Bithopsgate, Aldersgate, White-chapel and Stepney. In the months of August and September the disorder made most terrible slaughter; **(Page 102)** three, four, or five thousand died in a week, the deaths one week amounted to 8,000 and were believed to extend to 10,000! for the registers in such confusion were not kept with great accuracy.

Under these shocking circumstances, when the people were in the greatest want of spiritual consolation, they were in general forsaken by their parochial ministers; and sad as the minds of the people were, there were not wanting some who satirized them in lampoons, for this scandalous desertion of their distressed flocks. When on some church doors were written, *Here is a pulpit to let*, and on others, *A pulpit to be sold*, then it was that the ejected non-conforming ministers, showed that disinterested concern for the people, that constitutes the true essence of the clerical character; for, unmindful of their legal disability, and regardless of the surrounding danger, they resolutely mounted the vacant pulpits, often twice a day, and soothed the griefs of crowded audiences by their pious discourses and other religious exercises.

When deaths became so numerous, the church yards were unable to contain the bodies, and the usual modes of interment were no longer observed: occasional pits of great extent were dug in several parts, to which the dead were brought by cart-loads, collected by the ring of a bell, and the doleful cry of *Bring out your dead!* They were put into the carts with no other covering than rugs or sheets tied round them by their friends, if they had any surviving; and were shot down in promiscuous heaps! Sometimes the drivers of those carts would drop in their employments, and the carts would be found without any conductor; in the parish of Stepney, it was said they lost within the year, 116 sextons, grave-diggers and their assistants!

Trade was at a stand, shops were shut up, every day looked like a solemn Sabbath; few were to be seen in the streets, and neither cart nor coach appeared but such as were employed for immediate acts of necessity: grass grew in the most public streets, and in the Royal-Exchange,—and the broad street in Whitechapel might be mistaken for a green field. Those families who carried on retail trades, or subsisted by labour, were now supported (**Page 103**) by charity, which is recorded to have been worthily extended by those who had ability to bestow it. The king contributed 1000£ a week, and Dr. Sheldon, archbishop of Canterbury, who remained at Lambeth the whole time, beside his own benefactions, procured great sums to be remitted from the dioceses under his jurisdiction, by his affecting letters to the bishops— Monk, afterwards duke of Albemarle, with lord Craven, remained in London, and exerted all their abilities to alleviate the distress they were witness to. Though the city was in general abandoned by the rich, yet these did not forget those who were left behind—large sums were sent up by them to the magistrates, as well as from the trading towns in the remotest parts of England. The degree of general distress in the metropolis may be supposed void of exaggeration, when it is said that beside private charities, the lord mayor and aldermen were enabled to bestow 100,000£ a week for several weeks together to the poor!

That nothing might be left untried to disperse the contagion, large fires were ordered to be made in the public streets; yet the physicians were very diffident of the success of this expensive experiment; and the trial soon decided in favour of their doubts. Coals were then 4£ per chaldron\* ; and two hundred chaldron were applied in making fires at the custom-house, Billingsgate, at the bridge-foot, three cranes, Queenhithe, Bridewellgate, the corner of Leadenhall and Grace church streets, at the north and south gates of the Royal Exchange, Guildhall, Blackwell-hall, at the lord-mayor's door in St. Helens, at Bow church, and at the western end of St. Paul's cathedral.—These fires continued for three days—and were then almost extinguished by a smart rain; but the following night, from whatever cause it might proceed, was the most fatal of the whole; for more than 4,000 then expired! and this unfortunate event was a discouragement to any farther attempts of that nature.

---

\* Chaldron: An old unit of measure varying from 32 to 72 imperial bushels. (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition*)

When the disease was at the greatest height, little regard was had to the giving medical assistance; for many of the most eminent physicians and surgeons were already dead: and it was in vain to keep houses (**Page 104**) shut up, when they were mostly empty with their doors and windows open and shattering with the wind. At length the disorder, after having braved the art of man, gave way to the course of nature, at the decline of the summer season, when, though the numbers of the infected were not observed to lessen, yet the disorder grew weaker; more in proportion recovered, and the deaths insensibly diminished. When this began to be perceived, the dread that had invaded the minds of the people wore off, and contributed to their recovery; and whereas in the height of the disorder it usually killed persons in two or three days, and not above one in five recovered—now it did not kill in less than eight or ten days, and not above two in five perished; the nurses also grew either more cautious or more faithful; so that after a little while a dawn of health appeared as suddenly as it was unexpected. In the beginning of November, the face of affairs was quite altered: though the funerals were yet frequent, yet the citizens began to return without fear; and in December they crowded back as fast as they had fled in the Spring. Such as were cautious, took great care in seasoning their houses; and abundance of costly things were consumed, which not only answered their own particular purposes, but filled the air with grateful smells, which were serviceable to their neighbours; some burnt pitch, brimstone, and gunpowder, to purge their houses and goods; while others, through eagerness and carelessness, entered their dwellings without any preparation. Earl Craven and the other justices of Westminster caused the bedding of infected houses, to be well dried and aired, the rooms to be new whitewashed, and the churchyards to be covered two feet thick with fresh earth; to prevent, as far as possible, any revival of the pestilential taint.

The winter gave the most effectual check toward suppressing this great enemy of mankind; and tho' some remains of the contagion appeared in the succeeding spring, it was no more than could be easily conquered by medicine; and the city thus got rid of the infection and returned to perfect health.

The bills of mortality computed the numbers of burials (**Page 105**) this year at 97,306, of which 68,596 were attributed to the plague; but this estimate was universally received as very erroneous; as it was not difficult to show, from circumstances, that the account was manifestly defective. At the beginning of the disorder, there was great knavery and collusion in the reports of the deaths; for while it was possible to conceal the infection, they were attributed to fevers of all kinds, which began to swell the bills; this was done to prevent houses being shut up, and families being shunned by their neighbours. Add to this, that the dead carts working in the dark, no exact accounts were kept; the clerks and sextons being naturally averse to so dangerous a duty, and frequently falling sick themselves before such accounts as they had were delivered in. Quakers and Jews also, who had separate burial grounds, were not mentioned in the weekly bills; nor was any register taken of those who died on board vessels of all kinds in the river. It was well known, that numbers of poor despairing creatures wandered out of town into the fields, woods, and other remote places, where they died of the infection and of want. The inhabitants of the villages would carry food to these distracted refugees, and let it at a distance for them; and afterwards frequently found them dead with the victuals

untouched. The country people would then dig holes and drag the bodies into them with long poles having hooks at the ends, carefully standing to the windward; and throw the earth over them as far as they could cast it. On the whole, it was the opinion of eye witnesses, that the plague destroyed 100,000 at least. The yearly bill mentions but one parish that remained quite exempt from infection, which was that of St. John the Evangelist in Watling-street.

As to foreign trade during this year, it was almost extinct; as no port in France, Flanders, Spain, or Italy, would admit London ships, or correspond with that city; the Turks only and the Grecian isles, to whom the plague was familiar, were not so scrupulous. The Flemings and Dutch had great advantage of this circumstance, by buying English goods in those parts of England that remained clear of infection, carrying them home, and then exporting them again as their own.

**(Page 106)**

### ***Account of The Plague at Marseilles, in 1720.***

MARSEILLES has been several times visited by the plague, as in the year 1580, in 1630, 1649 and 1650.

In May, 1720, the citizens were informed, that the plague had made its appearance in Palestine, and Syria. On the 25th of that month, a vessel from Syria, and the island of Cyprus where the plague prevailed, arrived at the isles of Chateaudif, in the vicinity of the harbour of Marseilles. After performing a quarantine, the passengers were permitted to mix with the inhabitants. One of the crew, and a person placed on board as a guard, had in the mean time died; but the surgeon employed to examine the bodies, declared, that he could discover no mark of the plague. On the 12th of June, a ship, with a foul bill of health, as it is termed, cast anchor. On the 24th and 26th of June, four persons died. Three of these were porters, who had been entrusted with the care of purifying the merchandize on board of these vessels. The fourth was a boy belonging to the first vessel. Hence it appears that the progress of this contagion was in the beginning extremely slow. The surgeon again certified that there was no sign of the plague; but the magistrates began to distrust him. They caused the bodies to be buried in quick lime, and the vessels, from the cargoes of which the porters were suspected of having caught the contagion, were ordered to be removed to a greater distance. On the 7th of July, two other porters employed in the Lazeretto were taken ill, and on the 8th a third; on the 9th, the whole three expired. They were buried in quick lime, and their clothes were burned. Three other surgeons had been appointed to inspect their bodies; and it was at last confessed that they had died of the plague: from this time to the 31st of July, the contagion made feeble but gradual advances. The gentlemen of the faculty, who had declared the dangerous nature of the disease, were insulted by the rabble, who would not believe that the plague would have advanced so very slowly. The magistrates were afraid to injure the commerce of the city by the report spread that this infection had got into **(Page 107)** Marseilles. Though they seem to have done their duty, yet they were so little

aware of the gulf, which was yawning beneath them, that on the 15th of July, they sent letters to the health officers in the other ports of Europe, informing them, that though many persons were sick in the infirmaries, yet that the contagion had made no progress in the city. Indeed, from this day to the 26th, almost nothing was heard of it, and the people had begun to believe, that the danger was over. On the 26th, however, the magistrates were informed, that fifteen persons were taken ill, in the street of Lescalle. The physicians durst not venture to declare the fact and assigned any other reason for their sickness, than the plague.

At the end of July, the magistrates became alarmed in earnest. Some of them began to be exhausted by the melancholy employment of attending the funerals of the dead, and the removals of the sick to the public hospitals, both [of] which offices were performed in the night. The marquis de Pelles, governor of the city, examined the treasury, and found in it only the pitiful sum of eleven hundred livres. Corn, butcher's meat, and wood, were extremely scarce and dear. The wealthy part of the inhabitants had by this time fled. It was now certain that the contagion was fixed in the city; and it was readily foreseen, that, unless vigorous measures of prevention were taken, famine would complete the scene of calamity. All beggars from the country were commanded to leave the city; but it was immediately found impracticable, to carry this order into execution. The chamber of trade of the parliament of Aix, had published an arret, prohibiting the citizens of Marseilles from quitting the territories of the town. The other inhabitants of Provence were forbidden to hold any correspondence with them; and coachmen, carriers, or others, attempting to retire from Marseilles to the country, on any pretence whatever, were to return back under pain of death. It was, therefore, impossible to drive out of the city, two or three thousand beggars, and other strangers of different kinds. An attempt was made to dispel the infection by burning fire in the streets, but to no purpose. A variety of regulations were adopted to prevent the spreading of the **(Page 108)** distemper, as well as the progress of famine. What fuel had been in the city, was already consumed in the experiment of making fires. A great quantity of sulphur was bought, and a part of it distributed to the poor, in every quarter of the town, to be burned in their houses by way of a perfume: the colleges and schools were shut up, to prevent the communication of the disorder; and the most pressing applications were made to the government of France, for immediate and substantial assistance, before the avenues of the city should be absolutely shut up. On the third of August, a mob affembled demanding bread, which was given to them. On the fourth, the officers of the fort of St. John, waited on the magisfirates, to acquaint them, that their soldiers were in want of corn; and if not supplied, would perhaps enter the city, and take it by force; the answer which they received was, that if the troops attempted to enter Marseilles, the magistrates, at the head of the citizens, would oppose them. On the 7th of August, the chamber of trade of Provence, permitted the sheriffs to have a conference with some of their agents, at the distance of six miles from the city. Precautions were taken to speak at a distance. An agreement was made, that a market should be established in that place, and a double barrier erected. Another market was to be fixed upon a highroad, two leagues from Marseilles, in a different direction. A rendezvous for boats was likewise named, in a creek amongst the islands in the harbour of Marseilles. In all these places, the guards were appointed by the province, and paid by the city. On the 9th of August, it was found,



that most of the physicians and surgeons had fled. It was thought necessary to select a house to which the sick might be carried. The house of convalescence was pitched upon for that purpose. But it was an object of the greatest difficulty to remove the sick. Horses, harness, and carts were all equally wanted. It became necessary to go into the country to seek them, and when they were found, no person would consent to serve as a porter in removing the dead—Exorbitant wages were offered with little effect. An immense number of cooks and sick nurses were likewise wanted, and it was not without the greatest exertions, that the **(Page 109)** magistrates could obtain persons for these employments. Three pits were dug without the walls of the city. They were fifty feet in length and twenty four feet deep, and the dead were buried in quick lime. Another large hospital was fitted up under the vaults of a rope yard, by the chevalier Rofe [Rose], at his own expense; and he caused large ditches to be dug for burying the dead. The two hospitals were entirely filled in less than two days; but the patients did not remain there long. The distemper was so violent, that those who were brought into the hospitals at night, were cast into the ditches next morning. In every house where it entered, no person escaped the infection, and it seems that few or none survived it. On the 12th of August, two of the most eminent physicians of Montpellier were dispatched by the regent of France to the assistance of the citizens. The magistrates of health, the judges of the city, the rectors of all the hospitals and other charitable foundations, the commissaries who had been appointed for the different quarters of the city, but a few days before, with an immense number of people of all ranks, fled in the greatest hurry from Marseilles. The very sentinels who had been posted to prevent the flight of others, deserted, while the captains of the militia, and their soldiers ran away by whole companies. The shops, houses, magazines, churches and convents were shut up. The public markets were empty, and nothing was any where to be seen, but the dying or the dead. Marseilles was supposed at this time to contain about one hundred thousand people. Carts and porters were kept in constant readiness to carry off the dead; but the difficulty of providing these augmented every day. Persons employed in that service very seldom lived more than forty eight hours. It is said that by only touching the body with an iron hook, at the end of a pole, the distemper was communicated. Fifteen livres or about three dollars per day was the hire offered, and it was refused by the very beggars. At last, the magistrates applied to the officers of the galleys, and obtained from them a supply of hands, selected from the criminals, who were promised their pardon upon condition of exerting themselves; but they did their work **(Page 110)** with so much slowness and laziness, says our author, *that it was enough to make one mad*. The slaves were in want of every thing, and in particular of shoes, which it was impossible to get for them, as there was none in the city, nor any shoemaker, to manufacture them. These unfortunate beings, when they entered a house, to carry off the dead, hardly ever failed to plunder it, so that the perpetual danger of robbery was added to the other calamities of the citizens. The slaves were likewise unskillful as well as unwilling carters. They frequently overturned the carts, and broke the harness of the horses; a loss which was irreparable, for neither saddler nor cartwright was left in Marseilles. Besides, no tradesman would touch the carts or harness which were employed in that service; and the peasants in the territory belonging to the city, had carefully concealed their carts.

Multitudes of women, who were giving suck, died of the plague; and their infants were found some dead; and others dying in the cradles. An hospital and a convent, which were found empty, by the death or flight of their former possessors, served as an asylum for these novitiates in wretchedness. They were supplied with soup, and goats milk. Thirty or forty of them perished every day; yet there were never less than twelve or thirteen hundred of them surviving at one time. On the 21st of August, the number of the dead at once increased so prodigiously, that the magistrates found it impracticable to get them carried out of town, to be thrown into the pits. The quarter of St. John and some other parts of the old town, were, from the height of the ground and the narrowness of the streets, almost inaccessible to any wheel carriage. They were inhabited by the poorest classes of the people, who were worst lodged and worst fed, and therefore died fastest. The bodies, in heaps, blocked up the passages of the streets. It was to be apprehended, that if they were suffered to lie above ground, the infection would spread with augmented rapidity. The marquis dePille [dePelle] and the magistrates, requested a meeting at the town house, with the officers of the galleys. This assembly came to the resolution of interring the dead bodies, belonging to the **(Page 111)** higher parts of the town, in the vaults of the church yards in the neighbourhood. Quick lime and water were to be thrown upon them, and the vaults, when full, were to be closely cemented up. The bishop of Marseilles and the clergy opposed this measure; but the necessity of the case superseded every objection. On the 23d of August the magistrates began this task. The clergy had bolted the doors of their churches, which were broke open. In the mean time, the misery of the inhabitants augmented every day and almost every hour. Amongst other necessaries, linen was exhausted, and in the midst of this mass of wretchedness, the populace, from famine, despair, and madness, had become so turbulent, that it was found requisite to raise gibbets in all the public places of the city. From the 23rd of August to the end of September, a thousand persons were computed to perish every day. The galley slaves, who had been called to assist the citizens, began to die like the rest. The shopkeepers had locked up their doors, so that the people could not buy, on any terms, the common necessaries of life. On the 27th, the board of trade published an order, for all shopkeepers and tradesmen, to set open their doors, within twenty-four hours, on the pain of death. Commands of this kind had little weight. Desertion, wherever it could be accomplished was universal.

On whatever side the spectator cast his eye, nothing was to be seen but heaps of putrefaction. The streets, the public markets, the square of the play house, the harbour, and every other place, was strewed with dead bodies. In the original narrative, from which this abridgment is extracted there are many circumstances related, of a nature so shocking that to repeat them would be an act of inhumanity to the reader. Thousands fled on board the ships in the harbour, from a conceit, which proved very foolish, that the contagion could not reach them, when upon the water. The streets were heaped not only with dead bodies, but with furniture and clothes of persons infected, which were incessantly cast out of the windows. The dogs and cats were every where killed, and served to augment the mass of corruption. **(Page 112)** Ten thousand dogs were at one time computed to be floating in the harbour.

If you met any one in the streets, he looked as if half dead, and as if the distemper had affected his understanding. Many wandering about fell through weakness and never rose again. Some, to put an end to their sufferings cut their own throats, or jumped out of high windows or into the sea. It was impossible for the hospitals to contain the crowds of patients who thronged into them. The instant that a person was observed to be infected, he became an object of horror to his nearest relations. He was either left deserted in the house, or driven out of it. This was the treatment of wives to their husbands, and husbands to their wives, of children to their parents, and of parents to their children. The hospitals were so far from being capable to contain the sick, that numbers could not even get access to the doors, on account of the vast crowds that lay on the pavement around them. This was the situation of Marseilles at the end of August. By the third of September, the surviving magistrates found the town house almost empty. Five hundred persons belonging to it had died. Amongst these were three hundred and fifty of the city guards. The religious orders likewise suffered extremely

The bishop was distinguished by the most active and intrepid benevolence. On the 6th of September, there remained, after every exertion, above two thousand dead bodies in the streets. A fresh supply of galley slaves was obtained with difficulty. From this time, to the end of September, the disease raged with unabated fury. In the month of October, it began to abate without any visible cause. The sick began to be cured. In November, the contagion continued to decrease, and by the 1st of December, the danger was in a great measure at an end. It was not, however, entirely ceased till the month of March. We are not informed as to the exact number of deaths; but they are estimated at not less-than fifty or sixty thousand.

*List of all the Burials in the several grave yards of the city and Liberties of Philadelphia,  
as taken from the Books kept by Clergymen, Sextons, Etc.  
from August 12th to November 9, 1793.*

The next five pages of this book give detailed information on how many deaths occurred in August, September, October, and November, on which days and in which Church membership. No individuals are identified by name; 4041 individuals are accounted for. The detailed charts are difficult to transcribe and are not included here; the Churches mentioned are

|                     |                     |                    |
|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Christ Church       | St. Peter's         | St. Paul's         |
| First Presbyterian  | Second Presbyterian | Third Presbyterian |
| Scotch Presbyterian | Seceders            | Trinity            |
| Friends             | Free Quakers        | German Lutherans   |
| German Calvinists   | Moravians           | Swedes             |
| Baptists            | Methodists          | Universalists      |
| Jews                | Kensington          | Potter's Field     |

The next three pages of the book give detailed meteorological observations made in Philadelphia by David Rittenhouse, Esquire, for August, September, October and the first part of November 1793. They include readings for the barometer, thermometer, wind and weather taken at 6 a.m. and 3 p.m. on each day.

Both the accountings for the Churches and the weather reports are discussed in an earlier chapter of the book.

The last 38 pages of this book, 121 through 159, give a list of the dead in Philadelphia from August 1st to the middle of December 1793. The list of about 3500 people has been alphabetized and transcribed and is online at <http://www.rootsweb.com/~bwo/carey.html>.

INDEX OF PEOPLE AND PLACES

Place names are in Bold

**A**

**Abington, PA** ..... 55  
 Adgate, Andrew ..... 18, 20, 63  
 Ale, Sebastian ..... 54  
**Alexandria, VA** ..... 35, 36  
 Allen, Richard ..... 42, 43  
 Allibone, Thomas ..... 18, 65  
 Annan, Robert ..... 41  
 Artsdalen, Jacob V ..... 39  
**Augusta, GA** ..... 38

**B**

Baker, Hilary ..... 14  
 Baldwin ..... 63  
**Baltimore, MD** ..... 31, 34, 35, 38, 55, 57  
**Barbadoes** ..... 46, 48  
 Barclay, John ..... 21  
 Barker, John ..... 18  
 Benge, Samuel ..... 64  
**Bethlehem, PA** ..... 38  
 blacks ..... See Negroes, See Negroes  
 Blackwell, R. .... 41  
**Bordentown, NJ** ..... 34, 55, 58  
**Boston, MA** ..... 35, 36, 38, 61  
 Boyles, Thomas ..... 50  
 Brittle, Adam ..... 65  
 Brown, Andrew ..... 15  
 Bruce ..... 48  
**Brunswick, NJ** ..... 55  
**Bucks county, PA** ..... 61  
**Bulam** ..... 46  
**Burlington, NJ** ..... 55  
 Burns, Joseph ..... 65  
 Bush ..... 40, 60  
**Bushhill (Hospital)**... 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24,  
 29, 43, 50, 54, 59, 61

**C**

Cadwallader ..... 55  
 Caldwell, Samuel ..... 3  
**Cape François** ..... 8, 47  
**Cape François** ..... 23  
 Carey, Mathew ..... 3, 31, 64  
 Carroll ..... 63  
 Carson ..... 11  
 Castiere, Thomas ..... 65  
 Cay ..... 63  
**Charlestown/Charleston, SC** ..... 35, 37  
**Chateaufif, Isles of** ..... 72  
**Chester, PA** ..... 39, 47, 55  
**Chestertown, MD** ..... 31, 32, 39

Clarke, David ..... 50  
 Clarkson, Matthew ..... 12, 13, 14, 20, 21, 42, 53, 64  
 Clinton, Gov. of NY ..... 32  
 Clow ..... 63  
 Coates, Samuel ..... 18, 65  
 Cochran, Alexander ..... 65  
 Conelly/Connelly, John ..... 19, 64  
 Cornell ..... 55  
 Cornish, John ..... 19  
 Craven, Lord ..... 70, 71  
 Cummins, James ..... 65  
 Currie ..... 10, 47  
**Cyprus** ..... 72

**D**

**Darby, PA** ..... 55, 61  
 Dawson, Daniel ..... 65  
 Deforest, Henry ..... 20, 64  
**Delaware county, PA** ..... 61  
**Delaware, State of** ..... 9, 52  
 Denman, Matthias ..... 39  
 dePille [dePelle] ..... 75  
**Deptford, NJ** ..... 68  
 Deveze ..... 23  
 Dickens ..... 18  
 Disksey, Thomas ..... 65  
 Dobson, Thomas ..... 65  
 Dodds ..... 40  
**Dominica** ..... 46  
 Dougherty, William ..... 41  
**Dover, DE** ..... 52  
 Duffield, Benjamin ..... 23  
 Dunkin ..... 63  
**Dutch/Holland** ..... 66, 68, 72

**E**

**Easton, PA** ..... 39  
**Easton, MD** ..... 56  
 Eckard, William ..... 65  
**Elizabeth/Elizabethtown, NJ** ..... 32, 39  
**Elkton, MD** ..... 39  
**England** ..... 8  
 Ettries, John ..... 65

**F**

**Flanders** ..... 72  
 Fleming, F. A. .... 18, 41, 49, 63  
 Flickwir, David ..... 54  
 Forepaugh, George ..... 65  
 Fox, Justinian ..... 65  
**France** ..... 23, 40, 42, 47, 57, 60, 66, 72, 74  
**Franklin county, PA** ..... 61

**G**

|                                    |                    |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Gebler, Godfrey .....              | 54                 |
| <b>Georgetown</b> .....            | 52                 |
| <b>Georgia, State of</b> .....     | 2, 9, 35, 38       |
| <b>Germantown, PA</b> .....        | 55, 61             |
| Girard, Stephen.....               | 20, 21, 24, 50, 64 |
| Glentworth.....                    | 40, 63             |
| <b>Gloucester county, NJ</b> ..... | 61                 |
| Governor Moultrie.....             | 53                 |
| Graessl, Lawrence .....            | 41, 63             |
| Graham .....                       | 40                 |
| Grantham, John .....               | 65                 |
| Gray, William.....                 | 42, 43             |
| <b>Greece</b> .....                | 72                 |
| Green .....                        | 40                 |
| Gregory, William.....              | 19, 65             |
| <b>Grenada</b> .....               | 36, 46             |
| Griffits .....                     | 11                 |

**H**

|                                 |            |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Haddonfield, NJ</b> .....    | 55         |
| <b>Hagerstown, MD</b> .....     | 35         |
| Hamilton, William.....          | 14         |
| <b>Harrisburg, PA</b> .....     | 52         |
| <b>Hartford, CT</b> .....       | 39         |
| <b>Havre de Grace, MD</b> ..... | 34, 35     |
| Haworth, John .....             | 64         |
| Hay, Michael .....              | 54         |
| Helm, Peter.....                | 21, 24, 64 |
| Helmuth, Henry .....            | 18, 50     |
| Hicks, Priscilla.....           | 60         |
| Hillary.....                    | 48         |
| Hodgdon .....                   | 47         |
| Hodge/Hodges .....              | 11, 66     |
| Hollingsworth, Levi.....        | 18, 65     |
| Hopper .....                    | 55         |
| Howell .....                    | 63, 65     |
| <b>Howell's ferry, NJ</b> ..... | 34         |
| Humphreys, Clement .....        | 19         |
| Hutchinson, John .....          | 18, 40, 63 |

**I**

|                      |            |
|----------------------|------------|
| Innis, William.....  | 65         |
| Inskeep, Joseph..... | 17, 20, 54 |
| Israel, Israel ..... | 20, 64     |
| <b>Italy</b> .....   | 49, 72     |

**J**

|                               |           |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Jersey, State of</b> ..... | 9, 33, 56 |
| Johnson, John .....           | 40, 60    |
| Jones, Absalom.....           | 42, 43    |
| Joab.....                     | 18        |
| Robert .....                  | 19        |

**K**

|                                |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Keating, Christopher. V. ....  | 18, 41 |
| <b>Kent county, DE</b> .....   | 52     |
| Kerr, James .....              | 64     |
| Joseph.....                    | 65     |
| <b>Kingston, Jamaica</b> ..... | 46     |

**L**

|                                         |                       |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Lamberton/Lambertville, NJ</b> ..... | 31, 34, 55            |
| <b>Lancaster, PA</b> .....              | 55                    |
| Langstroth, Huson.....                  | 41                    |
| Lawrence, Sir John.....                 | 69                    |
| Lea .....                               | 63                    |
| Lemaigre .....                          | 12                    |
| Letchworth, John.....                   | 64                    |
| Lind.....                               | 47, 48                |
| Lining.....                             | 42, 47, 48            |
| Linn.....                               | 40                    |
| Littel.....                             | 57                    |
| <b>London, England</b> .....            | 6, 16, 30, 46, 66, 70 |
| Lowne/Lownes, Caleb .....               | 20, 64                |
| <b>Lynn, MA</b> .....                   | 52                    |

**M**

|                                      |                             |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| M'Elwaine, Fergus.....               | 65                          |
| <b>Marcus Hook, PA</b> .....         | 47                          |
| <b>Marseilles</b> .....              | 1, 2, 6, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76 |
| Martin, William.....                 | 47                          |
| <b>Maryland, State of</b> .....      | 9, 31, 32, 34, 58           |
| Mason, John .....                    | 20                          |
| <b>Massachusetts, State of</b> ..... | 36                          |
| Massey, John.....                    | 47                          |
| Mease .....                          | 11                          |
| Meeker, Matthias .....               | 39                          |
| <b>Middletown, PA</b> .....          | 52                          |
| Mifflin, Governor of PA .....        | 13, 28                      |
| Miller, Magnus.....                  | 18                          |
| Thomas.....                          | 12                          |
| Minier, Michael.....                 | 41                          |
| Monk, Duke of Albemarle .....        | 70                          |
| Morgan.....                          | 55                          |
| Morris, .....                        | 40                          |
| Benjamin W. ....                     | 65                          |
| Casper W.....                        | 65                          |
| Mosely, Richard.....                 | 65                          |
| <b>Mount Vernon, VA</b> .....        | 20                          |
| Murray, Alexander .....              | 41, 57                      |

**N**

|                                   |                |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Naffy .....                       | 60             |
| <b>Nazareth, PA</b> .....         | 38             |
| Negro/negroes .....               | 40, 42, 55, 60 |
| <b>New Bern, NC</b> .....         | 35, 37         |
| <b>New Jersey, State of</b> ..... | 38, 39, 52     |

**New York, NY**.....26, 31, 32, 37, 38, 51, 52, 55, 61  
**New York, State of**..... 33  
**Newark, NJ**..... 55, 57  
**Newburyport, MA** ..... 35, 37  
**New-York, State of** ..... 33  
**North Carolina, State of**..... 9, 37

**O**

Offley/Ossley, Daniel ..... 18, 20, 41, 63  
 Olden, John..... 65

**P**

Paine, Hannah..... 18  
**Palestine**..... 72  
 Pancoast, jun., Samuel..... 65  
 Parvin, Mary..... 25  
 Pattison, John..... 65  
 Paul, Jeremiah ..... 65  
**Pauling’s Kill, NJ**..... 52  
**Pennington, NJ**..... 40, 63  
**Pennsauken creek, NJ**..... 55  
**Pennsylvania, State of** ..... 3, 8, 9  
 Peters, Thomas ..... 20  
 Phile..... 40  
 Pilmore, Joseph ..... 41  
**Princeton, NJ** ..... 32, 55

**R**

**Reading, PA** ..... 38  
**Rhode Island, State of** ..... 35, 37  
**Richmond, VA** ..... 38  
 Ricketts..... 13  
 Rittenhouse, David ..... 77  
 Robeson, Samuel ..... 18  
 Robinson, sen., William ..... 65  
 Rofe/Rose ..... 74  
 Rogers, William..... 41  
 Rush..... 10, 11  
 Rutter, George ..... 65

**S**

Sansom, William ..... 15, 19, 65  
 Savadge, John..... 65  
 Savery, Thomas ..... 64  
 Saville, Mrs. .... 24, 50  
 Schmidt, Frederic ..... 41  
**Second river, NJ** ..... 57  
 Senter..... 10  
 Sergeant, Johathan Dickinson..... 20, 63  
 Sharfwood, James ..... 64  
 Sheldon..... 70  
 Sims ..... 63  
 Smith, Hannah ..... 60  
     Peter ..... 65  
**South Carolina, State of** ..... 9, 37, 42

**Spain**.....72  
**Spalato, Italy**.....49  
 Sprague/Spragues, William Peter..... 19, 65  
**Springfield, NJ**.....39  
 Sproat, James ..... 41, 54, 63  
**State Island, PA** .....53  
**Staten island, NY**.....33  
 Strawbridge .....63  
**Suffex county, NJ** .....52  
 Swaine, James .....64, 65  
 Swanwick, John .....25  
**Syria** .....72

**T**

Thomson, Peter .....65  
**Tobago**.....36  
 Tomkins, Jacob ..... 15, 18, 19, 63  
**Trenton, NJ**..... 31, 32, 34, 55  
**Turks/Turkey** .....72  
 Turner, Joseph.....41

**U-V**

Ustick.....18  
**Vermont, State of** .....52  
**Virginia, State of** ..... 9, 30, 36, 38, 52, 56

**W-X-Y-Z**

Waring .....63  
 Warren .....47, 48  
 Watkins, William .....65  
 Way .....40  
 Weatherby, Samuel .....54  
**West Indies** ..... 11, 37, 46  
**West Indies.** .....47  
 Wetherill, Samuel .....20  
 Whitehead, Richard.....65  
 Wickersham, Amos .....65  
 Willet, Susan.....51  
 Williams, Charles.....41  
 Willis, Thomas .....65  
 Wilmer, Lambert..... 18, 65  
**Wilmington, DE**.....40  
 Wilson, James ..... 15, 18, 19, 63  
**Winchester, VA** .....35, 36  
 Winkhouse, John ..... 18, 41  
 Wistar.....11  
     Thomas.....20, 64  
 Witman, Jacob.....64, 65  
 Wood, John .....65  
**Woodbridge, NJ** .....32, 55  
**Woodbury, NJ** .....39, 55  
 Woodside, John .....65  
 Worthington .....35  
 Young, William.....49, 50

---

A Short Account of the Malignant Fever (1793); Philadelphia County, PA

\*\*\*\*\*  
Copyright. All rights reserved.  
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/copyright.htm>  
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/pa/pafiles.htm>  
\*\*\*\*\*

File contributed for use in USGenWeb Archives by:  
Marjorie B. Winter [marjw@cox.net]

---