

II. *A Letter concerning the Antiquity of the Venereal Disease.* By Mr. William Becket, Surgeon, F. R. S. to William Wagstaffe, M. D. S. R. & Coll. Med. Lond. Soc. and by him communicated to the Royal Society.

S I R,

BEFORE I engage in the principal Design of this Letter; which will be to prove, that the Venereal Disease, when it came to be confirmed, was frequently known among us some hundreds of Years before the Siege of *Naples*: I shall endeavour to refute the Opinion of those Persons, who believe it to have had its rise there, if any such shall remain, who have read over my former Letter*. True indeed it is, that there have not been wanting several modern Authors, who have asserted it; but I determine to make it appear to be an Error as inconsiderately, and hastily received, as started by some Chimerical Author; who, because several Writers about that time, observing the Disease to begin in the *Pudenda*, separated it from another, with which it was before confounded, must likewise take upon him to assert its being a new Distemper, and to assign a certain Time and Place for its Rise. Now one might with all the Reason in the World expect, that, if the Disease had its Original there, it must have been so certainly and infallibly known, that there could have been no doubtful or uncertain Opinions about it, but

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* *Philosophical Transactions*, Num. 357.

that the Physicians, who resided in or near the Place, and those more especially, who interested themselves so far as to write of it, must have all of them, to a Man, agreed upon the Certainty of a thing, the Knowledge of the Truth of which was so easily attainable. But on the contrary, *Nicholas Leonicensis*, who was the first *Italian* Physician, that wrote of this Disease, and who lived at the very time, when *Naples* was besieged, is so far from acknowledging it to have had its rise there, from the *French* Soldiers Conversation with the *Italian* Women, and so little did he know of its true Cause, that he does not allow it to be the Consequent of impure Embraces. About this time it was likewise, that Pope *Alexander* the VIth engaged *Gaspard Torella* to write of this Distemper. This Pope was in League with *Alphonfus* King of *Naples*, against *Charles VIII.* King of *France*, to prevent his passing thro' *Italy*, when he went to besiege *Naples*; yet this Author is so far from allowing it to have had its Original there, that he tells us, the Astrologers were of opinion, that it proceeded from I know not what particular Constellations. Nor does *Sebastianns Aquilanus*, who lived at that time, allow it to be any other than an ancient Disease; or *Antenius Scanarolius*, who wrote in 1498, which was but four or five Years after the beforemention'd Siege. Nor do several other Authors, then living, say one Word about this *Neapolitan* Story. But it seems *Ulricus de Hutten*, a *German* Kt. who was no Physician, positively affirms this Disease to have had its rise there; but how he should come to know this, who lived at such a distance from the Place, and they, who were Physicians residing as it were upon the spot, be ignorant of it, will be as much credited, as his following inconsistent Relation, which will sufficiently prove,
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how little care he took to be apprised of the Truth of what he wrote. This very Author tells us this Disease was unknown till the Year 1493, or thereabouts; that he himself had it, when he was a Child, and so consequently that it was hereditary, or from the Nurse. He wrote his Book of this Distemper at *Mentz*, where it was printed by *John Schaffer* in 4to, in the Year 1519. Now if we allow him to be but 27 Years of Age, when he wrote, (for he cannot be suppos'd to be less, who before this took upon him to cure his Father of the Venereal Disease, without the Assistance of any Physician or Surgeon,) he must have had the Distemper upon him, according to his own Account, before ever it was in being. Thus we may see, how Persons may be impos'd upon by a hasty and inconsistent Writer, no way qualified for such an Undertaking, and greedily receive in Falshoods instead of Truths, if they will not be at the Pains of consulting the Original Writings of our Predecessors, the only sure Method of overthrowing such Chimerical and imaginary Notions.

But to come to what is principally designed in this Letter; If I have, *Sir*, in my former sufficiently proved, that the first Degree of the Venereal Disease was very common among us some hundreds of Years, before it is commonly said to have been known in *Europe*; there will be no Reason for any body to conceive we were at that time in any measure Strangers to it, when it came to be confirm'd; more especially, when we consider the Methods of Treatment in those Times, which consisting principally in topical Applications, many of their Patients could not possibly escape having it confirm'd on them. Now when it was in this confirm'd State, the Writers of those early times looked upon it as an entirely new Disease, and not a

Consequent of any Evil before contracted, because they were not apprised, that the first Symptoms being removed, and the Disease to Appearance cured, it should afterwards discover it self in such a manner, as should not seem to have the least Analogy with the Symptoms, that first attack'd a part, which had been for a considerable time free from any Misfortune. But because the Symptoms are the only true Characteristics, whereby we are infallibly able to know one Disease from another, it may be expected, that I produce sufficient Authorities, to demonstrate they were all of them known and described by ancient Physical and Chirurgical Writers, just as they appear to be in the Venereal Disease at this Day, if I would prove that Disease to be of a much more ancient Date, than is generally thought; and if I do this, I cannot but think it will be satisfactory, since we can have no other way of coming to a Knowledge of any one Distemper, than by its Symptoms. The Method of laying down the exact Succession of them, will be impossible to be reduced to any certain and infallible Rule, there being so great a Variety of Causes, that obstruct such a Regularity; for which Reason, I shall take notice of them in such Order as they most generally appear, which was upon no account to be expected from our ancient Writers, for as much as they mention every particular Symptom by it self, not knowing but that they were independent of each other, and that each of them was a distinct Disease. However, the proving these Symptoms were in being in these early times, will be as strong an Argument to prove the Antiquity of this Distemper, as if they had been register'd in the most exact Order of Succession, because we shall, upon the strictest Examination,

tion, find they are peculiar to the Venereal Malady only. I have, I hope, sufficiently made it appear in my former Letter, that the first degree of this Disease was anciently known among us by the name of the Brenning, or Burning; and that it was the same Thing with what we now call a Clap. The Symptoms, which are usually its concomitants, are the Phymosis, and Paraphymosis, both which are accurately described, and proper Remedies for them set down by the before mentioned *John Arden* Esq; in another Manuscript of his, curiously written upon Vellum, and beautifully illuminated. The imprudent Method of Cure of this first degree of the Venereal Malady, is sometimes attended with a Caruncle in the Urethra, which was a Disease very common among us anciently: For not to mention other early writers, our before mentioned Author gives us the Case of a certain Rector, that had such a Substance, like a Wart, growing in the Penis, which in another Place he says frequently happens, and of another, which had such an Excrecence as big as a small Strawberry, which (says he) proceeded from the corrupted Matter, which remained in the Urethra.

And indeed there is not any Symptom of the Venereal Disease, that I find so often mentioned as this of the Caruncle, insomuch that it seems to have been more common in those early times, than at this Day. But this must be certainly owing to the smooth and oily Remedies they were continually injecting, which, by their relaxing and softning the Fibres of the part, must necessarily dispose the contexture of small Blood Vessels, lodged at the bottom of the little Ulcerations, to fill with nutritious juices, and to extend themselves so, as

to form such fungous Excrefcences; and fo folicitous were they for removing thefe inconveniencies, that they made ufe of feveral ways by Corroſives and other Methods, to accompliſh this end; and a very early Writer among us, has given us a very methodical and curious Tract on this Subject, wherein he recommends the removing them by the medicated Candle, which we uſe at this Day, and lays down divers other Inſtructions, in Relation to it, which makes it probably the beſt Diſcourſe on this Subject, that was ever yet written. The ſame Author takes notice of thoſe contumacious Ulcers, which happen upon the *Glans* and the neighbouring parts, which we now call Shankers; and the great Trouble, our ancient Authors found in attempting their Cure ſufficiently diſcover them to have had their Original from a Venereal Infection. Theſe ſeveral Symptoms of the Venereal Malady our early Writers are very full in their Accounts of, and others, when the Diſeaſe was in a more confirmed State, to which they appropriated particular Names, perhaps more ſignificant and expreſſive than thoſe impoſed by modern Authors. Thus for inſtance, the Bubo's in the Groins they called Dorfers, which I have given a Reaſon for before; and the Venereal Nodes on the Shin Bones they termed the Boonhaw, which gives us a perfect Idea, not only of the part affected but after what manner it was Diſeaſed; for the old Engliſh Word, *Hawe*, ſignified a ſwelling of any Part. Thus for inſtance, a little Swelling upon the *Cornea*, was anciently called the Hawe in the Eye, and the Swelling that frequently happens on the Finger, on one ſide the Nail, was called the white Hawe, and afterwards Whitſlaw. The proceſs our laſt mentioned Author recommends, for the Cure of the Boon or Bone Hawe, is by making uſe of a Plaiſter, which had

had a Hole cut in the midst, to circumscribe it; and applying a Caustick of unslacked Lime, and black Soap incorporated together, which, with Plaister and Bandage, was to be secured on the part four Hours, and longer, if that was not found sufficient; after this he proceeds to the separating the Slough, &c. This Practice of his seems to have been found out by accident. For he tells us, when he was a young Practitioner, he having applyed both the Natural and Artificial Arsenick to the Leg of a Man, that was his Patient, it so mortified the Flesh, as surprized him; but by proper digestives, the Eschar coming off, and leaving the Bone bare, he scraped it with an Instrument for several Days, and dressed it with Incarnatives, designing to have ingendred Flesh on it; but this proving unsuccessful, he continued to scrape it, till he observed it move under the Instrument, after which having separated it, he found the Sore covered with new Flesh, and that the Bone was four Inches in length, two in breadth, and very thick, upon the removal of which the Patient was soon cured. Thus its probable this Observation of this great Man led our Predecessors to practice the very same Method; and we do at this Day in our Hospitals treat the Venereal Nodes on the Shins exactly as is here described, where we observe the same appearances, he so long before took notice of; and 'tis not in the least to be doubted, but the Boon Haw and our Venereal Nodes are the same Disease. By the appearance of some of the last of the above mentioned Symptoms, we infallibly judge the Patient has had the Infection upon him a considerable time, and that the Disease is making its gradual advances, to the corrupting and destroying the whole frame of the Body. That this was the Conclusion of the miseries of those Persons, that

that gave themselves up to the deceitful delights and entertainments of lewd Women, in those early times as well as now, I cannot better prove than by those remarkable instances you quoted from a MS. in *Lincoln Colledge, in Oxon*, which you kindly communicated to me, after you had mentioned them in one of your Learned Lectures in our Theatre. They are as follow, *Novi enim ego Magister Thomas Gascoigne, licet indignus, sacrae Theologiae Doctor, qui hac scripsi & collegi, diversos viros, qui mortui fuerunt ex putrefactione membrorum suorum genitalium & corporis sui; quae corruptio & putrefactio, ut ipsi dixerunt, causata fuit per exercitium copulae carnalis cum mulieribus. Magnus enim dux in Angli, scil. J. de Gaunt, mortuus est ex tali putrefactione membrorum genitalium, & corporis sui, causata per frequentationem mulierum. Magnus enim fornicator fuit, ut in toto Regno Anglia divulgabatur, & ante mortem suam jacens sic infirmus in lecto, eandem putrefactionem Regi Anglia Ricardo secundo ostendit, cum idem Rex eundem Ducem in sua infirmitate visitavit; & dixit mihi qui ista novit unus fidelis sacrae Theologiae Baccalaureus. Willus etiam longe vir matura aetatis & de civitat. Londonii, mortuus est ex tali putrefactione membrorum suorum genitalium & corporis sui, causata per copulam carnalem cum Mulieribus, ut ipsemet pluries confessus est ante mortem suam, quum manu sua propria eleemosynas distribuit ut ego novi anno Dni. 1430.* Now what those instances mentioned from *Arden*, or these from *Gascoigne*, who was then Chancellor of *Oxford*, cou'd possibly be but Venereal Cases, I would be obliged to any body to inform me. Certain it is, no Disease was ever known to be gotten by the carnal Conversation of Women, which first attacked the *Genitals*, causing a Corruption and Putrefaction of them, and afterward of the whole Frame of the Body, but that which is Venereal. For nothing is more commonly

commonly known at this Day, than that after the venereal engagement with an impure Woman, the Penis is the part where the Scene is first laid for the succeeding Tragical appearances; and there, and in the Neighbouring Parts, do the Symptoms of the Disease as its retainers, always first assemble, till the malignant Poyson taints the Blood and other Juices; which being convey'd over the whole Frame of the human Fabrick, if not check'd, soon brings about its total Corruption.

What I have further to add in relation to this, is, because we do not find the Disease mentioned by *Gascoigne*, was distinguish'd by any particular Name, and that great Numbers must unavoidably die of the Venereal Malady at that time, from the imperfect Knowledge of those who had the treatment of the first Degrees of it, it must necessarily follow, that when the whole Frame of the Body had received a taint from the Venereal Poyson, so as to occasion its breaking out in Scabs and Ulcers, almost all over its Surface it must generally be called by the Name of some particular Disease, whose appearances had somewhat of an Affinity to it. Now if we examine the Nature of all the Diseases that attack the Human Body, we shall not find the Venereal Malady, when it arrives at this State, to bear a greater Similitude to any than the Leprosy, as it is described by the Ancients: Nay so great was the Analogy betwixt these Diseases supposed to be, that *Sebastianus Aquilanus* has endeavoured to prove from *Galēn*, *Avicen*, *Pliny*, &c. That the *Pox* is only one Species of the Leprosy; and *Jacobus Cataneus*, a Writer almost as early as the rise of the Name of the *Pox*, tells us 'tis not only possible there may be a transition, from one of these Diseases into the other; but that he saw two Persons

in whom the *Pox* was changed into the Leprosy : That is, from having great Pockes or Pustules on the Surface of their Bodies, from whence the *Pox* is denominated, to have become Ulcerous or Scabby. This particular State of the Disease anciently put the Surgeons to a great deal of trouble: For they finding that these Ulcers were of a very contumacious and rebellious Nature, they were obliged to make use of great numbers of remedies, in order to conquer the evil Disposition of them. But they observed that all of them were useless, unless Mercury was joined with them. Now the dressing each particular Ulcer being so very tedious, they ordered the Patients to daub the Ointments over the Parts which were ulcerated; which done they were wrapt in Linnen Cloaths till the next dressing: But after a few Days they were extremely surprized, to find their Mouths began to be sore, and that they spit very profusely; but they tell us to their astonishment, that in a little time the Sores became healed, and the Patients cured. And by this accident it was the Method of Salivating by Uction was first discover'd, which is in so much use among us at this Day. From these and some other instances I have given of the Industry and Application of our Predecessors, and with what Sagacity they applyed every accidental hint, to the relieving their distressed fellow Creatures from the Misfortunes they laboured under; we ought to be led to the highest Esteem and Veneration of them, (and so much the more most certainly) forasmuch as they were principally our own Country Men, who I can prove not only from several Persons, coming from Foreign Parts to be cured of their Diseases here in *England*, but for other Reasons that they excelled most of their Contemporaries in the Divine Art of Healing. Now although

though those Foreign Authorities, I before mentioned, might be looked upon as sufficient to convince any one, how our Ancestors blended these two Diseases together: Yet shall I pursue my designed Method, and prove from our own Writers, long before those, that altho' the *Pox* was not only among us, but in distant Nations anciently confounded with the Leprosy; yet so exact were our Writers in their Observations of the Infectious Nature of one Species of that Disease, and describing the Symptoms, as was sufficient to lead any Person to the distinguishing between them, so as to separate one Disease from the other. I shall therefore first enquire into the manner how the Leprosy was sometimes said to be gotten in those early times, and then examine the Symptoms of the Disease, that attacked the Patient. *John Gadisden* a very learned and famous *English* Physician, who flourished about the Year 1340, in an excellent Work of his, he entitles *Rosa Anglica*, speaking *de infectione ex coitu Leprosi, vel Leprose*, says as follows, *Primo notandum quod ille qui timet de excoriatione & arsure Virgæ post coitum statim lavet Virgam cum aqua mixta aceto, vel cum urina propria & nihil mali habebit*; and in another place speaking, *de Ulcere Virgæ*, he says, *sed si quis vult membrum ab omni corruptione servare, cum a Muliere recedit, quam forte habet suspectam de immunditie, lavet illud cum aqua frigida mixta cum aceto, vel urina propria intra vel extra præputium*, He likewise speaking still of the Leprosy recommends a Decoction of Plantain and Roses in Wine, to be made use of by the Woman, immediately after the Venereal Encounter; upon which he tells us she will be secure. From hence it is evident some of their Leprous Women (as they call'd them) were capable of communicating an infectious Malady to those that had carnal conversation with

them which proves, the Pudenda of the Women must be diseased, for as much as we are absolutely assured Infections of that Nature only happen when a sound Part comes to an immediate Contact with a diseased one; for the Symptoms always first display themselves in those Parts through which the Virulency is first conveyed. Now in a true Leprosy we never meet with the mention of any disorder in those Parts, which, if there be not, must absolutely secure the Person from having that Disease communicated to him by coition with Leprous Women; but it proves there was a Disease among them, which was not the Leprosy, although it went by that Name; and that this could be no other than Venereal because it was infectious: for there is no other Disease that is capable of being communicated this way but the Venereal Disease, seeing the Pudenda are only in that Distemper so diseased as to become capable of communicating their Contagion. I find the learned *Gilbertus Anglicus* who flourished about the Year 1360, reasoning concerning the manner how it is possible a Man shou'd be infected by a Leprous Woman; where if we allow him to call the Malignant Matter, which, is lodged in the Vagina, [*the Womans seed*] we shall find he accurately describes the very first Venereal Infection, by part of the virulent Matters being received into the Urethra; from whence by the Communication of the Veins and Arteries, it is conveyed into the whole Body, after which (says he) ensues its total Corruption. Let us now examine the Symptoms of one sort of their Leprosy, for it must be necessarily divided into different Species, when another Distemper was blended with it, in which we observe such a diversity of appearances; and this I shall the rather do in this Place, because it will furnish us with the

next Succession of Symptoms after those already mentioned, as the Venereal Ozænas, the Ulcers of the Throat, the Hoarseness, the proof of its being communicable from the Nurse to the Child, by Hereditary succession, &c. All which we find to be true in the Venereal Disease at this Day. Our Country-Man *Bartholomew Glanville*, who flourished about the Year 1360, in his Book *de Proprietatibus Rerum*, translated by *John Trevisa* Vicar of *Barkley* in 1398 tells us *some Leprous Persons have redde Pymples and Whelkes in the Face, out of whome oftenne runne Blood and Matter: In such the Noses swollen and ben grete, the vertue of smellynge faylyth, and the Brethe stynkyth ryght fowle.* In another place the same Author speaks of *uncleene spoyrd glemy and qyttery, the Nofethrilles ben stopyl, the wafen of the Voys is rough, and the voyce is horse and the Heere falls.* Among the Causes of this sort of Leprosy, he reckons lying in the Sheets after them, easing Nature after them; and others which the first Writers on the *Pox* looked upon to be capable of communicating that Contagion: also, says he, *it comyth of fleshly lyking by a Woman, after that a Leprous Man hath laye by her; also it comyth of Fader and Moder; ann so thys Contagyon passyth into the Chylde, as it wære by Lane of Herytage.* And also *when a Chylde is fedde wyth corrupte Mylke of a Leprouse Nouryce.* He adds *by what ever Cause it comes, you are not to hope for Cure if it be confyrmyd; but it may be somewhat hidde and lett that it distroye so soone.* Thus we see how our Author under the Name of one Species of the Leprosy, gives a Summary of the Symptoms of the *Pox*, and the several ways whereby it is at this time communicated. Now when these two Diseases were anciently blended together and passed under the Name
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of the Leprosy only, it must be the real Cause why that Disease seemed to be so rife formerly; for two Distempers passing under one Name must necessarily make it more taken notice of and much more frequent; not but that much the greater Number of those who were formerly said to be Leprous were really Venereal, seems to be very evident; for since that Disease has been separated from the Leprosy, it has drawn off such vast Numbers, that the Leprosy is become as it were a perfect Stranger to us. Those that are acquainted with our English History well know the great Provision that was anciently made throughout all *England* for Leprous Persons, insomuch that there was scarce a considerable Town among us but had a Lazar-House for such diseased. In a Register which belonged to one of these Houses, I find there were in *Hen.* the VIIIth's time six of them near *London*, (*viz.*) at *Knights Bridge, Hammer-smith, High-gate, King-slend, the Lock*, and at *Mile-end*, but about 40 Years before I find but four mentioned; and in 1452 in the Will of *Ralph Holland*, Merchant Taylor, registred in the Prerogative Office, mention is made but of three, which, with his Legacies to them, are as follow. *Item lego Leprosis de Lokes, extra Barram Sti Georgii* 20s. *Item Lego Leprosis de Hackenay* (which is that at *King-slend*) 20s. *Item lego Leprosis Sti Egidii extra Barram de Holborn* 40s. from which its worth while to note, that the *Lock* beyond *St. Georges Church*, and that at *King-slend*, are at this time applyed to no other use than for the entertainment and Cure of such as have the Venereal Malady. Some of our learned Antiquaries have been much concerned to know the Cause why the Leprosy shou'd be so common in those early times, and so little known among us now: But I believe the Reason will be impossible

possible to be assigned, unless we allow according to the Proofs which I have already brought, that the Venereal Disease was so blended with it, as to make up the Number of the diseased. It seems to have been the same thing with them in *France* as with us: For the Author of the History of that *Kingdom*, which was lately published here in two Volumes in Octavo tells us that the House of the Fathers of the Mission of *St. Lazarus*, was formerly an *Hospital* for Leprous People, but that Disease being ceased in this last Age (since the *Pox* has been separated from it) these Lazar Houses have been converted to other Uses; and it may not be perhaps foreign to my purpose to take notice that the Writ *de Leproso amovendo* contained in the Register of Writs was, (according to *Coke* upon *Littleton*,) to prevent Leprous Persons associating themselves with their Neighbours, who appear to be so by their Voice and their Sores; and the Putrefaction of their Flesh; and by the Smell of them. Well then, let us examine what Method was to be taken to prevent this noysom and filthy Distemper, the Leprosy; why truly that which would infallibly prevent their getting the *Pox* after the usual Method, and that was Castration. It is certain that *Eunuchs* are rarely or never troubled with the Leprosy, according to *Monsieur le Prestre*, a Councillor in the Parliament of *Paris*, who has these Words (a) *Antipathia vero Elephantiasis veneno resistit: Hinc Eunuchi & quicumque sunt molles, frigide & effeminatae naturae nunquam aut raro Lepora corripuntur, & quidem quibus imminet Leprae periculum de consilio medicorum sibi virilia amputare permittitur.* And *Mezeray* says, he has read in the Life of *Philip the August*, that some Men had such Apprehensions

(a) Centur. 1 Cap. 6. de separatione ex causa Luis Venereae.

prehenſions of the Leproſy, (that ſhameful and naſty Diſtemper) that to preſerve themſelves from it, they made themſelves *Eunuchs*. Now it is highly probable that thoſe Perſons that ſubmitted to ſuch a painful Operation, having before obſerved, that thoſe that gave themſelves up to a free and unreſtrained uſe of Women, fell at length under ſuch unhappy circumſtances; and ſo found the only meaſures to preſerve themſelves from it was to be diſabled for ſuch engagements, which ſufficiently proves this Species of the Leproſy was Infectious; and for the reaſons before aſſigned could be no other than Venereal; for how the true Leproſy ſhould be prevented by ſuch means will be, I believe, impoſſible for any Perſon to determine. There yet remains one very conſiderable Symptom of the Venereal Malady for me to take notice of, becauſe it is looked upon to be the moſt remarkable in that Diſeaſe, which, is the falling of the Noſe; but ſince it has been already proved, that this Diſeaſe when it had arrived to ſuch a pitch as to diſcover it ſelf by thoſe direful Symptoms as are the immediate forerunners of this, was by the Ancients confounded with the Leproſy, and called by that Name, it muſt be among the Symptoms of that Diſeaſe we are the moſt likely to meet with it, if any ſuch thing as the falling of the Noſe was known among them. Now the moſt likely Method of coming to a certain Knowledge of the Infallible Symptoms of the Leproſy of the Ancients in its more confirmed State, is to conſult the Examinations thoſe unhappy Perſons were obliged to undergo, before they were debarred the Converſation of Human Society, and committed to cloſe confinement: But this being a thing ſome Ages ſince laid aſide, no Author that I know of having the particular Hiſtory of it, and ſomewhat of
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being absolutely necessary in this design, I shall do it as briefly as I can from what Remains I have met with in Records, and other scattered Papers. First then, after the Persons appointed to examine the diseased, had comforted them, by telling them this Disemper might prove a Spiritual Advantage; and if they were found to be Leprous, it was to be looked upon as their Purgatory in this World; and although they were denied the World, they were chosen of God: the Person was then to swear to Answer truly to all such Questions as they should be asked; but the Examiners were very cautious in their enquiries, least a Person that was not really Leprous should be committed, which they looked upon to be an almost unpardonable Crime: They considered the Signs as Univocal, which properly belonged to that Disease, or Equivocal, which might belong to another, and did not upon the appearance of one or two Signs, determine the Person to be a *Lazar*; and this I find to be the Case of the Wife of *John Nightingale* Esq; of *Burntwood* in *Essex*, who in the Reign of *Edw.* the IVth *An.* 1468 being reported to be a *Lazare*, and that she did converse and communicate with Persons in publick and private Places, and not (according to custom) retire her self, but refused so to do, was accordingly examined by *William Hattecliff*, *Roger Marcall*, and *Dominicus de Serego* the Kings Physicians; but they upon strict enquiry adjudged her not to be Leprous, by reason the Appearances of the Disease were not sufficient: Some of the Questions put to the Leprous Persons (as they called them) which will more fully confirm what I have before advanced, I shall now give as I transcribed them from an Ancient Book of Surgery *if there were any of his bygnage that he knew to be Lazares and especially their Faders*

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and Moders; for by any other of their Kynred they ought not to be Lazares, then ought ye to enquire yf he hath had the Company of any lepreys Woman, and yf any Lazare had medled with her afore him; and lately because of the infect matter and contagious filth, that she had received of hym. Also his nostrills be wyde outward, narrow within and gnawn. Also yf his lips and Gummes are foul stynking and coroded, Also yf his voice be horse, and as he speaketh in the nose. Now the Signs which are here mentioned, were looked upon to be Univocal: And these were they that made the Examiners principally determine the Persons to be Leprous; but what Determinations any one would immediately give from such Symptoms now, no Person is surely ignorant of. But even these certain appearances would not always satisfy some Persons, if we may believe *Felix Platenus* in his Medicinal and Chirurgical Observations, *Lib. 3.* who tells us some did not look upon them to be so, till they had an horrible aspect, were hoarse, and Noses fell. Likewise in the *Examen Leprosorum* printed in the *De Chirurgia Scriptores Optimi*, the Author speaking of the Signs of the Leprosy relating to the Nose begins thus, *Si nares exterius secundum exteriorem partem ingrossentur, & interius constringantur, & coarctentur. Secundo si appareat cartilaginis in medio corrosio, et casus ejus significat Leporam incurabilem.* And the before mentioned *John Gaddiden* in his Chapter *de Lepra* says as follows, *Signa confirmationis etiam incurabiliter sunt corrosio cartilaginis quæ est inter foramina & casus ejusdem.* Thus Sir have I proved we had a Distemper among us some hundreds of Years before the Venereal Disease is said to have been known in *Europe*, which was called the Burning; that this Burning was Infectious, and that it was the first Degree of the Venereal Disease; that this being
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common at that time, from their Method of Treatment; the *Pox* must be unavoidable: That it had exactly the same appearances it has now, although they were generally called by different Names, that the Ancients confounded it with the Leprosy; that the vast Numbers of Leprous Persons among us, before the Venereal Disease was separated from it; and the small Number we observe at this Time, is a flagrant Proof of the former; that in describing the Symptoms of the Leprosy, they give us those of the Venereal Malady; and, by mentioning how it is communicated, they describe the ways by which the *Pox* is gotten at this Day; that such Remedies were by them recommended to prevent the first attack of the Leprosy, as are at this Time in Use to prevent the first Symptoms of the *Pox*; and that the falling of the Nose, which has been look'd upon to be the most remarkable Symptom of the Venereal Disease, was commonly observed in what they called the Leprosy in former Ages.

I am, Sir,

Yours &c.

William Beckett.