

Cotton Mather on Rheumatism and the Gout

A Presentation of Chapters XII and XIII
from *The Angel of Bethesda*

Dedicated to the memory of Worthington C. Ford

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COTTON MATHER (1663-1728) is remembered popularly as a zealous Puritan whose name, together with that of his father, Increase Mather (1639-1723), is associated with the New England witch-hunts of the late seventeenth century. It is not generally appreciated that this much maligned clergyman was deeply interested in natural science, and that his writings provide a valuable source of information concerning early American medicine.¹

Cotton Mather was born in Boston, the eldest son of the Reverend Increase and Maria Mather. His father was to become a leading citizen of New England and was one of the first presidents of Harvard College (1685-1701). His mother was the daughter of the Reverend John Cotton. Young Cotton was apparently recognized as a prodigy and entered Harvard College at the age of 12 years. Concerned that a stammer might interfere with a career as a clergyman, he devoted part of his first two years to the reading of medicine. When his speech impediment was overcome, he turned to preparation for the ministry. He graduated at fifteen and three years later earned a master's degree. Shortly after this he became his father's assistant at the North Church.

Mather developed a remarkably wide range of interests and wrote nearly four hundred works dealing with history, science, and biography, as well as many aspects of theology and religion. He became well known in Great Britain and Europe, and in 1713 was elected to fellowship in the Royal Society of London. He was a staunch advocate of variolation and gave strong support to Dr. Zabdiel Boylston (1721) at a time when other physicians of Boston condemned this practice.²

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¹ O. T. Beall, Jr. and R. H. Shryock. *Cotton Mather. First significant figure in American medicine*. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1954.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 93-122.

Chief amongst Cotton Mather's medical writings is *The Angel of Bethesda*, completed in 1724.³ This is a lengthy work, the holograph manuscript of which is in the possession of the American Antiquarian Society and the bulk of which has never been published.⁴ His son Samuel (1706-1785) described *The Angel of Bethesda* as "a Book in which under every Disease there are proper, religious Christian sentiments for those who are Sick; and then the most simple and easy Medicines collected from his own Knowledge and Use, and from among the most noted Receipts and Experiments in learned Writers. This is a considerable Volumn, and cost the Doctor many Years study to fill and embellish it."⁵

Chapter XII in *The Angel*, which may be considered the first systematic American treatise of medicine, deals with the gout, and is of particular interest in that it reveals so much of both the character of its author and the nature of the medical theory and practice of its time. Chapter XII is lengthier than most of the others in *The Angel* and is far more complete in the treatment of its subject matter. This is not surprising, perhaps, in view of the fact that the gout was generally held to be the result of "the dissolute and voluptuous Indulgence of sensual Appetites."⁶ The disease thus provided a fertile basis for sermonizing. According to his son Samuel, the gout was one of five diseases for freedom from which Cotton Mather was particularly grateful:

The last thing I shall mention in this Section [of Cotton Mather's biography] is his pious Tho'ts upon being delivered from Sickness in General, and five Diseases in particular.

He was ever desirous, to be greatly affected with Dispositions of agreeable Gratitude unto the GOD of his Health; and by the Health with which he was favoured to be awakened unto such Acknowledgements of GOD and such Resolutions of Piety, as he tho't were most emphatically expected from him. . . .

There are particularly five Diseases, his Deliverance from each of which, he improved in a way of exceeding Thankfulness unto the LORD his Healer. And being delivered from them, he would on the occasion glorify his GOD after this manner. Since he was not lying under the living Death of a Palsey, he would be very zealous and active in the Service of GOD.

³ *Diary of Cotton Mather 1709-1724*. Boston, Massachusetts Historical Society, 1912, pp. 698-699. "[February] 20. G.D. My large work, entituled *The Angel of Bethesda*, is now finished. If my glorious Lord will please to accept of it, it may prove one of the most useful Books, that have been written in the World. I must now apply myself both to Heaven and Earth, to bring on the Publication of it." A single chapter, printed in New London, Connecticut, by Timothy Green in 1722, was all that was ever published in Mather's lifetime.

⁴ See Guerra for a description of Mather's many published medical books and pamphlets, beginning in 1689, and dealing with such subjects as demoniac possession, emotional disturbances, miraculous cures, "woeful consequences" of the use of rum, preparation for childbirth, treatment of measles, "inoculation for Small-pox," management of patients with incurable disease, euthanasia, and the evils of onanism. (Francisco Guerra. *American medical bibliography 1639-1783*. New York, Lathrop C. Harper, 1962.)

⁵ Samuel Mather. *The life of the very reverend and learned Cotton Mather, D.D. & F.R.S.* Boston, Samuel Gerrish, 1729, p. 72.

⁶ Richard Blackmore. *Discourses on the gout, a rheumatism and the king's evil*. London, J. Pemberton, 1726.

Since he was not under Corrosions of a Cancer he would have all Tendencies to Envy extinguished in his Soul, and a perpetual Joy at the Prosperity of his Neighbour flourishing in him. Since he had not the Tortures of the Gout, his Feet should cheerfully carry him to the afflicted, with Comfortable Words, and unto the Congregation of the Faithful; While his Hands should not be idle in writing for GOD, and in distributing to the Poor. Since the Stone had not laid him on the Rack, he would be full of tender Compassion to all the Miserable. And since he was not wasting with a Consumption, he would beware of Leanness in the Soul, and pining away in Iniquity. Thus he learned obedience by the things which he suffered not.⁷

It is possible, however, that Mather's interest in the gout was not completely impersonal, for we find the following entry in the autobiography of his father, Increase:

June 2, 1711 . . . I bless the Lord, in that he has given me to live to a great old age (for I am this moneth 72) and that he has made it to be a good old age, since I have enjoyed much health therein, and bin kept from painfull diseases. Some touches of the gout several times I have bin afflicted with, but have bin very gentle ones, and not of long continuance.⁸

The text of Mather's hitherto unpublished chapters on gout and rheumatism which follows is based on the highly accurate transcript of *The Angel* prepared a half-century ago by Worthington C. Ford (1858-1941), while serving as editor of the Massachusetts Historical Society.⁹ We have included Ford's marginal notes and have indicated these with his initials; all annotations which are not so marked represent the work of the present authors.

Cap. XII. The Prisoners of the Earth under The GOUT,

with some Notable and Instructive Entertainments
for them.¹⁰

O thou Sword causing Terroure in the Land of the Living;
how do the Sons of the Mighty tremble before thee! even the swift-footed Achilles cannot escape thee! Yea, all the People, all the Inhabitants of the World, both low and high, rich and poor together, feel the Strokes of this terrible one. Tis Dominus Morborum; but especially, Morbus Dominorum.

⁷ S. Mather (n. 5), pp. 62-63.

⁸ Increase Mather. *The autobiography of . . .*, edited by M. G. Hall, Worcester, American Antiquarian Society, 1962, pp. 257-258. (Reprinted from *Proceedings of American Antiquarian Society*, October 1961, pp. 271-360.)

⁹ We are grateful to Dr. Clifford K. Shipton, Librarian of the American Antiquarian Society, for permitting us to study both the manuscript and transcript of *The Angel* and for his helpful criticism and suggestions.

¹⁰ Chapter XII occupies pp. 78-91 of Mather's manuscript.

Tho' much Study will be not only a Weariness, but also a Detriment, unto the Flesh that has the Gout racking of it, yett the gouty Patient has usually more Strength, as well as Time, to read, than most People have in many other Diseases; and he may do well to employ his unhappy Liesure in the Reading of as many profitable Things as he can. T'wil not only divert him (which will be one part of the Regimen alwayes to be prescribed under this Malady), but also improve him; and he will be doing of Something to good Purpose, while he is laid by from his other Business; and he will not possess Months of Vanity, when wearisome Nights are appointed unto him.¹¹

We will therefore, for his Entertainment make this Article somewhat larger than some of the Rest in this our Hospital. It shall be a swoln Article that will now entertain him.

If there be anything in the Remark of Dolaeus,¹² that few Fools are troubled with the Gout, I may expect that my Patient may demand of me some rational Account of his Distemper: what may be the Original, what the Operation of it. He may look to be (cured, I will not say; perhaps he knows his Distemper too well, to look for that, but I will say,) treated, not as a Carter or a Porter, but as a Philosopher.

Now, if this may satisfy him, we will talk a little, of what is now commonly talk'd about the Matter.

The Bones, particularly at the Joints, are covered with certain Membranes, which abound with a vast Number of Glandules, (a Sort of small, soft, spungy, porous Bags,) the Office whereof is, (like a Sieve) to separate from the Mass of Blood which circulates thro' them, a certain mucillaginous Liquor or Jelly, which is by the Anatomists called, the Synovia, and which is to the Joints very like the smooth slippery Mixture of Grease and Tar, with which we anoint the Naves of the Wheels in Jacks and Clocks

¹¹ This passage is reminiscent of Petrarch's commentary on the gout in *De remediis utriusque fortunae* (1357-1360), which concludes with the following passage: "Sorrow. The gout keepeth me downe in my bedde, as yf I were bound with knottes that can never be undoone. Reason. Whyلة thou lyeest, thy minde may stande up, and survey the whole heaven, earth, and sea." (Francesco Petrarch. *Phisicke against fortune, as well prosperous as adverse*, translated by Thomas Twyne. London, Richard Watkyns, 1579, ch. 84, pp. 267-8).

¹² Joh. Dolaeus, German (1651-1707). "This disease, which seldom attacks fools and spiritless dullards, usually stems from venery, from burning the midnight oil, from grief, worry, and all other things which vitiate the life-giving spirits." *Encyclopaedia medicinae theoretico-practicae*. Francof. ad Mœnum, F. Knochii, 1684, vol. 1, p. 633.

and Carts and Coaches, to give them an easy Motion.¹³ In a Sheep or a Calf newly killed, if you cutt at the joint a little above the Hoof, while it is yett warm, this Liquor will be visible to the Eye of an Enquirer after it. Upon which Liquor, if you drop a little Vinegar, it will make a considerable Coagulation, which you may be a little instructed from. Now, foul, sharp, scorbutic Humours, bred in the Stomach, associate themselves with the circulating Blood. Wonder not, that you find me upon the Stomach here; for, whatever Fernelius¹⁴ and Company may suggest, Helmont¹⁵ and Etmuller,¹⁶ and Boerhave¹⁷ and Sydenham,¹⁸ as well as Sennertus¹⁹ and Riverius²⁰ and Bonetus,²¹ and a whole Army of Oracles, determine the Rise of the Gout ordinarily to be in the Stomach.²² We may suppose the Humours of an Ill-Digestion there to be of what we call military Shapes, and not fitt for an Association with the more peaceable Particles of the Blood. Nature has a Conflict with them; and laies hold on the first Opportunity for a Depuration, which it finds when it comes to pass thro' the mucilaginous Glands, which, doing the Office of Strainers to the

¹³ The material in this section is derived from the studies of Clopton Havers (*Osteologia nova*. London, S. Smith, 1691). Of particular interest is Mather's comment concerning the coagulation of joint fluid by vinegar (noted originally by Havers). This test is still in use in the diagnosis of joint disease. (Marian W. Ropes and Walter Bauer. *Synovial fluid changes in joint disease*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1953.)

¹⁴ Jean Fernel, French (1506-1588). "The Answer of Fernelius to the letters of Msr. Du Perat, a Gentlemen of very great Note in the Emperours Court, or of Beucherius his Physitian" in *Select medicinal counsels of John Fernelius . . . Being pick'd and chosen out of four hundred consultations and advices for sick people; of which, these are the flower and cream*. London, G. Sawbridge, 1678, pp. 333-337. Fernel believed that the "Brain is the spring of this Disease [the gout]."

¹⁵ Joh. Baptista van Helmont of Brussels (1577-1644). *Oriatrike or physick refined*, translated by J. Chandler. London, Lodowick Loyd, 1662, pp. 386-392.

¹⁶ Michael Etmuller (1644-1683). *Etmullerus abridg'd: or A compleat system of the theory and practice of physick*. London, E. Harris, etc. 1699, pp. 476-477.

¹⁷ Herman Boerhaave, Dutch (1668-1738)—W.C.F. *Boerhaave's aphorisms: concerning the knowledge and cure of diseases*. London, William and John Innys, 1724, p. 375: "1265. Now the nearest Origin of this Defect [causing the gout] is from an Indigestion of the Bowels, which do not sufficiently attenuate or assimilate the Aliments into a Substance, fit to supply the Nerves with Juices proper for'em, which do require a most elaborate Concoction."

¹⁸ Thomas Sydenham, English (1624-1689). *A treatise on gout, and dropsy* (originally published in 1683), in *The works . . .*, translated by R. G. Latham. London, Sydenham Society, 1850, vol. 2, pp. 129-130.

¹⁹ Daniel Sennert or Sennertus, German (1572-1637)—W.C.F. *A treatise of the gout*. London, Peter Cole, 1660, p. 11.

²⁰ Lazare Rivière, French (1589-1655)—W.C.F. *Of pain in the joynts, called arthritis, or the gout*. London, G. Sawbridge, 1678, pp. 531-547.

²¹ Théophile Bonnet, or Bonet, Swiss (1620-1689)—W.C.F. *A guide to the practical physician*. London, T. Flesher, 1684, p. 24.

²² Mather believed that the gout, like all other illness, originated in a disorder of the stomach. He considered the stomach to be the "the principal Wheel in the animal Oeconomy," and wrote, "It may be one of the truest Maxims ever yett advanced by any of the Gentlemen [physicians], has been that: *Ventriculus malis affectus est Origo omnium Morborum*. A distempered Stomach is the Origin of all Disease." (*The angel of Bethesda*, chapter 7, in Beall and Shryock [n. 1], p. 149.)

Blood, retain those ill-figured Humours like a Sieve (as we said,) stopping the muddy Settling. And there they prove to the Mucilage, like *Rennet* unto Milk: which at last grows into a Tophy, like a Chalk-stone or a Lime-stone, and in the mean Time causes most greivous Inflammations. The *Drelincourts*,²³ and other Gentlemen, that have opened the *gouty Joints*, have sufficiently detected the *stagnated Jelly* there.²⁴ To illustrate this a little more, it has ben found, that the *Sweat* of a *gouty Part* (which is always more offensive than any other) mixed with the slimy Liquor in a Calfs or a Neats Foot, just warm after the Creature is killed, will strangely thicken it. These Humours thus as it were *dropping* on the Joint, the *Name* of The *Gout*, has been produced, (as well as the *Pain* of it); the French, *la Goute*, coming from the Latin, *Gutta*, which signifies a *Drop* and hence flowes through an Irritation of the Nerves, a Misery almost aequal unto that which has been compared unto, *A continual Dropping in a very rainy Day*.

Before we go any further, there is this Remark very obvious unto us. The Patient may have more Cause to entertain his *Gout* very *thankfully* as well as *patiently*, than he may be well aware of. His *Gout* may be a *real* (however a *severe*) *Favour* to him. A *Fever* might probably enough have siez'd him, and kill'd him, if his *Blood*, in the Effervescence of the Battel, had not chas'd the Enemy into the Quarters it is now retreated to. The *Groans* of the *Gout* may have such *Songs* as these intermixed with them; *The Lord hath chastened me sore, but He hath not given me over to Death*.²⁵ And, *Why should a living Man complain? A Man for the Punishment of his Sin?* My Friend, instead of lying on thy *Couch*, thou mightest have been lying in thy *Grave*, if a *GOD* who in *Wrath remembers Mercy*, had not sent this rough Messenger to rescue thee.²⁶

A noted Physician who (they say) died of the *Gout*, writes, *The Gout is so far from being a Distemper, which we should be*

²³ Charles Drelincourt, French (1633-1697) and son Charles—W.C.F.

²⁴ This reference appears to be incorrect. According to Clopton Havers (n. 13, pp. 226-227) Drelincourt examined a patient who died of "a Rheumatism," not of gout, and "found a Jelly concreted upon the superficies of the muscles of the thickness of two or three Ducats." There is no indication that "stagnated Jelly" was found within the joints themselves.

²⁵ Psalms 118:18: The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.

²⁶ "What are Sicknesses, but the Rods wherewith GOD corrects His own offending Children? Pious Asa takes a wrong Step; and he is diseased in his Foot for it; God sends the Gout upon him. And, what are they, but the vindictive strokes of Wrath, wherewith God Revenges Himself upon the Children of Wrath?" (*The angel of Bethesda*, chapter 1, in Beall and Shryock, n. 1, p. 133.)

*sollicitous to cure, that in most Circumstances it is the only Releef the Constitution can have against much greater Evils.*²⁷

Thus we are approaching to the *Sentiments* of *PIETY* to which the *Gout* should stimulate the afflicted Patient.

They tell us a Story, that one *Limenius*, an old Musician of *Thebes*, mentioned by *Cardan*,²⁸ did use to cure *gouty People* by the sweet *Music* with which he entertained them. If the *Sentiments* of *PIETY* which *gouty People* are to be now entertained withal, have not the same Effect which the Notes of the *Theban* had, they may however have a better and a greater. The Blessings of an *healed Soul*, are the best of Blessings.

O thou afflicted! the *Bastinado* upon the *Feet*²⁹ is a very common, tho' no very easy, Punishment in many Parts of the World; everybody knows the Manner of inflicting it. *Hill*,³⁰ in his History of the *Ottoman Empire*,³¹ mentions an English Gentleman cured of the *Gout*, by a *Turkish Mob*, in an abusive and revengeful Way, employing this *Bastinado* upon him.³² Heaven is now laying thee under a *Bastinado*. Acknowledge the *Justice* of Heaven in it; and lett *Repentance* have its *perfect Work*. Make this Acknowledgment: *Lord, in the Worst of my Pains, thou dost punish me less than what I have deserved by my Sins. To suffer intolerable Pains that should give me gnashing of Teeth without any Intermission, and make the Cries of my Torment ascend forever and ever; is what my Iniquities have deserved.* But then, examine, Syr, whether your *Gout* be not the natural and probable Effect of some *Intemperance*, wherein you have indulged yourself; and consider your *Wayes*. It may be that you have not been so careful about your Diet as you should have been. It may be you have the *Tartar* of the *Wine* you have drunk, sticking to your Joints; or, it may be,

²⁷ The "noted Physician" with the gout is probably Sydenham, who wrote (n. 18, p. 131) that, "Nature diverted from her own good and safe method of depositing the peccant matter in the joints, as soon as the humours are solicited towards the intestines [by purgatives], instead of acute pains with little danger, induces sickness, griping, fainting, and other irregular symptoms, which will nearly destroy the patient."

²⁸ Jerome [Hieronymus] Cardan, Italian (1501-1576)—W.C.F. We can find no reference to Ismenius (Limenius) in the writings of Cardan. However, this story of the musical cure of the gout is mentioned in a work by Joh. Loselius (*De podagra tractatus*. Lugd. Bat., Joh. Marie, 1639, p. 338) which is bound with Cardan's *Podagrae encomium*.

²⁹ Whipping of the soles of the feet, an Eastern form of corporal punishment.

³⁰ Aaron Hill, English writer (1685-1705)—W.C.F.

³¹ Published in 1709—W.C.F. *A full and just account of the present state of the Ottoman empire in all its branches*. London, John Mayo, 1709.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 17. A second cure of the gout by bastinado is recounted by Bonet (n. 21), p. 25: "A Turk at Constantinople (as an ocular and credible witness, Mr. Arland a Watchmaker of Geneva told me) who had a confirmed Gout, received, according to the Custome of that People, five and twenty blows with a Cane upon the Soles of his Feet, as a Punishment for some Fault; he was deprived of the use of his Feet for some days, but he lived afterwards free from the Gout."

as *Hippocrates* observed so long ago, *Men have not the Gout before the Use of Venus*,³³ you may charge yourself with some *venereal Irregularities*. If you find any of this *Guilt* upon you, it becomes you to *humble* yourself before the Glorious GOD; *humbly confess* and *bewayl* your sinful Follies; *humbly accept the Punishment* of your *Iniquity*; and repair to the great *Sacrifice* of your SAVIOUR for the *Pardon* of it.³⁴

Languishing Man, if thy *Gout* will not bring thee down upon thy *Knees*, thou hast a Distemper worse than the *Gonagra*, (or *Gout in the Knees*) upon thee. If an *Asa*, troubled with the *Gout*, and exceedingly *diseased in his Feet*, think Skill in *Physic*, (whereof his Name would intimate his being of a Race pretending to it) may excuse him from *seeking to the Lord*, and he will not *seek unto the Lord, but unto the Physicians*, his Fault can have nothing said for the *Excusing* of it.³⁵ But every Thing that *setts a Man a praying*, is to be esteemed so far a Kindness to him. A *gouty* Man made a *praying* one, will be an *happy* one. There will be little Need of suggesting to him, what is now to be *pray'd for*. Begin, my friend, and the *Spirit of Grace* and of *Supplications* will be nigh to thee, will *help thy Infirmities*.

How reasonably would the *Pains* of the *Gout* lead the Sufferer to think on the *Pains* of that HELL, which the Book of Truth calls, a *Place of Torment*; and where a Glorious LORD whose *Resurrection* from the Dead has *victoriously* declared His *Revelation* forever to be relied upon, has *given Assurance to all Men*, that GOD can and will bring dreadful Circumstances on the *Bodies* as well as the *Souls* of the Wicked! While the *Soul* remains yett united unto the *Body*, the Sentiments of *Delight* or of *Trouble* raised in the *Soul* from Things occurring in the *Body*, have no more than what we may call *occasional Causes* in those Things, but really proceed from the Glorious GOD, with His *immediate Providence* and Concurrence as the *Universal Cause*, perpetually executing His own established *Law of Nature*, that there shall be such and such *Sentiments* produced on such and such *Occasions*. On the *Stretching* or the *Piercing* of a *Nerve*, whence come the Sentiments of *Torment* in the Mind? It is a GOD always and

³³ *Hippocrates*. Aphorisms, section VI, in *The genuine works of Hippocrates*, translated by Francis Adams. Baltimore, Williams and Wilkins Co. 1939, p. 315: "30. A young man does not take the gout until he indulges in coition."

³⁴ "The Cure of a Sin-sick Soul is what all Invalids ought to reckon their grand Concern." (*The angel of Bethesda*, ch. 1, in Beall and Shryock, n. 1, p. 136.)

³⁵ II Chronicles 16:12: And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians.

every where at Work for the Execution of His own Law, that raises them. When the Union between the *Soul* and the *Body* is dissolved, and the *Spirit returns to GOD that gave it*, the same GOD can yett more immediately, even without the Mediation of any *Nerve*, raise the like Sentiments of *Torment* in a guilty Mind; and, that he will do so, may be strongly argued from the Anguish felt by some under the Terrors of a *Conscience* under a Load of *Guilt*, who have said concerning the *Torment* of being *burnt alive*, *This is but a Metaphor to what I am suffering!* But the *Soul* of the wicked Man shall be anon reunited unto his *Body* that there may be yett further Sentiments of *Torment* given him; and a *strange Punishment* inflicted on the *Workers of Iniquity*. Who can doubt of this, that beleeves our JESUS to be a *Teacher come from GOD*; or that beholds how unpunished in this World a *just GOD* leaves the horrid Things done by the worst of Men unto those who are more *righteous than they*? Now lett the gouty People that are *chastened with Pain on their Bed*, and the *Multitude of their Bones with strong Pain*, fall into serious and awful *Meditations* on the *Pain*, which will be the Portion of them, on whom an Allpowerful GOD will make known the *Power of His Anger*. Lord, *who knows the Power of thine Anger?* Tis good Advice: *Descendamus viventes, ne descendamus morientes*.³⁶ The *Gout* is by *Paracelsus* called, *Morbus Tartareus*.³⁷ What Stimulations may it give unto *Meditations* on the Dreadful Things undergone in the *Tartareous Regions*! Man, what if every *Joint* of thee, as well as one or two, had the *Gout* reaching of it, and thy *Head* and *Stomach* at the same Time tortured with it, and this *Pain* vexing of thee for seven Years together? Truly, this were but a very little Emblem of the Miseries to which thou art obnoxious, until thou escape the tremendous Danger by a Flight unto thy only SAVIOUR, and a Life of PIETY resolv'd upon.

In the Sacred Scriptures, when *Hardness of Heart* is mentioned, the Word, *πωρος*³⁸ is made Use of. The Word is used among *Physicians*, for the *Knottiness* which an inveterate *Gout* brings upon the *Joints* of them that are tortured with it. With *Budaeus*,³⁹

³⁶ "We descend while we are living, to avoid descending when we die." (We would like to thank Prof. William C. Panetta of the Department of Classics, University of Pittsburgh, for his assistance in the translation of this and the other Latin passages.)

³⁷ *Paracelsus* (Phillipus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim), Swiss (1493-1541). *Das sechste Buch in der artzney. Von den Tartarischen oder Stein krankheiten, das ist von allen Geschichten des Stein unnd Podagrams, sampt der selben Heilung zwey Tractat*. Meissen, M. Georgium Forberger, 1574.

³⁸ *πωρος* (poros) = stone of tufa, i.e., tophus.

³⁹ Guillaume Budaeus (Budé) (1467-1540)—*W.C.F. De curandis articularibus morbis comentarius*. Paris, Petrus Regnault, 1539, pp. 41-42.

tis *Durities in Artubus*;⁴⁰ which has been pronounced *incurable*. My Friend, if thy *Gout* bring thee not unto such *Sentiments of PIETY*, or, if thy *Heart* be not sensibly moved and mended with them, thou hast something worse than a *gouty Knottiness* upon it.

I have seen a Servant of GOD, under sore *Pains* of the *Gout*,⁴¹ making his pious Reflections on the Sufferings of our SAVIOUR, when He could complain, *They pierced my Hands and my Feet*.⁴² Under the *Gout*, the *Patient* (and one who would be indeed a *Patient*) will do well to take into his Contemplation, the *Pains* endured by our SAVIOUR, when He made His Complaint, *My Hand they and my Feet have dug // ev'n as a Lion would; // my Bones, I may tell all of them; // they look and stare on me. // Like Water am I pour'd and all // my bones are out of Joint; // my Hearts like Wax; in the midst of // my Bowels tis dissolv'd. // My Strength is like a Potsherd dried, // and my Tongue joins my Jaws: // And thou hast brought me down into // the Dust where ly the Dead.* //⁴³ Sing it, if thou canst! But consider these *Pains* of thy SAVIOUR, as declaring *Demerits* of our Sins; as proclaiming the *Love* of our SAVIOUR unto unworthy Sinners; as purchasing our Deliverance from *eternal Pains*, and spiritual Advantages to arise unto us from the *Sufferings of this present Time*.

And why should not much *Prayer* to Heaven be employ'd now, as well as on other Occasions? The Apocryphal Epistle of King *Abgarus* unto our SAVIOUR, praying Him to come and heal him, supposes the *Gout* then upon him.⁴⁴

This is very sure: the *Gout* is a Misery, under which a marvelous *Patience* is called for, under such a Misery, a consummate *Patience* (more *precious* than *Gold* under the *Trial* of the *Fire*) will be found unto *Praise and Honour and Glory*. With what Concern have I read of several poor Gentlemen, in whom the Torments of the *Gout* have produced such a Disorder of Mind,

⁴⁰ "Hardness of the joints."

⁴¹ ?Increase Mather.

⁴² Psalms 22: 16: For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

⁴³ Psalms 22: 13-15.

⁴⁴ Eusebius. *Ecclesiastical history*, translated by Roy J. Deferrari. New York, Fathers of the Church, 1953, book 1, pp. 76-82: King Abgar, ruler of the lands beyond the Euphrates "suffered from a terrible bodily ailment beyond any cure by a human power" and appealed to Jesus, who promised to send one of His disciples "to heal your suffering and to give life to you and those with you." Some time later Abgar was visited by the disciple Thaddeus who placed his hands upon the king in the name of Jesus, whereupon "he was immediately healed from the disease and suffering which he had." It is not clear from this account whether Abgar had the gout, although it is noted that Thaddeus cured Abdus, the son of Abgar, of this disorder.

that they have laid violent Hands on themselves, and chose a *Strangling* or *Stabbing*, rather than *Life*! No, Syr; say rather, *I will bear the Indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him!*

§ But now, what shall be done for the Relief of the *grievous Malady*? It has hitherto been the Queen among the *Medicorum opprobria*. However, without minding an Italian Physician,⁴⁵ lett us not altogether *despair*: Something may be done. The *Tree*, whereof the *Leaves* are for the *Healing of the Nations*, may afford a *Leaf* that will do Wonders for us. The Praescription of that great Emperour Charles V who, after many Victories was conquered by the *Gout*, and said, *The best Remedies for the Gout are to Weep and to Bear*;⁴⁶ this anon will not be the only one that we may have recourse unto.

The Cure of the *Gout* will not always be a Jest; nor that Versicle always an Oracle: *Tollere nodosam nescit Medicina podagram*.⁴⁷

I am sorry for the Satyr of *Dolaeus* upon us; who sais, *Few Patients are to be mett withal, that will observe any Rules*.⁴⁸

Tis true, a great Prince afflicted with the *Gout* might very well say to the Physicians, *They were at best but good Guessers*. However, lett us then *guess* a little.

Tis beyond *Guess*, what I shall first of all quote from the incomparable *Sydenham*, who had been above thirty Years troubled with the *Gout*, and may be a little harkened to.

One Thing he sais, is this: *I confidently affirm that the greatest Part of those who have perished in the Gout, have not been so properly killed by the Disease, as by Improper Applications of external Remedies*.⁴⁹

Another Thing he sais is, *We must not attempt the Remedying of the Joints alone, without a Care of the whole*. Adding, *What-*

⁴⁵ ?Giorgio Baglivi (1668-1706). *The practice of physick*. London, Andr. Bell & others, 1704, pp. 111-112: "Tis almost in vain to prescribe any Remedy to the Gouty, unless they be very temperate in the use of Wine and Venery, and avoid both Idleness and hard Drinking."

⁴⁶ Charles V, Roman emperor and king of Spain (1500-1558). Daniel Sennert (n. 19), p. 57: "... the sick person may yet in the mean time enjoy those benefits and comforts that we have mentioned, and with Patience establish his mind, after the example of that great Emperour Charls the fifth, who was wont to say, that to be Patient, and not much to complain and cry out by Reason of the pain, are the best Remedies against the Gout."

⁴⁷ "The healing art knows not how to remove the crippling gout." The oracle is Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso). (*Epistolae ex Ponto*, translated by A. L. Wheeler. New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1924, I. 3.23, pp. 281-283.)

⁴⁸ Dolaeus (n. 12), vol. 1, p. 635.

⁴⁹ Sydenham (n. 18), p. 156.

ever does assist the Blood in discharging the vicious Humours that are mixed with it, cannot but answer the Intention of Cure, be the Method and Medicine what it will.⁵⁰

It is possible that there may one Day be found out some external Application so emollient, and relaxative and attractive, that it may first of all dilate the Pores of the Scarf-skin,⁵¹ and then with a penetrating Volatility so rarify the coagulated Humour as to bring it into a Condition for Transpiration, and then cause an easy and copious Exsudation of it; and the weakened Joint shall be therewithal corroborated. It is possible at the same Time there may be found out, some internal Antiarthritic, which may at the same Time inwardly concur to sweeten the Mass of Blood, and otherwise dispose of the ill-figured Particles floating in it, and at once dissolve the thickened Moisture in the Joint, and carry off the Humour from the Blood by some other Channels. *Who can tell?*⁵² Gentlemen Physicians, employ yett more of your Studies and your Prayers on this Occasion! We hope tis not come to a *ne plus ultra*, with you.⁵³

It is reported of *Budaeus*, that he proposing to teach a Method for the utter Extermination of the Gout, the Lady became so angry, that she siezed upon every Part of him, and made sad Work with him. *Ipsum Auctorem ita concussit, ut nil integrum ei reliquerit.*⁵⁴ The Fate of *Budaeus* will not intimidate me. I will go on with my communications.

§ In the mean Time, the gouty Patient cannot be too much afraid of *Repellents*. They are fatal and cruel *Murderers*!⁵⁵

§ *Blisters* made with *Cantharides*, have done Wonders for the easing and helping of the Gout.

§ By washing of the Feet every Day in *Urine*, and applying of *Blisters*, the Malady has been to Admiration totally cured.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

⁵¹ Outer portion of the skin, or epidermis.

⁵² The development of such uricosuric agents as probenecid, zoxazolamine, and sulfinpyrazone would appear to represent the realization of this prediction.

⁵³ Mather displays a fine sense of sarcasm.

⁵⁴ "She shook that worthy author so hard that she left no part of him whole." (Cardan, n. 28, p. 350.)

⁵⁵ Sennert (n. 19), p. 30: "But now as for Topicks (that are directed unto the Cause) and in the first place, touching Repelling Medicaments we say, that although they are by some commended; yett alone they have here [treatment of gout] scarcely any place at all. For seeing that Nature her self hath ordained this Motion, and that she endeavourth to drive forth the vitious Humors from the more internal unto the external parts that are less noble, if this motion be hindered, and the Humors driven back again unto the internal and more noble and principal parts, this cannot be done without the extream hazard of the life."

§ Dr. *Biester*,⁵⁶ a famous Physician of *Hamburgh*, returning out of *England*, carried this as one of the notable Things he had there mett withal. A celebrated Cure for the Gout, by a Bath for the Feet with the Urine of a Cow; especially, if that Liquor were also drank in the Spring-season, by which the whole Mass of Blood is diluted and purified.

§ *Boreleus*⁵⁷ tells of an Abbot who was cured of a sad Gout by abstaining from all Manner of Drink. Such was his Abstinence that he drank not a Drop for six Years together. My *Podagricks* won't make this Experiment. But I wish they would see to it, that their Drink both for Quality and Quantity, may be such as *Wisdome* would oblige them to!

§ Some will mightily cry up an Ointment of *Comfrey-Leaves*.⁵⁸

§ *Burning* of the Place affected, with *Touchwood*,⁵⁹ or with *Moxa*,⁶⁰ has had a strange Effect, for the Releef of the Gout.

Hippocrates burnt with Raw-Flax.

Ten Rhyne,⁶¹ a Dutch Physician writes a Treatise to prove that the Gout is from a *venemous* and *malignant Flatuosity*: a pernicious Vapour which is gott in between the Bone and the Membrane that immediately covers it, and so inflames it with Tumor and insupportable Torment. And he mightily commends *Burning*⁶² for it, as the grand Remedy used in the *Oriental* Parts of the World.

§ *Purgatives* are more proper to prevent than to remove the Gout; yett *Purging* in Conjunction with *Bleeding*, used before the Access of the Fitt, Monsr. *D'ube*⁶³ sais, *It sometimes produces stupendous Effects*.

§ A *Milk-Diet* for some Time entirely kept to, has done Wonders for the Releef of gouty People. Hear the Words of a

⁵⁶ Joachim Biester, German (1644-1734), chief city physician of Hamburg, 1700-2.

⁵⁷ Pierre Borel (Borellus) (1620-1689). *Historiarum et observationum medicophysicarum centuriae IV*. Francofurti & Lipsiae, Laur. Sigism. Cörnerum, 1676. The story of the Abbot is found on p. 287.

⁵⁸ *Symphytum officinale*, also known as blackwort and knitbone.

⁵⁹ Tinder, such as that formed by the action of certain fungi on wood of the oak, willow, poplar, and other trees.

⁶⁰ *Artemisia moxa*, or mugwort. The ancient Chinese practice of moxabustion was introduced to the Western world in 1676 by a Dutch clergyman, Herman Buschoff. See G. P. Rodnan and T. G. Benedek: The use of ancient therapeutic arts in the gout. *Arthritis and Rheumatism*, 1963, 6, 317-340.

⁶¹ Wilhelm ten Rhyne, Dutch (c. 1640-)—*W.C.F. Dissertatio de arthritide: mantissa schematica: de acupunctura*. London, R. Chiswell, 1683.

⁶² i.e., moxabustion.

⁶³ Paul Dubé. *The poor man's physician and surgeon; shewing the true method of curing all sorts of distempers*. Translated from the 8th edition. London, T. Newborough, T. Leigh, and D. Midwinter, 1704, p. 207 (originally published in 1678).

learned Gentleman in the *Acta Medica of Bartholinus*⁶⁴: *Nonne unico solius Lactis usu Medico vel nuper sanatos Legimus Arthreticis podagricisque cruciatibus correptos*⁶⁵

Both *Celsus*⁶⁶ and *Pliny*⁶⁷ assure us that the Vertues of Milk for the Gout, were celebrated many Ages ago.

The Learned observe that a Milk-diet is exceeding friendly to the Nerves.

§ *Antiscorbuticks* are commonly *Antiarthriticks* too.

§ Some that have been dismally handled with the Gout, have by the Use of *Bears-Grease* internally taken, obtained a strange Deliverance.

Quaery: whether the *Oil of sweet Almonds*, or *Sperma Ceti*, or some other such unctious Liquors, inwardly used, in a Sort of Diet of them, would not so sheathe the Tormentors, as to ease the Patients wonderfully. But then, Cautions must be used that an *ill-Habit* of Body be not introduced.

§ In the *Miscellanea Berolinensia*,⁶⁸ there is a new Specific for the Cure of the Gout. It is drink for three Days after the first Fitt, twelve Pints of a Diet-Drink made of *Guajacum*, *Sarsaparilla*, *Squachanthus*, *Polypodium*, and *Hermodactylus*.⁶⁹ The Drinking of this, three Days, rarely misses of curing the Patient.

§ *Quincy*⁷⁰ says, There may be almost Wonders done with *Camphire* in the Gout.

§ *Vander Heyden*⁷¹ commends a *Poultis* made of Crums of Whitebread, (or he says, rather the powdered Root of Marsh-

⁶⁴ Thomas Bartholinus, Danish. (1616-1680). *Acta medica et philosophica Hafniensia*, 1671-1679. Hafniae, P. Haubold, 1673-80.

⁶⁵ "Do we not read that those afflicted with the torments of arthritis and gout have indeed been cured recently by no more than a prescribed diet of milk alone?" See Joh. Dolaus. *Tractatus novus, nunquam antehac editus, de furia podagrae lacte victa et mitigata, propria experientia conscriptus*. Amsterdam, J. Waesbergios, 1707.

⁶⁶ Celsus. *De medicina*, with an English translation by W. G. Spencer. London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1948, vol. 1, p. 455: "Some also when they have washed themselves out by drinking asses' milk, evade this disease [podagra and cheiragra] in perpetuity." (IV, 31)

⁶⁷ Pliny. *Natural History*, Book XXVIII, chapter 33. (9.), translated by J. Bostock and H. T. Riley. London, Henry G. Bohn, 1856, vol. 5, p. 320.

⁶⁸ *Miscellanea berolinensia ad incrementum scientiarum ex scriptis societatis edita*, published by Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin, from 1701-1743.

⁶⁹ *Hermodactyl* was here included, as in many other diet drinks, because of its effectiveness as a purgative, and not because of any recognition of the specific anti-inflammatory action of colchicine.

⁷⁰ John Quincy, English (1723)—W.C.F. "Of the gout," in *Medico-physical essays*. London, W. and J. Newton, et al., 1720, p. 91. "It may be remembered what hath been said of the great subtilty of the gouty Matter, and how far it gets into the small Threads and Fibres; now by this Means it lyes out of Reach of any but the most subtile Medicines, and this we know *Camphire* to be. . ."

⁷¹ Herman van der Heyden, Belgian (1572-1650). *Speedy help for rich and poor*. London, James Young for O.P., 1653, p. 41.

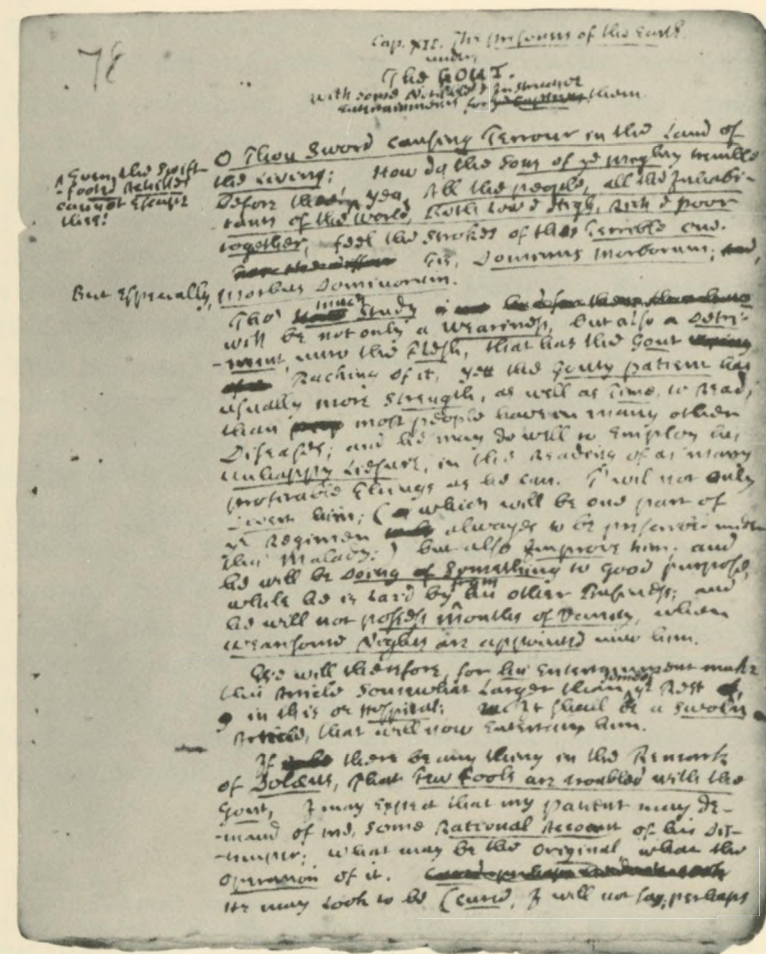


Fig. 1. First page of Chapter XII of *The Angel of Bethesda*, entitled *The Prisoners of the Earth under The Gout*, with some Notable and Instructive Entertainment for them. (Published with permission of the American Antiquarian Society.)

Mallows) boil-d up to a Consistence in New Milk, and pounded with *Oil of Lillies*, or fresh Butter; mixed with a small Quantity of *Saffron*.

§ Some have been much eased by putting their Feet or Hands into a Bath made of *Castile-Soap*, as hott as they can endure it.⁷²

§ Here's our famous *Fuller's Balsame*; for *New England* has had its *Fullers*, as well as *Old*.⁷³

§ Take two Ounces of *Saffron*; two Ounces of *Castor*; half a Pint of *Brandy*; half a Pint of *Sallet Oyl*.⁷⁴ Beat the *Saffron* and *Castor* to Powder. Putt all into a glass Bottel, stop'd and bound very close. Boil it for seven Hours. With this *Balsam* chafe the grieved Part. But always mix with it a small Quantity of *Oil Peter*.

This *Balsame*, is the older, the better. The Part in Pain must be rub'd with an hott Clothe, and bathed against the Fire. It will drive the Pain before it, if it be *not* settled. If it *be*, it will kill it in thrice doing.

§ Some Gentlemen have been sensibly releev'd, by a *Water* distilled from the Contents of a Bullock's Pannels,⁷⁵ newly killed. Fomenting the Part affected.

§ Old *Lucian*⁷⁶ brings in the Priests of that Goddess that uncontroul'd makes all Physicians Noddies, as having Temples round begirt with Elder-Branches. There's a Key to it in *Marcellus de Medicina*, who sais, that *Elder* with *Grease*, is of great Use in the *Gout*. And *Scribonius Largus*⁷⁷ writing, *De Podagra Frigida*, confirms it.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁷³ New England's physician Fullers included Samuel Fuller (1580-1633) of the Mayflower, his son Isaac, and Matthew Fuller, while that of "Old [England]" was Thomas Fuller (1654-1734), who wrote the popular *Pharmacopoeia extemporanea*.

⁷⁴ *Sallet* = salad or salve.

⁷⁵ Pannels = paunch or rumen. See Thomas Willis (1621-1675), *The London practice of physic*. London, T. Basset, T. Dring, C. Harper, and W. Crook, 1692, p. 502.

⁷⁶ Lucian of Samosata, Greek sophist and satirist (c. A.D. 125-c. 190), credited at one time with the composition of *Tragopodagra* and *Ocybus*, mock tragedies dealing with the gout. The authorship of these works is now considered in doubt. The goddess of the gout taunts the physicians with the following words:

"Me not *Apollo's* Self with all his Drugs, / High Heav'n's divine Physician, can subdue; / Nor his learn'd Son, wise *Aesculapius*. / Yet ever since the Race of Man begun, / All have essay'd my Fury to repell, / Racking th' Invention of still-baffled Physick." (*The triumphs of the gout, in Odes of Pindar, with several other pieces in prose and verse*, translated by Gilbert West. London, R. Dodsley, 1749, p. 245.)

⁷⁷ Scribonius Largus (flourished c. 40 A.D.), physician to the emperor Claudius, compiled a list of 271 prescriptions (*Compositiones*) about 47 A.D. The greater part of this collection was used, without acknowledgment, by *Marcellus Empiricus* (c. 410) in his work entitled *De medicamentis empiricis, physicis, et rationabilibus*. Mather appears to have been unaware of this in crediting Scribonius Largus with the confirmation of the

§ In the *Boylaeen*⁷⁸ Receipts there is,

A Speedy Remedy for Arthritic Pains

Dip a Feather in good Spirit of *Sal Armoniac*; and gently moisten the Parts affected, or, take one Part of *Sal Armoniac*, and three Parts of *Spirit of Wine*. Shake them together; and then dip old, but clean, linnen Rags in this Mixture; and apply them to the Parts affected. Shift them.

There is added:

A Medicine that almost presently appeases the Pains of the Gout.

Take of *Black Soap* four Ounces; choice *Wood-Soot* finely sifted, about a Dram. Add unto these about half the Yolk of an Egg. Incorporate 'em diligently; spread the Mixture thin, and apply it warm.

§ To appease *gouty Pains*: take *Linseed*, and with a little Water, beat it in a Mortar. Lett it be well-rub'd, that the Medullary Part may be separated a little from the Husk, and make the Water white. In this Liquor dip clean Rags, till thoroughly wett, and apply them warm to the Parts affected. Shift them every Hour or two.

§ When the *Gout*, leaving the extreame Parts, flies dangerously to the *Head* or *Stomach*, a *Sinapism* applied unto the *Feet*, will be as likely as any Thing to bring it back again.⁷⁹

§ A Gentleman in *Germany* releevd his *Gout*, in this Manner. He gathered *Mullein*,⁸⁰ when it was in the Flowre, and cutt a good Quantity of it small, Stalk, Flowre, Leaf, and all, and boil'd it in a pail-full of the *Forge-Water* taken from a Smith's Trough: and

value of elder. How closely Marcellus copied the receipts of Scribonius is indicated by the following excerpts dealing with the treatment of the cold gout.

"Ad frigidam podagram quae sine tumore & rubore consistit . . . Ad hoc benefacit & habisci radix ex aqua mulsa cocta & imposita: item sabucum (elder) cum axungia (axle grease) vetere tritum & impositum; adiectus & brassicae cinis cum axungia, vel semen caulium. (Scribonius Largus. *De compositione medicamentorum liber*, in *Medicae artis principes, post Hippocratem & Galenum*. [Geneva], Henricus Stephanus, 1567, vol. 2, p. 219.)

⁷⁸ Robert Boyle, English (1627-1691). *Medicinal experiments; or, a collection of choice remedies, for the most part simple, and easily prepared*, 5th ed. London, Sam. Smith, 1712. The prescriptions given by Mather are found on pp. 101-102.

⁷⁹ Mather refers here to the problem of retrocedent or irregular gout, wherein the gouty humours were held responsible for cerebral, gastro-intestinal, and a variety of other visceral complaints. Sinapisms (mustard blisters) were commonly employed to draw the peccant humours back to the extremities and permit their more natural evacuation.

⁸⁰ *Verbascum thapus*, also known as high taper and blanket herb.

"Ad frigidam podagram quae sine tumore est . . . Benefacit & Hibisci radix ex aqua mulsa cocta & imposita: sambucum quoque cum axungia, & brassicae cinis cum axungia impositus plurimum uinat." (Marcellus. *De medicamentis liber*, in *Medicae artis principes, post Hippocratem & Galenum*. [Geneva], Henricus Stephanus, 1567, vol. 2, p. 408.)

then putt into it a large Piece of *Chalk* in Powder. In this Water he bathed his Feet, Legs, and Knees, as hott as he could endure it in a Tub till the Water grew cold. He then buried this Water, with the Ingredients, in his Garden.

Using this upon the first Symptom of a Fitt approaching, it always prevented the Fitt, so that he never had any Pain, Swelling or Lameness. If he omitted the Use of this Remedy, he suffered racking Fitts of the Gout, which confined him to his Bed, a Month or six Weeks together, twice in a Year at least, chiefly Spring and Fall.⁸¹

§ Some Gentlemen, who have been sorely handled with the *Gout*, have upon Experience reported and asserted, that filling a minute leathern Bag of about the Dimensions of one's middle Finger, with powdered Brimstone, and so wearing it any where about their Bodies as to have their Flesh warming of it, they have never had any *grievous Fitt*, or any more than a *gentle Touch*, of the *Gout*, after it. But this wants more Confirmation.

§ Some eminent Physicians, besides *Borellus*, have told us remarkable Things of Gentlemen cured of the *Gout*, by having their *Dogs* to sleep with them.⁸² But, *Wo to the poor Dogs*, who have undergone the *Transplantation*!

*Valleriola*⁸³ and *Heyden*⁸⁴ give Instances of *gouty* Persons releevd by transporting Fitts of *Anger*, or of *Terror*; I am far from recommending the Experiment. But if any of you *Arthriticks* can gett such a Cure as *Antonius Fayus*⁸⁵ tells of—by a Transport of *Joy*, I shall be heartily glad of it.

When the Fitt is past, it is the Advice of Dr. *Strother*,⁸⁶ to bury the gouty Part under *hott Sand* about a Quarter of an Hour

⁸¹ There were a number of other botanicals besides mellein which were believed to act as receptacles for the imposition or transplantation of the gout. These included the "gout-turnip" (bryonia), and the willow, oak, and poplar. For a discussion of these and other magical cures of the gout see Rodnan and Benedek (n. 60).

⁸² Pierre Borel (n. 57), pp. 220-221. See also Samuel Boulton. *Medicina magica tamen physica: magical, but natural physick*. London, T.C. for N. Brook, 1656, pp. 145-146: "But by Approximation, transplantation is effected, which is performed, if to the sick person such things be applied which can attract the vitall spirits and active beames, & having so attracted them; and this is done either by application of plants, and their parts, or of beasts, birds or the like. . . ."

⁸³ François Vallerioli, French (c. 1504-1580)—W.C.F.

⁸⁴ Van der Heyden (n. 71), pp. 54-56. Van der Heyden describes reports of relief of "Palsey," "Quartane ague" and convulsions by fright or anger but does not mention such cures of the gout.

⁸⁵ Antoine de la Faye (-1615), French theologian and physician. We have been unable, alas, to find any description of this highly desirable treatment of the gout.

⁸⁶ Edward Strother, English (1675-1737). *An essay on sickness and health*. London, Charles Rivington, 1725, pp. 258-259: "It [burying the gouty limb under hot sand] calls out by the Pores, this Matter, which by residing among the Tendons, and within the *Periosteum* would harden into a Chalkstone, and stand in the way to hinder Motibn; it supplies the Joint instantaneously, and gives new Life and Vigour to it."

together, twice or thrice a Day. This will presently supple the Joint, and give new Life and Strength and Vigour to it.

§ It is of good Consequence that the *Mind* should be kept easy and cheerful, when the *Gout* is torturing of the *Body*.

Agreeable *Company* may afford its Lenitives.

Reading may afford many serviceable and comfortable Entertainments. The Influence which the Reading of *Curtius*⁸⁷ and of *Livy*⁸⁸ has had, for the Recovery of *Health* to some eminent Persons, has been celebrated. The *Gouty* may find Histories, that shall not be stuffed with the Romances in the former, or the *Prodigies* in the latter of these.

They forbid *Study*, to Men under the *Gout*. But if the great *Erasmus* had kept unto that Rule, how many Lucubrations of inestimable Value had we been deprived of.⁸⁹

Cardan observes, *Habet Podagrosus maximam Temporis Partem in sua potestate*.⁹⁰ *Gouty* People have more Time to command than other People. They should mightily study how to improve their unhappy Liesure unto the best of Purposes; and yett not in such severe Studies as to inflame and enrage the Malady.

A waggish Fellow sings,

The *Gout's* enrag'd by Care and Sadness;
The best Oyl for't, is that of Gladness.

Among the Scribbles of the bantering *Lucian*, the Learned know, there is a Farce, wherein he represents the *Gout* as a Goddess, whose Priests are the *gouty People*. While she is boasting of her invincible Power, she is informed that certain Quacks from *Syria* had threatened and undertaken to dispossess her. Offended at their Praesumption, she sent her trusty Executioners to torment them wonderfully. When the Wretches had in vain applied all their most potent Remedies, they betake themselves to most humble Supplications, wherein they confess that she had conquered them. On this Confession, she recalls the Tormentors and is contented with her acknowledged Victory.

I will not commend the *Tragopodagra* of *Lucian* to the Reading of my *gouty* Patients, because I do not think that any can be much edified by reading so lewd a Writer.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Quintus Curtius Rufus (fl. A.D. 50), biographer of Alexander the Great.

⁸⁸ Titus Livius (59 B.C.-A.D. 17), historian.

⁸⁹ Cardan (n. 28), p. 356 and Sennert (n. 19), p. 57.

⁹⁰ "The gouty man has a great deal of time at his disposal." (Cardan, n. 28, p. 374.)

⁹¹ *Lucian* attacked Christianity in his life of Peregrinus (Proteus) of Parium, who, after professing this faith, became a cynic and publicly burned himself at Harpina in A.D. 165. *Lucian* is said to have been an eye-witness to his suicide.

And it may be some will think, that in reading the *Gout-Raptures* of Dr. *Willit*,⁹² they do not find that any uncommon Charms of Witt are to be mett withal. But a little to suit the Intention of *Reading*, we will here insert some Heads of the fine Oration with which *Pirckheimer*⁹³ brings in the Lady *Gout*, as making her *Apology* against the Complaints of them who say they suffer by her.

The Lady first hopes that her Judges will not be prejudiced by the Clamorous Accusations of them that cried out upon her; inasmuch as tis well-known, the Best in the World underwent the Clamours of a calumnious Multitude.

She sais, they could not with any Face complain of her Visits to them; for she never visited them until they not only invited her, but even compelled her unto it. *Ita vivunt, certo ita bibunt, ut etiam me invitam saepiusque reluctantem in suum contubernium pertrahant, ac festinate compellant*.⁹⁴ She sais, that her Accusors laying upon her the Blame of the Pains they undergo, have indeed none to thank but themselves; *penitus immemores, Vitam suam corrupissimam, ac pessimis Vitiis contaminatam, tot malorum Causam esse*.⁹⁵ Very commonly, she sais, they are People of such luxurious Manners, that they are altogether unworthy to have Health continue with them.

She observes, if she were so bad a Companion as People would make for, how comes it then to pass, that when Persons are siezed with other Distempers, their Friends come to them with a sorrowful and condoling Aspect; but whenever she first gives her Company any where, presently the Friends of the Patient all come about him to make merry with him. Every one, *in Risum solvitur, accurit, jocatur, et ferme Congratulari videtur*.⁹⁶

She then putts her Clients in Mind of the *Honours* that she helps 'em to; every one gives *Place* to them; every one allows them to call for what they will; every one allows them to *sitt* or to *ride*, as if they were Persons of the best Quality; and Persons of the best Quality complement them. Nay, their Friends take Pleasure in

⁹² Robert Wittie, English (1613-1684). *Gout raptures, or an historical fiction of a war among the stars*. Cambridge, John Hayes, 1677.

⁹³ [Wilibald] Pirckheimer or Pirkheimer, German historian and philologist (1470-1530 or 1531)—W.C.F. His encomium *Apologia seu laus podagrae* was first published in 1522.

⁹⁴ "They so live, indeed they so drink, that they drag and constrain me, even against my will and oftener than no reluctantly, into cohabitation with them."

⁹⁵ "... wholly unmindful that their own way of life corrupted and contaminated by vices of the worst sort, is the cause of so many misfortunes."

⁹⁶ "... bursts out laughing, comes running, makes a joke of it, and almost seems to congratulate him."

bringing to them all the *Talk of the Town*; and they have more Intelligence than if they were walking on the *Exchange* every Day.

She affirms that she often obliges them to prosecute their *Business* in the most thoughtful and gainful Manner, while she rescues them from thousands of Dangers, which in going abroad, they would be exposed unto. Yea, how many might have been *hanged* for an Hand in a Plott, if she had not *imprisoned* them! Their *Heads* have been saved through her laying them by the *Heels*; Yea, she declares, that for the Cultivation of their *Minds*, they are more than a little indebted unto her. Be sure, she gives them Opportunity for it. Particularly, she makes them notable *Rhetoricians*; enabling them to *disguise the Matter* as *Rhetoricians* do, they talk about; for scarce one of them will ever confess the *true Cause* of her coming to him. And for *Astrology* and *Philosophy*, she appeals to them, whether their very Bodies do not now furnish them with more Knowledge and Presage than any *Almanacks* could ever pretend unto.⁹⁷ She makes them also *Physicians* to an high Degree: and putts 'em on Reading indeed every Thing that may accomplish them. All this too, she does for nothing! Yea, she removes and even destroys, that Contagion of the *Body*, which would obstruct the *Soul* in conversing with its most proper Objects. *Dum Corpus debilito, Animum sano; dum carnem affligo, spiritum corroboro; dum Terrenum expeligo, quod caeleste est introduco; dum Temporarium adimo, quod immortale est confero.*⁹⁸

She asserts, that she prolongs the *Lives* of Men, by driving to the Joints that furious Matter, which would else fall on the nobler Parts, *et perquam facile Spiritum extingueret Vitalem.*⁹⁹ Yea, she cures their *Vices*, at a Rate beyond all the *Divines* in the World. She knocks down, and keeps low, the *Pride* of Men; and mortifies their Ambition, making *Men remember that they are but Men*. She prevents their meddling with the Affairs of other Men. She scourges them for their criminal Excesses, and brings them to *Repentance*; and putts a Stop to their *Debaucheries*. Nor can *angry People* under her Charms, vent their Anger as they would, if she did not restrain them. She goes on with a Relation, (*which t'were to be wished might be always true!*) that by Weaning Men from this World, and showing them the Vanity of all Things

⁹⁷ i.e., "more Knowledge and Presage" of impending changes in weather.

⁹⁸ "While I weaken the body, I heal the mind; while I afflict the flesh, I strengthen the spirit; while I drive out that which is earthly, I bring in that which is heavenly; while I take away what is perishable, I bring that which is immortal."

⁹⁹ "... with the greatest ease quench the vital spirit."

here below, she awakens them to serious PIETY, and brings them to the sincere and fervent *Worship* of GOD; and helps them to glorify Him in a particular Manner with a religious *Patience* under His afflictive Dispensations. How *humble* also doth she render those that are under her Institution! how *modest*! how *courteous*! how free from a *vengeful* Temper! and how full of *Compassion* to others that may be under the same, or any Calamity! with what *Assurance of Success* do you usually address one of these Patients, when *Alms* for the Releef of the miserable are to be asked for! so that the Lady upon the whole concludes, *Accusatores meos communi vestro calculo unanimiter condemnabit.*¹⁰⁰

Lest *Pirckheimer* should not have said enough, *Cardan* will come with an Oration, and it is no longer, *Apologia*, but, *Encomium podagrae*,¹⁰¹ that must be the Title of it. It were well, if what he sais, were more universally verified. *Qualem hominem facit podagra! pium, castum, continentem, prudentem, vigilem. Nemo tam Dei memor quam qui a podagrae doloribus detinetur. Qui podagram patitur, oblivisci non potest, quod caeteris omnibus sui contingit, se esse mortalem.*¹⁰² In short, the Gout makes People wise and good; mindful of their GOD and of their *End*; and every Thing that they should be.

Reader, if thou dost not in thy own Experience find it so, thy Gout has not had its due Effect upon thee.

A Gentleman has lately published a Treatise entituled, *The Honour of the Gout*,¹⁰³ which I have not yett had the opportunity to meet withal.

Cap. XIII. The Gout's Younger Brother
or, The RHEUMATISM and SCIATACA,
quieted.¹⁰⁴

Here comes a Gout wherein Help is more commonly hoped for.

A *Rheumatism*, called a *Bastard-Gout*, lies in wandering Pains of the Joints, which proceed (as we must say till we can talk to

¹⁰⁰ "By your decision in common you will unanimously condemn my accusers."

¹⁰¹ *Cardan* (n. 28).

¹⁰² "What a man gout makes! devout, morally pure, temperate, circumspect, wakeful. No one is so mindful of God as the man who is in the clutches of the pains of gout. He who suffers gout cannot forget that he is mortal, because it affects him in every part of his being." (*Ibid.*, pp. 367-368.)

¹⁰³ *Philander Misiatrus* or *Misaurus, Pseud.* (John Taylor), English, (1580-1654). *The honour of the gout*. London, J. Roberts, 1720 (originally published in 1699).

¹⁰⁴ Chapter XIII occupies pp. 92-95 of Mather's manuscript.

better Purpose,) from a volatil Acid falling on the Membranes of them.

The lower Part of the Back sometimes is more particularly siezed with such Pains. And then the *Sciatica*, or *Hip-Gout*, becomes the Name of the Malady.

There is more of *Pain* than of *Peril* in the Distemper. But it calls for much *Pitty* in the Spectators, as well as *Patience* in the Sufferers.

O thou Child of Sorrow, under all the Dolours, with an exquisite and excellent *Patience*, glorify the Righteous GOD who inflicts them upon thee. Confess, *Lord, Thou dost not punish me as my Sins deserve. These are not the great Pains and of long Continuance which my Sins against an Infinite GOD have made me worthy of.*

Wait patiently till GODS Time arrives for the Removal of the Calamity. It won't be *at once*; it must be *waited* for. Be *patient*, and beleeve GOD *has meant all this unto good.*

So improve this *Time of thy Visitation* (in a troublesome Sense it may be called *so*;) that *Repentance* may have its perfect Work, and that upon a *Faith* in the *Sacrifice* of a SAVIOUR (who for it became a *Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Griefs*;) thou mayst have some Assurance that thy *repented*, bewayled, abhorred Sins are *pardoned*. But lett thy present Condition, wherein thou hast the *Use of thy Limbs* taken from thee, stirr thee up very particularly, to lament thy former *Inactivity* in the Service of GOD; thy being so listless and lifeless in all Motions for the serving of GOD, and the saving of thy Soul; and resolve, with the Help of GOD, that if He restore thee, thou wilt be more *active* in doing of good, yea, *doing with thy Might, what thy Hand finds to do.*

§ *Water-gruel* and *Patience* are sometimes pleasantly praescribed by them who see, (I say *see*, for you may be sure they don't *feell*!) the *Rheumatism*. The Meaning however is good. Beware of all preposterous Managements: and submitt unto a *liesurely Cure*. Be sure, *Water-gruel* is as one may say, even a *specific Diet* for it.

§ Strange Cures of a *Rheumatism* have been wrought among us, by nothing but keeping to a Diet of *Whey*. I knew a Gentleman, who, whenever a Fit of the *Rheumatism* took him, always found a Cure by following this *Whey Diet*.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ This last sentence is in a writing other than Mather's—*W.C.F.*

§ For a *scorbutic Rheumatism*, tis directed by Willis¹⁰⁶: Take the Infusion of *Stone*¹⁰⁷-*Horse Dung*, made in Wine or Ale; in any proper stilled Water twice or thrice a Day; to four or six Ounces.

§ In People of a robust Constitution, *Blood-letting* is not only seasonable, but also will *do Wonders*. In Persons of a feeble Constitution, it must be more cautiously ventured on.

§ An usual Method in the *Rheumatism*, has been, to correct the Sharpness of the Humours, with the testaceous Powders: *Crabs Eyes and Claws*, *Oister-Shels*, *Egg-shels*, and the like; a Dram four Times a Day in some warm Vehicle, for six or seven Days.

Then to sweat with Decoctions of *Guajacum*, and *Sassafras*, and the like. The Sweating to be repeted every three or four Days; and between each Time, the alkalious Powders to be taken.

Then a gentle Purge.

Briefly, *Corrigents* and *Catharticks* are the general Method for the Cure of a *Rheumatism*.

§ Honest Woodman¹⁰⁸ praescribes a Cure for a *Rheumatism*, without Bleeding, Sweating, or Vomiting. "Take *Sweet Mercury* finely levigated, one Dram; *Scammony*,¹⁰⁹ two Drams; *Electuarium Lenitivum*,¹¹⁰ one Dram and an half; Oil of *Juniper*, four Drops; with Syrup of *Saffron*, make a Mass for Pills; which divide into twelve Doses."

Give one of these every other Night, at going to Bed; which will seldome fail to give three or four Stools, the Day following. Do this till about six, eight, or ten be taken. Woodman sais, *It never yett fail'd me in curing the Rheumatism*. Yea, he adds, *when they have been continued until twelve or fourteen were taken, I have known them give great Releef in the Gout itself.*

I doubt Master Woodman's Patients might have many of them too much of a *venereal* Addition to the *Rheumatism*, else his Pills would not have been altogether so potent with 'em. Our People are generally Strangers to that Circumstance.

¹⁰⁶ Thomas Willis. *A tract of the scurvy*, in *Pharmaceutice rationalis: or, an exercitation of the operations of medicines in humane bodies*. London, T. Dring, C. Harper, and J. Leigh, 1679, p. 46.

¹⁰⁷ Stout ?—*W.C.F.* No. Stonehorse = stafillion.

¹⁰⁸ Phil. Woodman. *Rheumatism*, in *Medicus novissimus; or, the modern physician: shewing, the principal signs, causes, and most material prognosticks*. London, Chr. Coningsby, 1712, p. 320.

¹⁰⁹ Scammony = gum resin obtained from roots of *Convolvulus scammonia*, a strong purgative.

¹¹⁰ Still more laxative!

§ In *rheumatic Pains* of the Loins, (known from those of a *nephritic* Sort by the Patient rising with Difficulty, and as if cutt through the Middle, after bowing down to the Ground) Baglivi¹¹¹ says, There has been great Success of taking a Pint of Milk-Tea every Morning.

§ For the *Sciatica*, our People find great Releef by *Rum*, which has had *Castoreum* steeped in it.

§ Here is a *cerecloth*.¹¹² Take one Pint of *Linseed Oil*; eight Ounces of *Red Lead*; four Ounces of *White-Lead*; three Ounces of *Castile-Soap*; the *Leads* must be powdered fine, and sifted thro' a fine Lawn Sieve. These must be incorporated in a well-glazed Pipkin, over the gentle Fire; and you must keep stirring of it until it be brought into a Consistency for a Plaister.

This Plaister has had incredible Success in the Curing of the *Sciatica*.

Yea, and the proper *Gout* itself has been strangely releevd by it, especially, if used at the *Beginning*.

Applied unto the Joints of the Jaw, and under the Ear, it also helps the *Tooth-ache*, to Admiration.

COMMENT

Chapters XII and XIII are similar to others in *The Angel* in reflecting an uneasy integration of Mather's medical interests with his puritanical religious outlook. The gout (and rheumatism), like all other illness, is caused by sin and represents a "rough messenger" sent by a wrathful God. The chief sin is that of intemperance, in the form of gluttony, insobriety, and venery. In espousing this view of the etiology of gout, Mather found himself in agreement with nearly all the medical authorities of his time. What distinguishes Mather's expression of this concept is the theological fervor of his presentation, the colorful use of metaphor, and the frequent citation of biblical and other literary references. This first part of the chapter on gout is, in short, a sermon, which stresses the importance of prayer and repentance.

When he considers medical treatment, however, Mather is quite consistent with the practices of his time. Nearly all of the remedies listed in his pharmacopoeia are taken from popular contemporary works. The selection is remarkable in its number (some thirty prescriptions in all) and variety, and reveals great, albeit uncritical, familiarity with medical literature. Mather does little more than list the various treatments and appears to accept implicitly the word of his many authorities concerning their

¹¹¹ Baglivi (n. 45), p. 112.

¹¹² Cerecloth = cloth smeared or impregnated with oily or waxy substance.

effectiveness. Only in the value of an amulet of brimstone does he express some doubt. The majority of the prescriptions represent fairly standard external applications, including baths and poultices. There is a notable paucity of internal remedies.¹¹³

Mather's comments concerning the value of reading, study, and "agreeable company" indicate an appreciation of psychophysiological factors, which is also shown, perhaps, in the extended commentary on Pirckheimer's *Apologia seu laus podagrae*. In concluding the chapter with excerpts from this famous encomium, he abandons the earlier tone of stern rebuke and attempts to chide the reader for his misbehavior by use of gentle and perhaps more acceptable allegory.

¹¹³ His diary indicates that Mather looked after patients with the gout but fails to tell which medical or other treatment he used. (Mather [n. 3], pp. 377 and 382.)

