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A
PHILOSOPHICAL
ENQUIRY
INTO THE
Late SEVERE WINTER,
The SCARCITY and DEARNESS OF
PROVISIONS,

AND
The Occasion of the Distemper
raging in several remote Parts
of *England*:

WITH
LETTERS from many Eminent Phy-
sicians in the Country to those in Town:
And Remarks Physical and Curious.
Published for the Information and Advan-
tage of the People of *Great Britain*.

By *RICHARD BRADLEY*,
Professor of BOTANY in the University of
Cambridge, and F. R. S.

L O N D O N:

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1729.

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T O

Sir Hans Sloane, Bart.

P R E S I D E N T

O F T H E

ROYAL SOCIETY, &c.

S I R,



S I Am a Member
of the ROYAL SO-
CIETY, it is no less
my Duty than my Inclina-
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tion, to pay you my Tribute in a Branch of Philosophy which our Institution has obliged our Body to cultivate, and has the Honour of so great and so judicious a Gentleman for their President.

But these, Sir, are not the only Motives that induce me to address myself to you, since I have been long enough in that excellent Academy of Learning, to observe the many great Assistances you have given to it, by the Pains you have

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have always taken in cultivating an universal Correspondence for its Benefit, and the extraordinary Sums of Money you have given and procured, for promoting its Welfare, and establishing it on a good Foundation.

If I said less than this, I should be ungrateful, but I could say much more without giving you yet the Dues I ought to pay you.

In a word, Sir, our Body may be justly said to
owe

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owe the greatest Share of
their Ease and Honours to
yourself and your Illustri-
ous Predecessor, Sir *Isaac*
Newton.

I am, SIR, with the
greatest Respect,

Your most Obedient,

Humble Servant,

R. BRADLEY.

(I)



A N

ENQUIRY

I N T O

The late Severe Winter,
the Scarcity of Provi-
sions, and the Epidemi-
cal Fever, &c.

THE Severity of the last Winter,
the Scarcity of Provisions, and
the Epidemical Distemper, (as
some call it) which now reigns
in the Country, have occasion-
ed various Speculations among the Cu-
rious.

For which Reason I conceive it may
not be ungrateful to the Publick, if I pre-
sent them with the Observations I have
made of the several Particulars, during the
last seven or eight Months, and compare

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them as I go along, with such Remarks as I have heretofore collected, that we may the better determine how to judge of one and the other.

With regard to the late Winter, I must acquaint my Reader that I have taken such remarkable Notice of it, that, I believe, few Incidents have escaped my Observation within ten Miles round *London*, from the first Frost in *November*, 1728, to the middle of this present Month (*May*) 1729, when most People agreed the cold Weather was but just ended.

I have been the more particular in my Observations from a kind of Prognostick given me last *October* from a Country Mole-catcher, who for many Years had followed that Calling, and had been lucky enough in his former Lucubrations to hint his Thoughts to a Gentleman, by which a good Estate was saved from Ruin. The Account I had first of his Skill in this way relates not a little to what I shall have occasion to mention hereafter, and therefore shall, *en passant*, introduce these Papers with it.

A Gentleman who had a large Farm in *Essex*, going to receive his Rent, accidentally fell in company with the old Mole-catcher; who presently began to acquaint him of the Business he had followed for so many Years, and that he had been a trusty Servant for a long time to the worthy

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thy Family of the Gentleman, &c. and in a sort of Gratitude, desired his Worship would be pleas'd to believe him, that the Winter coming then on, would be very severe, and of long Continuance; for he had a good Reason to give him for it. The Gentleman was, no doubt, inquisitive enough to know the Reason of the old Man's Harangue; and learnt this from him, (at *Michaelmas* in the Year 1715) that the Winter would be severe whenever the Moles (or Wants) bury'd themselves so deep in the Ground as they had done that Season; which was a Foot deeper than ordinary; and in proportion as they wrought deeper or shallower, so would every Winter be more or less subject to Frost. The Gentleman took the Hint, and as his Tenant had not yet sold enough of his Crop to raise a sufficient Sum to pay his Rent compleatly, the Landlord look'd over the Barns, found them well stock'd, and oblig'd his Tenant not to part with any of his Corn till *March* or *April* following; as well imagining, if the Mole-catcher's Rule was certain, the Farmer would then carry his Corn to a much better Market than he could at that immediate Time; and in Consideration of this, the Landlord took no Rent at that time of the Tenant.

In effect, the Winter was severe, and gave but a melancholy Prospect of a good

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Crop of Corn for the following Summer ; and the Farmer, who was obliged to observe his Landlord's Directions, gain'd about treble the Profits for his Grain, that he first expected ; which put him in a way to improve the Land, to pay his Landlord, and even afterwards to lend his Landlord Money into the bargain, which saved the Estate to the Family free from Mortgage.

It is to be noted, that the Winter between 1714 and 1715, was attended with a Frost of ten Weeks, and the River *Thames* was frozen over, and continued so for several Weeks, when there was a sort of Fair kept upon it, with many large Booths ; an Ox was roasted, and Coaches and Carts were continually passing backwards and forwards on the Ice. Corn was then at an extraordinary Price, but yet not so dear but the common People made shift to purchase it, being then for the most part in a tolerable way of Trade ; which might probably have been still continued to them, if they had not been overtaken with Madness in the Year 1720, which stript many Thousands of their All, and encreas'd the Number of Beggars and Labourers to double the Quantity there were before. At that time however, there was some Employment left for those that would work, in the Woollen Manufactures, and in the Pompous Buildings, and other Vanities of the

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the new-rai'd Gentlemen that sprung up in that Year.

But this did not last above a Year or two ; the Secret was discovered, and Law-suits were began between the Losers and Gainers in almost every Quarter of *England*, which put a stop to Trade, and there was little Employment left for the poorer Sort, and the reduced People to get their Living by ; and what still did us farther mischief, was the *Missisipi* Project, which then started up, and carry'd most of our Money'd Men to *France*, where many of them were eas'd of the greatest part of their Stocks, and according to the best Computation, above Three Millions Sterling were lost to *England* by that Enterprize.

We may consider likewise, that lately some Woollen Manufactures have been set on foot in Foreign Parts, which may be one Reason why our own Trade in the Woollen Way does not shew itself with that Lustre that it did before ; but what is yet (it may be) a Reason of far more Consequence is, the Scarcity of Current Money. However it is certain, that many who subsisted purely by the Woollen Manufactures here, are now destitute of common Necessaries.

It was generally computed that we had in *England* in the Year 1715, about Thirteen Millions Sterling Money, of which it was

was reckon'd there were about Eleven Millions circulating; but since the Year 1720, and from thence to 1724, or 1725, there is scarce Seven Millions suppos'd to circulate, which must necessarily hurt the poorer sort of People at home. But will be farther explain'd in another Place.

I now come to treat of the late hard Winter, and consider it in the several Particulars I have observ'd of it, and its Consequences.

The *Mole-catcher*, whom I mention'd above, gave the same Reasons in *October* last, why we might expect a more severe Winter than is commonly usual, from the same Principles he had given to the Gentleman abovemention'd, in the Year 1715. *viz.* That the *Moles* had then bury'd themselves deeper in the Earth by a foot than usual, except in the Year above-mention'd, and in the Year 1709, and one Year about 45 Years ago. This I took occasion to enquire into, in several other Places about *London*, and found it generally as he had said; which gave me an occasion to enquire into the Reason of their sinking so deep into the Ground before the Severity of Winter had yet begun.

Some Learned Gentlemen of the Royal Society were surpris'd at the Story, and led my Curiosity to search after this kind of Pre-knowledge of the Mole more than, perhaps,

perhaps, I should otherwise have done; the Sum of which seems to amount to this, *viz.* The Mole, it seems to me, as it feeds altogether upon Earth-Worms, must follow its Food into every Station where it goes; and according to the Structure and tender Disposition of the Body of the Earth-Worm, it may be suppos'd that its Body is as quick and discerning in its Powers of Sensation as any Creature that has been fram'd, and may by this means feel much earlier than others the Alterations of Temper in the Air, which may on the approach of the hard Winter make its Cell or Habitation deeper in the Ground than the ensuing Frost can penetrate; for in frozen Ground the Worm cannot work or feed; neither can the Mole, or *Want*, have any Liberty to move or find his Prey, so that he must necessarily follow the Earth-Worms, as they go deeper by degrees into the Ground.

We find in many Cases amongst the Sleepers, such as the *Tortoise* for example, that against a hard Winter he buries himself in the Autumn much deeper than when we are to expect a milder Season; and tho' the *Tortoise* does not eat during the whole Winter when he is laid up, yet it seems, he has Parts fine enough to discover sooner than a human Body can do, the Temper of Air coming on towards forming the Degree of Cold or Heat that will happen the following

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following Winter; and it is remarkable, that if we take him out of his Winter-Quarters, and bring him into a warm Room, in a small time he will recover his Motion, and being carried back to the same Place, will as soon lose it.

I suppose the *Tortoise* would not be a Sleeper in the Winter, but because in the severer Seasons there is no Food proper for him; for we find that as the Food of the *Tortoise*, which is upon some particular Summer-Herbs, does decay, or decline, he begins to prepare his Nest, and never appears again till those Herbs are already in a State fitting for his Food.

The common Season of his laying himself up, is about the end of *September*; and generally we first observe them to come abroad about the middle of *April*, when the Strawberry-leaves are tender and full of Juice. But sometimes, as in a Season like this present, where the Severity of the Winter has kept us back more than three Weeks, the *Tortoises* in *England* have appeared equally as the warm Weather advanc'd.

The *Nightingale*, which feeds on the most tender Insects and Summer-Flies, is never seen with us but at the time when such Insects are to be found; some indeed are kept alive by us in Cages all the Winter, by extraordinary Meat, such as every Bird-Fancier knows.

It

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It is remarkable of the *Nightingale*, as well as of the *Tortoise*, that it follows its Food when it is in its natural State abroad. So several others of the Sleepers, the Birds of Passage, and Fish of Passage, make their Appearance only when their Food is ready for them. — So we may find that there are some Bodies which are much quicker in their Powers of Sensation than others.

The Vegetables, whether of the Land or of the Waters, must be influenced by a certain Temperature of Air before they can be rendered fit or qualified to serve as Food for either Insects or Animals; which is the Occasion that the Animals above-mentioned do not appear constantly at the same time, but as the Season for the Growth of their Food happens to be sooner or later.

These few Remarks seem to determine, in my Opinion, why the Moles Lodgment at the end of Autumn deeper or shallower in the Earth, may be look'd upon as a kind of Prognostick of the Weather that will happen.

The Experience of the Mole-catcher, and the Severity of the last Winter are so concordant to one another, that I think they are well worth our Observation. The late Winter began with a severe Frost, attended with Snow, and lasted three Weeks.

During this Frost, the Thermometers (regulated by Mr. *John Fowler* at the
C *Royal*

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Royal Exchange) were fallen many Degrees below the common Standard for extream Cold; and what was very remarkable in that Frost, some of the Fowls called *Ruffs* and *Reeves* were shot in the Fields near *Hoxton*, not more than a Mile distant from *London*. The *Ruff* and the *Reeve* I have not found before that time, to come farther South than *Norfolk* or *Suffolk*.

During the same Frost I was at *Stratford* in *Essex*, and there took out of the back Rivers with a Casting-net, a great quantity of Fish which had gathered together in the Nooks or Holes, among which the greatest Part were *Bleake*, a Fish that was never observed before in the River *Thames*, or any of its Branches so near the Body, after *September*.

The *Bleake* naturally runs up the River *Thames* before the *Smelt*, commonly about the End of *February*, or later, as the Season happens to be; and, for the most part, passes to the Sea, as I have said before, about *September*.

In this Frost, *Snipes* were in such great numbers in *Essex*, that it was common to kill three or four at a Shoot; they then appeared in Flocks, though naturally a solitary Bird.

In *Bedfordshire* and *Buckinghamshire*, as well as in the County before mentioned,
Snipes

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Snipes were seen together in such Numbers, that it was computed there were no less than Four or Five Hundred in a Flock; and were so tamed by the Violence of the Season, that Boys knock'd them on the head with Sticks; and it was common to have one Higgler from the Country bring forty, fifty, or sixty Dozen at a time to Market, which they sold at first hand for Three-pence and a Groat a Dozen, but they were very lean.

But the extraordinary Sharpness of the Season, which by the Thermometer appear'd to be much more violent than the lasting Frost, 1714 and 1715, I imagine was the occasion of the *Snipes* flocking together, as Birds of Passage do generally when they design to leave the Country; and it is very likely that the Want of Food, which render'd them so lean, as I have already said, was a Reason why we did not lose them at that Season, they not having Strength enough to go off.

During this first Frost, Wild Geese were in great Flocks, and became familiar in many Villages in *Essex*, so that they were kill'd at the pleasure of any one: And it is not a little remarkable what I heard from some People belonging to the Decoys for Wild Fowl, that the Decoys were fully stock'd three Weeks earlier than usual; and besides the common Ducks, there were several

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veral other kinds they had not seen before, which might be occasioned by the extraordinary sharp Weather, which begun about three Weeks sooner in the Northern Parts of *Europe*, than it had been known to do in the Memory of Man.

When this first three Weeks Frost ended, we had a strong Thaw about five Days, while the Wind blew from the South-West, during which time the Thaw undid the Severity of the former Frost; but then the Wind changing to the East and North-East Points where it had been before, a new Frost began, which, although it was not attended with the extraordinary Violence of the first, yet lasted for a Month and two Days, without Intermission; and during that time, I found that the *Snipes* we had left, were become solitary as they used to be, and were then in a good Plight for the Table.

Nothing more material happened during the course of this second Frost, but that Provisions began to grow dear, Coals were rais'd to a high Price; and Corn not being able to be brought by Water from the Upper Country, (by reason of the extraordinary Floods, which were occasion'd by the melting of the first Snows) was at a very high Rate.

The great Quantity of Snow that fell in the first and second Frost, together with the over-

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overflowing of the Country from the Thaws, destroy'd abundance of Cattle, either by burying them in the Fall of the Snow, or by drowning them by the melting of the Snows, and many more perish'd for want of Provender.

Between this and the third Frost there was an Intermission of about seven Days, during which time the South and South-West Winds prevailed, though not so much, but that there was still some Snow left uncongeal'd when the third Frost began.

The third Frost lasted with great Severity for about a Fortnight, attended with Snow; and seem'd (after a little Respite from cold Weather) to be as sharp as the first, but the Thermometers shew'd us that it was not so severe by five or six Degrees.

When this Frost broke, we had Accounts from the North, of great Losses in Cattle, which were either carried away by the Floods, or kill'd by the Excess of the Snow, and Sheep particularly were rotten in most Places.

The fourth Frost coming on, when we expected the Spring to open itself, the Grass, and other green Fodders were kept back; and the Snow very much prevailing at that time, contributed to keep such Cattle as could not be well supply'd with dry Fodder, from gathering Strength and Flesh enough to bear the Markets. During this time, the
Wheat,

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Wheat, and other Winter-Corn, bore so melancholy an Aspect, that several Acres were offered to Sale for a Crown each Acre, for *this Year's Crop*; because the Acrospire and the Shank, as the Farmers call it, seem'd both to be a little black.

In the mean time the ready-money'd Men supposing there would be a Scarcity, ingross'd all the Corn they could take up, and the poorer sort of People not being able to purchase any, were forced to have recourse to Horse-beans, Pease, and such like base Provender, to satisfy their Hunger; which Method of living being directly contrary to their accustomed Diet, might perhaps be a means of occasioning ill Health amongst them.

At the same time we must consider that a great Quantity of Corn was exported to several Places abroad; for as the Case was then, the poorer sort of People, who generally *make a Market*, being incapacitated to buy Corn, it was not worth the while of the Farmers to send their Waggons out on the Market Days, but rather chose to be contented with carrying Samples, and providing such Quantities as were proposed in the Markets to be delivered at certain Times, as the Corn-Factors appointed.

Besides, several Gentlemen finding that the Poverty of many People in the Country would not allow them to purchase Corn
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at the dear Rate it must necessarily be sold in the Markets, by reason of the difficulty of Carriage in the hard Weather, could have little Expectation of receiving their Rents from their Tenants; and therefore chose to take out their Dues in Corn for Transportation, which they found would bring them a double Advantage, there being a vast Demand for Corn abroad.

In some Parts of *England* we have found the People mutiny on the Occasion of exporting Corn, as in *Cornwall*, for example; and some People, we hear, lost their Lives in the Scuffles that happened on that occasion: the same likewise happened in *Carnarvanshire*, and Countries thereabouts, where, even the Corn that was going to be delivered to the Factors, was stop'd by the Country People before it could get to the Market.

About *Cheshire* and *Lancashire*, Wheat has been sold from ten to twelve Shillings a Bushel, and some Gentlemen of those Countries assure me, that all other Corn was so dear in those remote Parts from *London*, that they could keep their Horses in Town much cheaper than they could in those Parts of *England*.

About *Chester*, *Preston*, or other Parts in that Quarter, Malt was likewise so dear,
that

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that the middling sort of People, and from them to the poorer sort, did in a manner abandon Brewing for some time, and drank Water; which as they were not frequently used to, must necessarily give them a lowness of Spirits, and dispose their Bodies to receive Distempers.

A Gentleman of great Note in *Lancashire* told me, that he had introduced a few Years ago Potatoes into that Country: For as that Part of *England* does not so much abound in Corn as in Cattle, so he concluded that the Potatoe might be of some Service to the Poor, who soon found the Advantage of them; these were sold at first for about Two-pence a Peck, but are now risen to Eight-pence or Nine-pence a Peck; for as Bread happens to be dear, so the Potatoe, which is a very good Substitute, must necessarily rise in its value.

I have often wish'd that some of the Lands of those Countries where Cattle chiefly bring the Profit, were cultivated for Potatoes, for the sake of the poorer sort of People, which in a severe Season might be very profitable to them, serving them as a sort of *boyl'd Bread*, or may be otherwise used by grinding so as to make an agreeable baked Bread.

The Potatoe, in whatever Shape we put it, affords an excellent Nourishment, and in a Season so harsh as this has been, will
always

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always stand the Poor in good stead, even though Corn should be ever so plenty.

But I am obliged to take notice of a fifth Frost, which began a few Days after the break of the former; the Sun was then come near enough to us to shew its influence over the Vegetables, as well as the Animals, had not his benign Design been interrupted by Easterly Winds, which reign'd at that time with some Violence.

During this Frost, at Intervals we had warm Gleams of Sun-shine, which began to give us hopes of a favourable Spring, but these were presently overpowered by the Sharpness of the Eastern Air; and this Contrast, I suppose, was not a little contributing to the ill Health of People, especially those who were already weakened by the Severity of Weather in the foregoing Frost, and want of proper Necessaries for their Support: For we find that the Distemper which has made so great a Noise of late, has chiefly been amongst the poorer sort. ——— Heats and Colds too suddenly following one another, every one knows must prove very dangerous to any thing that has Life, either vegetable or animal, but more especially those Bodies that have been already weakened. In short, this fifth Frost we may well enough say, remain'd
with us till the 15th of *May*, which was

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as late as it was possible for it to distinguish itself.

When I speak of this fifth Frost, I do not mean that the Earth was continually frozen, but that every Night was frosty, and every Day was attended with a piercing sharp Air, which retarded the Growth of every thing, both in the Fields and Garden; insomuch, that the Course of our Spring is altered at least three Weeks from the State it used to be in, as we may observe from some of the following Remarks.

It has been common about the middle of *January* to find some of the earlier kinds of *Crocus* to blossom, but this Year I could not meet, in Gardens of the warmest Situations, any *Crocus* in flower till the beginning of *March*, and then but in a very indifferent Condition, and even in the beginning of *April* I found many of them still making their attempt to flower, whereas in all the other Seasons within my Memory, the several sorts of *Vernal Crocus*, have been long before that time past their Bloom. It is to be noted likewise, that notwithstanding this Flower has always been able to resist our former Winters, it was so overcome by this, that half the Blossoms were destroy'd before they were come out of the Ground.

This Year the *Glastenbury Thorn* at Mr. *Cawel's*, a curious Gardener at *Hoxton*, miss'd

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miss'd flowering at *Christmas*, altho' those who remember it about thirty Years have never known it fail before, of bringing its Blossoms at that Season.

The common *Violet* was not in its Prime till the beginning of *April*, though a Fortnight before that time it used to be declining in its Flower.

The *Almond-tree*, which usually made its gay Bloom and Appearance in the beginning of *February*, did not shew itself in its Lustre till about the end of *March*.

The *Mezerion* was accustomed to shew its Flowers in the beginning of *January*, but this Year hardly open'd its Blossoms till the third Week in *February*.

Asparagus, in the natural Ground, used to begin to shoot (in mild Springs) the last Week in *March*, but in every Year, however severe the Winter had been since I have had any Observation, they never fail'd shewing themselves in a strong Crop the first Week in *April*; but this Year the end of that Month was the earliest we could boast of seeing them in any Perfection.

Some sorts of *Peaches*, which used to blossom about the 10th of *February*, did not now open their Flowers till about the end of *March*.

Abricots used to blossom in *February*, or the beginning of *March*, but this Year

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did not open their Flowers till about the tenth of *April*.

The *Hazle* and *Philbud* used commonly to bring their Catkins in the beginning of *January*, but this Year they were retarded by the Severity of the Weather, till the middle of *February*, before those Male-Blossoms appeared in their full Strength, and even then were cut off, as I imagine, by the Easterly Winds; so that it is a doubt whether we shall have any great Quantity of those Nuts this Year, notwithstanding there was a large Appearance of Blossoms.

The *Alaternus*, or what the common Gardeners call the *Phylirea*, was generally kill'd by this last Frost, especially where they had been under the Discipline of the Shears; the *Laurustinus*'s have likewise generally suffered.

The *Bays*, (especially those of the finer sort) where they have been exposed abroad, are all dead, where I have had any opportunity of making my Observations: And the common sort of *Bay*, which grows so frequent in the old *English* Gardens, hath very hardly escaped the Rigour of the Frost.

All the Passion-Trees that stood abroad within the Compass of my Visitation, are dead, and there is no likelihood of their springing again from the Root as they did in the Year 1715, when the Frost was severe

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vere enough to destroy every part of them that was above ground.

The *Olive*, which I had made familiar to our *English* Climate, is by the Severity of this Year's Frost quite destroy'd.

Most of the Plants from *South Carolina*, and of the same Latitudes, which have resisted our former Winter-Frosts, have perished this Year; so that we must have recourse once more to the Gardeners, who have good Green-Houses, to renew our Stocks, if we have a mind to recruit.

The Green-Houses this Year, or Repositories for foreign Plants, were shut up for a long time in the several Frosts, to prevent the Violence of the Weather from injuring the Plants that were contain'd in them, which occasioned a Stagnation of the Air in those Houses, that proved almost as fatal to the Plants, as the Frost would have been, especially since in the Intervals or Thaws between the several Frosts of this Winter, the Damps were very great in those Houses; and even though the fresh Air was administered to them, yet the Exhalation of the melting Snow and other moist Vapours from the Earth destroy'd great Numbers of Plants, either by entering too rudely upon them, after they had been so long confined from a freedom of Air, or carrying such Poison with them as the hous'd Plants, through

through their Weakness, were not able to resist.

I think now, most People agree that there is some sort of Analogy between Plants and Animals, as I have endeavour'd to explain in some former Works. It is true, a Plant has no local Motion, but it has all the Parts necessary to grow and increase like an Animal; it will become more luxuriant when it is well fed and nourish'd, as an Animal does, and when it wants Nourishment it pines and sickens as an Animal would do that has not had proper Subsistence.

It is equally of the same Consequence to debar a Plant or an Animal from the Air, for if either one or the other be for a long time kept in a close Place, they will equally grow faint, and languish in proportion as they are shut up; and then when they have been thus reduced, if we give either of them a free Quantity of Air too suddenly, it will assuredly occasion their Destruction, even though the Air was pure and wholesome of itself.

We find that it is not every sort of Air which is agreeable to the same Man. One sort may be too fine, or too much rarified for him to breathe with pleasure, while another Air, more dense, may be proper for him, as in the Case of those who inhabit the Wolde of *Kent*, and some parts of the Hundreds of *Essex*, who cannot live in the
Hilly

Hilly Countries, no more than those who are born and bred in the Hilly Country can live long in those low Places.

We have a memorable Instance upon Record of this, in the Trial of a Man in the Wolde of *Kent*, who was accused of poisoning several Women that he had married at divers times, for in less than twenty Years he had bury'd fourteen Wives, with every one of which he had a tolerable Fortune for a Man of his Circumstances. His Defence upon his Trial was, That he married all his Wives from the Hilly Country, and upon their coming down to the Wolde of *Kent*, the difference of Air, and some Alteration likewise of the Diet, might probably be a means of flinging them into an ill state of Health, which in a few Months would carry them off, notwithstanding he was at great Expence in Physicians, and in using proper Methods for their Recovery, which Expence amounted, within a trifle, to what he got with them. This also the Physicians confirmed in Court, and the Man was acquitted.

Nor has the Air, in its several States and Changes, more influence over human Bodies, or those of Quadrupeds, or Fowls, than the different States or Change of Waters have over several sorts of Fish. *Trout*, for Example, which is naturally the Inhabitant of a clear Stream, will not live if it
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be put in a standing Water, no more than a *Tench*, which chiefly delights in a thick deep Water, will thrive in a shallow clear Stream. Neither will any of our common Pond-Fish live in Salt Water, any more than the *Cod*, the *Herring*, *Mackerel*, &c. will live in the Fresh Water.

But with regard to the Weather of the last Winter, the *Jack* or *Pike*, which used to appear on the top of the Waters about the beginning of *March*, I observed this Year did not rise till about the 10th of *April*; so that there seems to be about a Month's difference between this and other Years, according to the rising and spawning of the *Jack*, which I presume must happen from the want of Food necessary in the Waters this Year, to promote its Appetite to generate, as it used to do in *March*.

If I may be allowed to give my Reasons in particular on this Case, they are; *viz.*

The Plants in the Rivers could not grow sufficiently for the Water-Insects to feed upon, nor by the same Law of Nature, could the Insects which are Sleepers, discharge themselves from their Lethargy, nor the Eggs of others hatch, to feed upon such Plants as they required; neither did the Fish, which properly feed on such Insects, lead their way to such Places this Year so early as usual, being seemingly instructed by Nature, that their Food there was not yet

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yet provided for them; and where those Fish which are the common Prey of the *Jack* were wanting, it is reasonable to believe the *Jack* or *Pike* must fail of its Food, and consequently remain longer without being disposed for spawning: for the Want of Food or Nourishment equally keeps back the Vigour and Health, as well in one as in other created Bodies, whether Vegetable or Animal.

As Creatures of all sorts have more or less Feed to their satisfaction, so are their Bodies more or less disposed to receive any Distemper; as it is certain that as their Diet is more or less wholesome, their Bodies are more or less healthful and tending to generation.

The *Nightingale*, which usually begins its Song the first Week in *April*, did not this Year give us its Harmony till the end of that Month, nor did other Birds begin to build their Nests till about a Month later than usual; so that the *Cuckoo* of course was not heard or seen amongst us till it had an opportunity of finding a ready made Nest to lay its Egg in, according to its wonted manner.

The *Swallow* used always to appear the beginning of *April*, but I could not find that any were observed this Year till the End of that Month.

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The Backwardness of the Season, and the Poverty of the Barn-Door, as some imagine, was the occasion that the common Poultry did not begin to lay so early by three Weeks or a Month as usual, which was one Reason why Eggs were sold about *London* at double the Price that they used to be in *Lent*.

One may guess from these Instances how much the Spring Season was kept back from its usual Power of Acting upon Bodies of all kinds. To take the Medium, one may reasonably allow three Weeks difference between this and former Springs within twenty Years last past, which will be of ill Consequence to the Gardeners by retarding the ripening of their latter Fruits, unless they have as warm a Season in the Autumn, as they had a cold one the last Winter.

It is my Observation, that about the Latitude of *London*, our Fruits want a Month's Warmth more than our Climate will allow in a common Season, to ripen them in as great Perfection as those about *Orleans* in *France*; but this Year has at least taken away from our common Fruit-bearing Season three Weeks, which then makes us seven Weeks behind the Latitude of *Orleans* for ripening of Fruits, so that I much doubt whether the late *Nectarines*, *Peaches* and *Grapes* will come to Perfection; and if that

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that should be the Case, the *Peaches* and *Nectarines* may be rendered wholesome and agreeable by baking; and the *Grapes* may be made into Verjuice, which may turn to as good profit, to be sold to the Printers of Callicoes and Linnen, as if they were to be carried full ripe to Market.

It is very remarkable, that during all the Violence of the last Winter, the fine Waters of *Cars-Halton* in *Surrey* did not freeze, but smok'd during the whole Course of the hard Weather, as they constantly do in frosty Weather, let it be never so severe; insomuch that the Gentlemen thereabouts who want to supply their Ice-Houses with Ice, are forced to collect it from Places three or four Miles distant. Yet notwithstanding this seeming Warmth in the Situation, I did not observe that the Spring opened itself with more forwardness than it did in other Places, where the Frost shewed itself in its greatest Severity. It is likewise remarkable, that *Cars-Halton* has been very healthful during the Course of this Winter, while the People in other Places three or four Miles distant from it were attended with Intermitting Fevers and Rheumatick Cases, but with no Distemper that seem'd the least Epidemical.

However, if we consider the Diet and way of living of the People so near *London*, where Provisions are more plentiful

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than in the remoter Parts of *England*, it is no wonder that they were not attack'd with Distempers so severe as has been in *Somersetshire, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Staffordshire, Lancashire, Lincolnshire*, and in *North and South-Wales*, where Provisions, and Corn especially, has been very scarce, chiefly by reason of the great Quantity of Wheat that hath been exported and monopolized within the course of the last eight or ten Months; which has occasioned several of our ingenious and great Personages to consider particularly the Case, and to provide against such Practices more effectually for the future. For though it may not be disadvantageous to the People of *England* to send out Corn to foreign Markets in small Quantities; yet as there were Ingrossers of Corn probably at home that had hoarded large Stocks, one may suppose that they rather chose to lay it up in their Granaries, than bring it to Market, tho' they might sell it at a high Price. In the first place, they knew that the generality of the People had not wherewithal to purchase it; so that the Farmers or others, that had large Stocks of Corn in their hands, did not perhaps think it worth their while to carry it abroad; and in the next place, did not care to run the hazard of an extraordinary Expence that might accrue from the Wear and Tear of their Wag-

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gons and Teams through Roads that were the last Winter judged to be impassable, and such a Hindrance alone would be enough to make a Disturbance in a Market. However, that my Reader may have an opportunity of judging as well as myself of the Case, I shall give him some Abstracts of Letters from the Country on that occasion, with some farther Remarks by way of Explanation.

Extract of a Letter from Bristol, Dated
May 2, 1729.

TH^{O'} the Richness of our City occasions Plenty of most sorts of Provisions to be brought to us, we cannot boast that the Country is altogether so well serv'd, for the Monopolists have been gathering together for a long time great Quantities of Corn from the adjacent Parts, which I suppose may be by way of Stewardship from some Gentlemen who are now at *London*, who were jealous of their Tenants, to secure themselves, or to export when they could find the best Opportunity: For, in short, the poorer sort of Country People have not Money enough to buy good Corn, and most of the Farmers rather chuse to sell it to the Corn-Factors who buy great Quantities, than be at the trouble of sending it to the Country Markets;

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kets; and we suppose this has occasion'd the Country Poor to live upon unwholesome Trash, to the Injury of their Health, for abundance of them die of a Distemper in their Throats, and violent Pains in their Heads.

The Country has lost considerable numbers of Cattle by the severe Weather, and want of Provender, as well as by the Land-Floods that have happened upon the Thaws.

Extract of a Letter from Exeter, Dated May 7, 1729.

WE have lost many Cattle in the Country about us by an odd Distemper, which seizes them in the Head, and in a short time makes them blind: It is attributed to the Severity of the last Winter, which did but just allow them Fodder enough to keep them alive, and their feeding, at this time, upon fresh Brows and Grass, overflow them with Blood, so as Cattle are when they have the Gargut; but now we have found out a certain Remedy against their Distemper, which is bleeding of them as soon as they are taken.

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Extract of a Letter from Carmarthen, Dated May 3, 1729.

THE Winter has been so severe in the Country about us, that the poorer sort of People ran great hazards of being starved to death, either by Cold or Hunger; Corn has been excessive dear, and so is all other Provision, Flesh especially, from the great loss of Cattle, by Floods, and likewise by the Rot which has much afflicted our Sheep; but we have a promising Prospect of a good Corn-Harvest, notwithstanding the Corn, in the Severity of the cold Weather, made but a melancholy Appearance.

It is said that the Reason of the Scarcity of Corn with us is owing to the Ingressors, notwithstanding there is a Law to prevent their sending it out of the Nation; and then the Cold of the Winter kept the poor People from working to get their Living; they are very sickly, and drop off apace with Swellings in their Throat like a Quinsy, and sometimes have Carbuncles under their Arms, but those the Doctors cut open, and the People recover; some People say the Distemper is not catching, but for all that several People die of it in one House.

The People of *Brecknockshire* have fared much as we have done; we hope the Spring will

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will soon come on, and mend the Healths of the People, and some of the Corn-hoarders will be obliged to let us have Corn at a more moderate Price.

The Spring is very backward here, and we have lost most of our forward Crops of Beans and Pease; but as for Fruits, the Trees seem to be very well set with Fruit; and chiefly the Apples promise a good Crop.

*Extract of a Letter from Beaumaris,
Dated May 5, 1729.*

IN *Carnarvan* and *Merionethshire* there has lately been a struggle between some of the Country People and the Corn-Factors, the latter endeavouring to forestall the Markets, but were prevented by the former, there being but little Corn growing commonly in those Countries; the chief Profits made out of the Land arising by Cattle.

It is not to be doubted, by the Wisdom of our Legislature, in a late Act that has pass'd, the Exporters of Corn will be prevented for the future in their Designs, and that there will be such sufficient Employment found for the Poor, as will capacitate them to lay up some little Store against Winter for their Use, in the Severity of
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Weather, at such times when they cannot work; for surely there were never more generous Acts for the Ease and Good of the Publick ever pass'd in one Sessions of Parliament, than there were in the last. The inclosing of Commons, in answer to the Complaints of the Poor, has been pass'd in several Acts; whereby, as I understand, the Poor that have a Right of Commoning will now have their several Proportions allotted them, which they may severally possess in quiet, to their full Advantage, without being interrupted, as they were before by People's Cattle being turn'd in, that had no Right to be there.

It is very certain that Commons, when the Liberty is granted of inclosing them, will yield three times the Profit in general to the People, that they did before, when they lay open; and this would be one Means of making such of the poorer sort of People that are concerned in them, able to keep their Families comfortably, and prevent, for the future, such Miseries as some have suffered heretofore in difficult Seasons; and likewise ease the Publick of a great Expence which they have been at of late, for the Maintenance of poor People.

By inclosing of Commons, every Sharer may have the Advantage of improving the Land, to bear good Corn, so that none of

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the Poor in such a Case need want that Subsistence, even in a time when a Season is over-ruled by the greatest Severity of Frost. I have not yet found however, as the Case has been, but that *England* has been constant in producing three times as much Corn in each Year as serv'd the Inhabitants: so that there is some room for Exportation, and there will be much more when the Commons are all enclosed; for the more Corn we have, so much the more Riches we gain, and Gold is the same thing, let it be brought from any market.

But though we have already so great a share of Corn produced in *England*, most of the Corn-Farms have one third Part of Land Fallow, or Uncropp'd every Year.

As to leaving Ground fallow, although it has been a prevailing Custom among the Farmers, Time out of Mind, I cannot find there is any Reason for it; for these Fallows are commonly overgrown with Weeds, which of necessity must draw as much Nourishment from the Ground as Corn would do: Why then might not something of Worth be sow'd upon such Spots of Land, either Pease, Beans, &c. to serve as a Food to Mankind, and which would draw none of the Nourishment from the Ground which would disappoint the Corn that was to be sown the Year following of its proper Subsistence? Or else one might
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sow such Lands against the Winter, with Turnips, or other proper Fodder for Cattle, that would help them in a hard Season, when dry Provender may happen to be scarce, or even would afford us such Fodder as might be cut in the Summer for the Winter's Use.

But even as the present Case is, without yet receiving any Benefit by the Acts lately made for inclosing of Commons, or the employing of Fallows, one might reasonably judge, that about one third Part of the Corn of the Nation might be well enough exported, one Year with another, without doing the People of *England* any Injury; but more especially when the Commons in *England* come to be inclosed, and the Methods taken that I have prescribed above, are practis'd by the Farmers, for then Cattle will have more Plenty of Fodder in the Winter, and will be less subject to suffer by severe Seasons.

By these means, when the Winter happens to prove harsh, such Cattle as feed continually abroad may be shifted from low Lands in time of Floods, to the sides of Hills, and meet there with a proper Subsistence, and Defence from Injuries that may happen by great Snows; considering always that the Places we bring them to, be well shelter'd from the Drift of the Snow, which comes generally from the North and
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North East Points. But then some will say, of what Use will those Lands be, that lie exposed to the North and North East Points? Such Lands, we may very reasonably answer, will afford good Crops of green Fodder, when those on the South Side of Hills will be scorch'd and burnt up, as the Cattle themselves would teach us, if they were at full liberty to follow their own Intent in an open Country; and therefore when we come to inclose Land, the Farmer ought to think in such a manner, as that his Cattle may always be so situated, as Nature would direct them to do, had they the choice of the Country at their own Will. The good Management of Cattle in this sort, does not only preserve their Life and Health, but increases and improves their Flesh, for it is certain where you have Plenty of good Fodder, you may have Plenty of good Cattle, which is not disagreeable to the Phrase, that *all Flesh is Grass* (or *Herb*.)

Another thing, which is necessary to be observed, with regard to the Improvement as well as Increase of Salutory or Healthful Diet for Mankind, is, by providing and stocking our Gardens betimes with wholesome Herbs and Roots for Winter Use, for which in most of the *European* Countries one fourth Part of the common Food is gathered.

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To mention a few of these, there are the Cabbage, and its several kinds, the Colerape, the Turnip, the Carrot, the Parsnip, and the Potatoc, besides several other nourishing Plants, which I have introduced into *England* in my former Works, from the excellent Use I have seen made of them abroad, will be of great Assistance, if other Provisions should prove scarce; besides the common Benefit such Ingredients of the Garden will prove to those that use them in their Kitchens, in the time of the greatest Plenty.

There can be but one Reason that I know of, why some of the lower sort of People may be against this Doctrine; which is the great Quantity of Flesh that they have used customarily in their Diet, and that it would be demeaning themselves to enter upon so low a Food as Herbs and Roots: but I believe that Obstacle may be removed, when I tell them, that most of the Quality in *England* take pleasure in the Food that the Garden produces.

Those who lead a sedentary Life, or live in such manner that they use little Exercise, find Herbs and Roots the most proper Diet for the Preservation of their Health; I don't mean to have them abandon entirely Flesh, but to use at least one third Part of the Vegetable Produce with the Flesh they eat, or in proportion lessen the Quantity

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tity of Herbs as they work harder, or use more Exercise; for too much Flesh without Exercise, breeds the Scurvy, and other Distempers, which are hard to root out of the Body when they have got possession.

I have known, where such Distempers have been contracted by high Diet, the Remedy that has proved most effectual has consisted chiefly of Herbs, whilst on the contrary much salted Flesh, without Exercise, contributes to breed such a Distemper in human Bodies; and if this Diet of *Salt-Flesh*, high-seasoned with Spices, was to be used (as far as I have observed) by People who use little or no Exercise, they would assuredly be subject to the Stone: but if they still add to this high Food sharp, thin, and light Wine, such as *Burgundy*, *Champaign*, &c. they will stand a fair chance for the Gout. And it is for this Reason we find that most People of the highest Rank, who use generally this way of living, are troubled with the two last terrible Distempers, for they seldom use Exercise enough to get rid of the ill Effects, which will necessarily attend such a way of Life; while the poorer sort, who live upon simple Food, and use Exercise, are seldom troubled with such Distempers.

It may be objected, that in *France* the common People are generally alert and brisk, though they drink commonly such
Wines

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Wines as I speak of, but then their Food is, for the most part, Herbs and Fish; but if we consider the higher and more fashionable Living amongst the great Men in *France*, we shall find that they are yet more subject to the Gout and the Stone than the Gentry of *England*, as appears by the Observations I have made for the last seven or eight Years past, by which I find that most of the Quality of *France* die of the Stone, especially those who reside at *Paris*, or use the most elegant way (as it is call'd) of living.

Thus far Diet, in too much Plenty, as well as where it is in too great Want, seems to be equally injurious to the Rich as to the Poor; the Medium way of living practised among the Hospitable Gentlemen of our Country about three or fourscore Years ago, consisted chiefly of substantial plain Diet, *viz.* Beef, Mutton, Fowls, Fish, and other such like wholesome and nourishing Food; their Drinks were then Cyder, Ale, and Wines, for the most part, made of the Produce of our Country; and if we were to step back an hundred Years, perhaps we had no better Spice in *England* than the *Bay-leaf*, which the good Women then used by way of Cordial, and to help Digestion, especially when they farced or forc'd any of their Meats, as well knowing Compounds would give the Sto-
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mach a double trouble in the Performance of its duty, when it received two things at once, that it had been unaccustomed to, and were equally of hard Digestion.

I suppose that this Aromatick or Spice of the *Bay-leaf* was first known and used in *Britain* by the *Druids*, who officiated as Priests and Physicians at the same time, and who made the *Oak* their Temple of Worship, in honour of *Saturn*, at whose Festival, which was some time in *December*, the common People adorned the *Oak*, which was then naked of Leaves, with Branches of all the Ever-greens that they could collect; such as the Bay, the Juniper, the Ivy, the Mistletoe, and many others, which did not only give a grace to their Temple, but served as Physick to be distributed to the People by the Priest. A Preparation of the Bay being the best Carmi-native then known, cured them of the Cholick; the Juniper being the best Diuretick, would help Obstructions in the Reins and Bladder, such as the Gravel or Stone, if any such Distempers were then known in this Island. The Ivy, whose Berries make an extraordinary Alexipharmic, as we have often proved, and the famous Sir *John Colbatch* has particularly experienced as a Remedy against infectious Fevers, and was likely used as such by the *Druids*; and the Mistletoe Sir *John Colbatch* has likewise discovered

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vered to be the best Medicine that can be used in Epileptick Cases; and the Bark of the Oak, the very Temple itself, the most proper Remedy then in being, that we can guess at, against Intermitting Fevers.

But it is now necessary that we take a view of the Distemper, which has lately been so frequent and fatal in the Country, which the following Extracts of Letters from the several Parts of *England* and *Wales* will in some measure explain.

Extract of a Letter from Carnarvan in North-Wales, Dated May 7, 1729.

THE Country is very sickly, not only in the County of *Carnarvan*, but in *Merionethshire*, and others adjacent, in-somuch that, with the Distemper which seizes People with Swellings or Tumours in their Throats, so many die with us, that several Houses are shut up, not having one Person left alive of the Families. When the Distemper takes them in the Throat, they are commonly dead in 24 Hours; but if the Swelling breaks, the People in eight or nine Days are well enough to do Business.

The late cold Winter, and the great want of Provisions, together with the Poverty of the People hereabouts, is said to be the occasion of this Distemper.

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Those who have the Tumours under their Arms, or in other Parts of the Body except the Throat, are generally thought out of danger.

Extract of a Letter from Gloucester, Dated April 28, 1729.

I Have, at your Request, enquired after the Welfare of our Country People, who I find to be for the most part, in a very bad state of Health, from the Dearness of Provisions, as I apprehend, the Want of Work, and the Violence of the late Winter Season; they are attack'd with Fevers that, for the most part, carry them off in 48 Hours. In one Family of nine Persons there was but one left alive in a few Days, after the Distemper first took the House, and lately the dead Bodies of three persons of one Family, *viz.* The Father, Son, and Daughter, were brought hither to be bury'd at one time, from a Place not above a Mile distant from this City, and the Mistress of the same Family died but a few days before.

It is supposed that the Smoke of this City keeps the Inhabitants in good Health, or it may be that our Inhabitants are in a better State of Health than those in the Country, because they are in less want, and feed upon more wholesome Diet. I should tell you

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you before I conclude, that most of the People that die so suddenly are seized with Swellings in their Throats.

Pray, if the Physicians in your great Town have made any particular Remarks upon this extraordinary Distemper, and have found a Method of Cure for it, send me word by the first Post.

Extract of a Letter from Grantham in Lincolnshire, Dated May 7, 1729.

THE Country hereabouts is very sickly, and great Numbers of People die of Swellings in the Throat, attended with a Fever, which carries them off in 24 Hours: These Tumours or Swellings sometimes appear under the Arms, and on other parts of the Body, and if they break the Patient is then safe.

Extract of a Letter from Pershore in Worcestershire, Dated May 5, 1729.

A New Distemper rages in these parts which kills People very suddenly; whole Families have been taken off by it, some by Swellings in the Throat, and other parts of the Body, which, except they break, take People off in 24 Hours: In the Village call'd *Ashton-Underhill* near *Tewksbury*, near fifty Persons have died since *Christ-*

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mas last, out of the Inhabitants, whose Number did not exceed one Hundred; there are found to be more than have dy'd in that Place in twenty Years before.

Most of the Villages thereabouts are in the same miserable Condition, and what with Poverty and Sicknes, the People are in the most deplorable Circumstances; few Labourers are able to work, and those that do, have double Wages: The Poor's Rates are excessive, being above seven Shillings in the Pound in several Parishes, which, together with the Scarcity of Corn, has drove the Farmers to such Despair, that several Farms in this rich County are left on the Gentlemens hands, and very few are able to pay any Rent.

Extract of a Letter from Worcester, Dated
May 12, 1729.

THE Country hereabouts is very sickly with the new Distemper of swell'd Throats, and Tumours, which appear on other parts of the Body, that carries off People apace. It is chiefly among the poorer sort of Folks, and is thought to be owing to their eating Bread made of Horse-Beans, Corn being so very dear that they are not able to purchase it. In short, the Distemper rages so violently, that the Name some People give it is too terrible to mention.

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Extract of a Letter from Bristol, Dated
May 14, 1729.

OUR City is not much troubled with any Distemper but what is common, but in the Country about us, abundance of People die daily of Swellings in their Throats, attended with Fevers; the poorer sort of People chiefly are subject to this Distemper.

Many of the Cottages have lost all the People belonging to them, and several daily sicken; but now the Physicians in our Parts have, as they imagine, overcome it, partly by opening such Tumours as they can come at, out of which issues a watry Humour; or, as others say, by treating the Persons so distemper'd as they used to do in the Quinsey, the Distemper goes off.

It is, however, supposed that the Charities that have been collected by good-natur'd Persons here, and in our neighbouring Towns, have been a means of saving many People's Lives by furnishing them with proper Necessaries, in time, for their support. It is generally judged hereabouts, that the Hardships those poor People were drove to last Winter, occasion'd the Distemper that I speak of, by compelling them to live even without Fire, or without even such mean Diet as they used to have.

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Some here tell us that the Distemper proceeds from their drinking of bad Water, and even using too much Ice melted into Water, during the last Winter; while another would suppose it from Insects brought to us by the Easterly Winds, which were drawn in with the Breath, and lodg'd themselves in the Throat, where they occasion'd these Swellings.

Extract of a Letter concerning two Infants that were attack'd with the aforesaid Distemper.

THE Distemper which you have heard takes People generally with a Swelling in the Throat, does not always prove fatal. A Child of half a Year old near my House, was in the Morning of the 15th of May very well, in all appearance, but grew restless in the Evening, and the Morning following had a Tumour broke on the outside of his Throat, from whence issued a thin yellowish Water in a large Quantity, considering there was not the least shew of any Swelling the preceeding Morning; the Tumour still continues running, and the Fever is ceased. Another Child about the same Age had a like Tumour that broke on the out-side of his Throat, which, I suppose, sav'd it from being suffocated, as most People

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People are, that have the Swelling in their Throat.

This likewise discharged more than one could expect of a yellowish Water, considering the smallness of the Passage, which was much less than in the former Case; but not being opened properly by a Surgeon, or other Person of Judgment, a Swelling of the like kind shew'd itself in two Days in the Head, which I suppose will of itself open, as the other did before. But I have advised the Mothers of both these Children, to give it the best opportunity of discharging itself by cutting, believing it would prevent all further Difficulty: For I observe, that while this Distemper hath been on foot, of all those Swellings that have appeared within the reach of an Instrument, and could be cut, People did well.

Extract of a Letter from Droitwich in Worcestershire, May 20, 1729.

THOUGH we have a Distemper in this Country that has carried many People off by Swellings in their Throats, yet we have been all along very healthy in this Place; some People tell us, that it is owing to the great Numbers of Salt-works which are always kept at work; and when I tell you, that sometimes this Town has paid 1500 *l.* a Week Duty to the King for Salt made here,

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here, you may suppose that we have Fire and Smoak enough continually about us, and that we being never out of Work, do not spare to live well.

I have heard say that the Salt-springs about us, keep us from the Sore-Throat Distemper.

Extract of a Letter from a Gentleman of Oxford, Dated May 21, 1729.

I Have been lately making the Tour of *Worcestershire* and *Gloucestershire*, where I met the Distemper that has frightened so many People into a Belief that the Swellings in the Throats proceed from Pestilential Principles; but, in my Opinion, it is a sort of Quinsy, which of necessity must suffocate the Patient in a short time, without proper help is immediately sent for.

I have read most of the Books that have been wrote concerning Infectious Distempers, and am of opinion that most of them, if not all, proceed from Insects or their Eggs, brought to us, or hatched with us, by Easterly Winds, which create several Disorders.

In the Case you desired me to observe, I have been diligent enough to examine what Insects were abroad, that were discernable by the natural Eye, that I might find out, if possible, the Nature of some of them.

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Amongst others that I have observed, there is a small kind of Gnat particularly remarkable by Candle-light, which does not exceed the one twelfth part of an Inch, its Body as fine as a Hair, and so light that the common return of Breath of any man, will remove it from the Place where it lodges at a Foot distance; and it is not unlikely that many of these light Bodies may be received with the Air that the Lungs take in.

Some of these are shining, and of a green Colour, or most like *Cantharides*, and perhaps may, in some degree, have an Effect like them, by lodging themselves in the more tender Parts, occasion Inflammations. But I cannot find this Distemper to be infectious, because several Persons of Fashion have visited some of the sick Families to assist them with Charity, and have had none of the Distemper, though the People belonging to the Cottages where they went, died of it; so that it is not reasonable to believe that this Distemper is pestilential, because if it had been so, some of the Visitants must necessarily have taken the Distemper: but it is true indeed, that those of my Acquaintance, as well as myself, who visited many of the poor People, live in a very different way from them; that is, we enjoy the Benefit of Plenty, and they had scarce enough to keep themselves alive.

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N. B. It is generally observed, that those poor People, who have had timely Assistance by the Favours of the Rich, have escaped the Violence of this Distemper.

Extract of a Letter from Chester, Dated May 28, 1729.

I Have been lately in *Staffordshire, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire*, and many other Parts thereabouts, where I hear that a strange Distemper has been for the most part of the Winter, which has killed a great many People, by swelling their Throats till they were choak'd; but by the Care of the Doctors, and the Favour of the richer sort of People, the Distemper is much abated.

I can tell you too, that the poor People were reduced to so great Extremities for want of Work in the hard Weather, that they were forced to eat any Trash they could get, which is supposed to be the Cause of their Distemper; for among the richer People of those Parts, I could not find that any died of that Distemper.

The cold Weather of the last Winter made a great Havock among the Cattle, through the Scarcity of Fodder that was wanting for them, so that many were starved to death in the Mountainous Parts, any many others were drowned by the
Floods.

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Floods. The Sheep were very subject to the Rot, which, as some suppose, contributed a great deal to the ill Health of those People who eat of their Flesh, which the poorer sort were forced to do; the Scarcity of Corn likewise, which could not be brought to Markets, through the badness of the Road, occasioned poor People to make Bread of any thing they could get.

Some who used Oatmeal, had the Preference above the rest of the Poor, and those Families escaped best from the Distemper; on that occasion, there was so great a demand for Oats, that they were sold in some Places for 20 s. a Quarter, so that many Gentlemen were forced to part with several of their Horses.

The Gardens thereabouts have suffered very much, and the Fruits were generally cut off by the last Easterly Winds, so that some of the Gardeners in those Countries expect little more Fruit in Perfection and full Crop, than Cherries, Strawberries, Gooseberries, and Currants. The Wall-Fruit, in such Places as were well sheltered, escaped tolerably well, especially the Pears and Apricots.

Fig-trees are generally destroy'd; there is a good Shew of Grapes, but it is not likely they will ripen this Season, for the Shoot is at least three Weeks later than it used to be.

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Our Laurus-Tinus and Bays are dead almost every where; and most of the Carnations are kill'd, and such of them as are alive will hardly blow.

Our Auricula's were generally rotted, and our Ranunculus's are all gone.

We have lost all our Collyflower Plants, and most of our Artichoaks; what is more extraordinary, the Phyllirea which used to be hardy, has shared the same Fate with the Bays and Laurus-Tinus.

The Stock July-flowers have suffered very much, there not being above One in a Hundred left alive; most of the Winter-Lettice were killed before the end of the second Frost, and the forward Beans and Pease were quite taken off.

Our best Green-houses have not been capable of preserving the Plants in them from the Frost; the Orange-trees especially have suffered so much, that they have lost all their Leaves, and of the few Alloways and Ficoides that we had hereabouts, none are left alive: but the Arbutus or Strawberry-tree, that stood abroad, which is reckoned a tender Plant, has escaped very well; most of our Lavender and Rosemary is killed.

The Severity of the last Winter gave us, at least, Hopes to believe that the Slugs and Snails would be destroy'd; but, to our mortification, we find them now as plenty

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ty as ever. One of our Doctors says, That Slugs, which are viscous Bodies, and such others of the like slimy Disposition, cannot receive any Harm from the most violent Frosts, for that no viscous Body can freeze, though it was to be put into an Ice-house.

We have lost abundance of Bees, and abundance of Fish has been killed by the Severity of the Weather; we never had, notwithstanding the hard Season, so great a Quantity of Wild-Fowl, but they were good for little, hardly worth the Dressing.

But now the Weather begins to look favourable upon us, and we are in hopes of a good full Summer Crop, for the Spring starts out upon us as it does in *Muscovy*, so that one may almost see the Plants grow.

Our Corn, notwithstanding the Apprehension of our Farmers last Winter, that it would come to nothing, has now a very promising Aspect, so that there is no doubt but we may enjoy a plentiful Harvest.

Our Grass comes forward apace, and we are likely to have a good Hay-Harvest, which we shall begin very soon; which will help to employ such of the poor People as can work, which at present most of them are able to do, since the Distemper is abated.

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M The Poultry hereabouts did not begin to lay by three Weeks or a Month so soon as they used to do.

THE foregoing Extracts and Observations relating to the late hard Winter, the Scarcity of Provisions, and the New Fever that has been amongst the poorer sort of People, seem to have such a Dependance upon one another, as the several Particulars have shewn us, that I have little more to say than what has been already related.

The extraordinary Severity of the last Winter has been the Occasion of Want of Fodder for the Cattle; by which many of them were lost, which has rais'd the Price of the rest; it has likewise given Encouragement to the Engrossers to hoard up their Corn. The badness of the Roads by long Frosts, and great Inundations, has prevented the Farmers carrying their Corn to Market, as the Want of Work amongst the poor People has occasioned the want of Money, and made it not worth the Farmer's while to send out his Corn, considering the Wear and Tear of his Cattle and Carriages, which must necessarily happen in their Passage through bad Roads.

From whence one may judge how much less the Country Markets were served with Provisions last Winter, than they had been
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