

BRADLEY RICHARD

THE PLAGUE AT
MARSEILLES
CONSIDER'D

Richard Bradley
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Marseilles Consider'd

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*The Plague at Marseilles Consider'd / With Remarks Upon the Plague
in General, Shewing Its Cause and Nature of Infection, with Necessary
Precautions to Prevent the Spreading of That Direful Distemper:*

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TO

Sir Isaac Newton

President of the Royal Society, &c

SIR,

To Act under Your Influence, is to do Good, and to Study the Laws of Nature, is the Obligation I owe to the Royal Society, who have so wisely placed *Sir Isaac Newton* at their Head.

The following Piece, therefore, as I design it for the Publick Good, naturally claims *Your* Patronage, and, as it depends chiefly upon Rules in Nature, I am doubly obliged to offer it to the President of that Learned Assembly, whose Institution was for the Improvement of Natural Knowledge.

I am, Sir

With due Respect,

Your most obliged,

Humble Servant,

R. Bradley.

PREFACE

There would be little Occasion for a Preface to this Treatise, if the last Foreign Advices had not given us something particular relating to the Pestilence that now rages in the South Parts of France; and what may more particularly recommend these Relations to the World, is, because they come from Physicians, who resided at the Infected Places.

The Physician at Aix gives us the following Account

The Contagious Distemper, which has become the Reproach of our Faculty here for above a Month past, is more violent than that at Marseilles; it breaks out in Carbuncles, Buboes, livid Blisters, and purple Spots; the first Symptoms are grievous Pains in the Head, Consternations, wild Looks, a trembling Voice, a cadaverous Face, a Coldness in all the extreme Parts, a low unequal Pulse, great Pains in the Stomach, Reachings to Vomit, and these are follow'd by Sleepiness, Deliriums, Convulsions, or Fluxes of Blood, the Forerunners of sudden Death. In the Bodies that are open'd, we find gangrenous Inflammations in all the lower Parts of the Belly, Breast and Neck. Above fifty Persons have died every Day for three Weeks past in the Town and Hospitals. Most of them fall into a dreadful Phrenzy, so that we

are forc'd to tie them.

***The other is a Letter from a Physician at
Marseilles, sent to John Wheake, Esq;
who was so kind to give me the Abstract***

Marseilles Sept. 15. 1720.

Sir,

I Arriv'd here the 8th, and enter'd the Gate of Aix which leads to the *Cours*, which has always been esteem'd one of the most pleasant Prospects in the Kingdom, but that Day was a very dismal Spectacle to me; all that great Place, both on the Right and Left, was fill'd with Dead, Sick, and Dying Persons. The Carts were continually employ'd in going and returning to carry away the Dead Carcasses, of which there were that Day above four Thousand. The Town was without Bread, without Wine, without Meat, without Medicines, and in general, without any Succours.

The Father abandon'd the Child, and the Son the Father; the Husband the Wife, and the Wife the Husband; and those who had not a House to themselves, lay upon Quilts in the Streets and the Pavements; all the Streets were fill'd with Cloaths and Houshold-Goods, strew'd with Dead Dogs and Cats, which made an insupportable Stench. Meat was Sold at 18 to 20 *Sous per* Pound, and was only distributed to those that had Billets from the Consuls: This, Sir, was the miserable State of this City at that

Time, but at present, Things have a better appearance; Monsieur *le Marquis de Langeron*, who Commands here, has caused the Dead to be Buried, the Cloaths and Goods to be burnt, and the Shops to be open'd, for the Sustenance of the Publick.

Two Hospitals are prepar'd where they carry all the Sick of the Town, good Orders are daily re-establish'd, and the Obligation is chiefly owing to Monsieur *de Langeron*, who does Wonders. However, there is not any Divine Service Celebrated, nor are there any Confessors. The People die, and are buried without any Ceremonies of the Church; But the Bishop, with an undaunted Courage, goes thro' the Streets, and into Publick Places, accompanied with a Jesuit and one Ecclesiastick, to Exhort the Dying, and to give them Absolution; and he distributes his Charity very largely. The Religious Order have almost all perish'd, and the Fathers of the Oratory are not exempt; it is accounted, that there have died 50000 Persons. One thing very particular is, that Monsieur *Moustier*, one of the Consuls of the City, who has been continually on Horseback ordering the Slaves who carried away the Dead in Carts, or those that were Sick, to the Hospitals, enjoys his Health as well as he did the first Day he began; the Sickness seems at present to abate, and we have the Satisfaction to see several whom we took under our Care at the Beginning of the Sickness, promise fair towards a Recovery. The Sickness however, is of a very extraordinary Nature, and the Observations we have in our Authors, have scarce any Agreement with what we find in this: It is the Assistance of

Heaven we ought to implore, and to wait for a Blessing from thence upon our Labours.

I am, &c.

We may observe, that the Contagion now spreading it self in Foreign Parts, has nearly the same Symptoms that were observ'd in the late Plague at London; so that what Medicines were then used with good Success, may direct not only the People of England in the way of Practice, if God Almighty should please to afflict us with that dreadful Distemper, but be serviceable likewise to the Infected Places abroad. There is room enough to hope, the approaching Cold, which we naturally expect at this Season, may prevent its spreading amongst us for some Months, 'till the Air begins to warm, but the Seeds of that Venom may be brought over in Merchandizes even in the coldest Months, and according to the Nature of Insects will not hatch, or appear to our Prejudice, 'till the hotter Seasons. For to suppose this Malignant Distemper is occasion'd by Vapours only arising from the Earth, is to lay aside our Reason, as I think I have already shewn in my New Improvements of Planting, &c. to which my Reader may refer.

I suppose there may be such Persons in the World who do not agree with the Hypothesis I have laid down in the following Sheets, altho' many Learned Authors have supported it; and again, I expect others to Except against the Concise way I have taken, in writing upon a Subject, which at this time ought to be set in the plainest Light; but as I found the Danger of Pestilence spreading it self more and more every Day, a true Lover of his Country could

not be easie without giving the Publick some Hints to prevent its dismal Effects, and at the same time to engage the Learned to write upon such an Occasion.

And it is with Pleasure I observe, that since the former Editions of this small Tract has been made publick, our Learned Physicians are dispos'd to consider the necessary Means to prevent (as far as in them lies) the spreading of this Calamity, and justly deserve the favour of the Publick.

For my own part, I can only say, that the short time I had to put this Work together, would not allow me to give it with that exactness, that I would have done, if I could have had more Leisure.

The Deplorable Condition of the *Marseillians*, and the Danger that all the Trading Parts of *Europe* are now in, of being Infected by the Plague which rages in the *South* Parts of *France*, and every Day spreads it self more and more over the Neighbouring Countries, gives me occasion to Publish some Papers which would never have otherwise appeared in the World.

When I consider the melancholy Circumstances of the People at *Marseilles* and other infected Places, how they are now divested of Relief, and brought into that miserable State, that even every Man is terrified at the Approach of his dearest Friend, and the very Aspect of our Neighbours strike such Horror and Confusion in us, as if they brought our Death and Destruction with them; it is then surely time for every one to contribute all that in him lies to prevent the Progress of so *direful a Calamity*.

The good Counsels of our Nation, therefore, to prevent as much as possible the Infection which might be brought among us by Merchandizes coming from Infected Places, have wisely order'd strict Quarentine to be perform'd, before either the Sailors or Goods can be brought ashoar.

The Neighbouring Nations of Trade, have follow'd our Example, but the *Hollanders* in an extraordinary manner, have even order'd the Burning the very Ships and Goods coming from *Marseilles*, and have been so cautious, as to suffer none of the Passengers to come on Shoar, without first being dis-rob'd of all their Apparel, and even to be well wash'd with Sea Water, and then likewise to perform Quarentine in a little Island, remote from the Inhabitants. I could mention many Relations we have had, of the Sufferings of the poor People belonging to *Marseilles*, who to avoid the dismal Consequence of the Plague, have flown for Refuge into the Country, and have either been starv'd to Death, or Murder'd by the Country People; but yet we find, that notwithstanding all these Precautions, that Pestilence continues to destroy as much as ever, and makes it Advances every Day more towards us.

It is computed, that about 60000 are Dead of the Plague at *Marseilles*; and that there are now (*October 20. N. S.*) above 14000, Persons left in that Town, including 10000 Sick; and at *Aubagne*, out of 10000 who retir'd thither from *Marseilles*, above 9000 are Dead.

On this sad Occasion of the Ruin of *Marseilles* especially since

there is talk of Burning that Town, it may not be unseasonable to give an Account of it.

‘Marseilles is one of the most considerable Cities in *France*, and the most Populous and most trading Town of all *Provance*. It is so Antient, that it is reckon’d to have been Built upwards of Six Hundred and Thirty Years before the Birth of our Saviour. It was once a very flourishing Republick; and its University was in such Esteem, as drew Students thither from all Parts of *Europe*.

‘Marseilles is situate at the Foot of a Hill, which rises in the Form of an Amphitheatre in proportion to its Distance from the Sea. The Harbour is Oval, and bounded by a Key about fourteen hundred Paces long, upon which stand the handsomest Houses in the Town. It affords a very delightful Walk, Part whereof is taken up in the Day time by the working Gally-Slaves Stalls, where you may furnish your self with Cloaths and other Necessaries; the Entrance of the Harbour is shut up by a Chain supported at certain Distances by three Stone-Pillars; so that only one large Ship can pass at a time, tho’ the Haven will contain about Five hundred. And hither are brought all sorts of Commodities from all Parts of the known World.

‘The Cathedral Church, call’d Notre Dame la Majeure, whereof *S. Lazarus* is Patron, is very Solemn. It was formerly a Temple dedicated to *Venus*, or to *Diana* of *Ephesus*. Its Form is Irregular; but it was not thought proper to add or diminish any thing. There remain several large Columns, on which stood the Idol. The Treasure of this

Church is very Rich. Here you see the Head of S. *Lazarus*, that of S. *Connat*, a Foot of S. *Victor*, and many other Relicks. Near the Cathedral, is a Chappel built upon the Spot where (the *Marseillians* tell you) S. *Mary Magdalen* preached the Gospel to the Idolaters, as they came out of the Temple.

‘*Notre Dame des Acoules* is also a fine large Church, which was formerly a Temple sacred to the Goddess *Pallas*. In that of S. *Martin*, which is Collegiate and Parochial, is preserv’d a Silver Image of the blessed Virgin, five Foot and half high, the Crown and Ornaments whereof are very rich. The Church of S. *Saviour*, now belonging to a Nunnery, was anciently a Temple of *Apollo*. All these Places are so many Proofs of the Antiquity of *Marseilles*, as well as two other Temples near the Port, with two Towers, viz. that of S. *John*, which is a Commandry of the Knights of *Malta*, and that of S. *Nicolas*.

‘The Abby of S. *Victor*, of the Order of S. *Benedict*, is situate at the Foot of the Citadel. It resembles a Castle, being encompass’d with Walls, and set off with Towers. At the Front of the Church are these Words address’d to S. *Victor*,

Massiliam verè Victor civesque tuere

‘In a Chappel on one side of the Epistle, you see the Head of that Saint, in a Shrine of Silver gilt, finely wrought, which was given by Pope *Urban V.* whose Tomb is on one side of the Choir; there are many other Relicks in

this Church. You then descend a large Stair-Case into the Church under Ground, where the Chappels visited by the Curious, are full of Holy Bodies. There they shew you the Tomb of *S. Eusebius*, and those of forty five Virgins who disfigur'd themselves to terrifie the Vandals who put them to Death. Here also you see *St. Andrew's* Cross entire, the Branches whereof are seven Foot long and eight Inches Diameter. In one of these subterraneous Chappels is a little Grotto, wherein *S. Mary Magdalen* (they tell you,) upon her Landing at *Marseilles* began to do Pennance. They add, that she Inhabited it six or Seven Years: Her Statue likewise is represented, lying at the entrance of this Grotto. There is also a rich Chappel of our Lady, wherein no Women are permitted to enter. This Order was made, upon the Vulgar Notion, of a Queen's being struck Blind, who had the Temerity to venture into it.

'In *Marseilles* you observe likewise the Monasteries and Churches of the *Carthusians*, the Monks of *St. Anthony*, the *Trinitarians*, *Jacobins*, *Augustins*, Barefooted *Augustins*, *Carmelites*, Barefooted *Carmelites*, *Cordeliers*, *Observantins*, *Servites*, *Minims*, *Capuchins*, *Recollects*, *de la Mercy*, *Feuillans*, *Jesuites*, Fathers of the *Oratory*, and of the *Mission*. There are also *Benedictine* Nuns, *Dominicans*, Nuns of *S. Clare*, *Capuchins*, *Carmelites*, *Bernardines*, *Urselins*, Nuns of the Visitation of Mercy, and of the good Shepherd or Repentance; and a Commandry of *Malta*.

'The Citadel of *Marseilles* is near the Port, extending its Fortifications to the Entrance of the same; and yet it commands the Town. The Key which lines this side

of the Harbour, from Fort S. *Nicolas* to the Arsenal, is about fifteen hundred Paces long, and is adorned with handsome Ware-Houses and Dwelling-Houses: Here is the great Hospital for Sick Slaves, which was formerly the Arsenal before the New one was built. Six large Pavilions, as many main Houses, and a great square Place big enough to build several Galleys at a time in, form the Design of it. In this Place are two large Basons, as long and as deep as a Galley, in each of which, when a Galley is ready to launch, they open a small Sluice which kept up the Sea Water.

‘This great Building makes one entire Front of the Port, three hundred Paces in Length; the Harbour of *Marseilles*, is thirteen hundred Paces long, and the Circumference about three Thousand four hundred and fifty Paces. The Streets of the old Town are long, but narrow; and those of the New are spacious, and well Built. The chief, is that they call *le Cours*, which is near forty Paces broad, in the middle of which is a Walk, planted with four Rows of young Elms, which, with the Keys, are the Places of publick Resort.

‘The Town-House which they call *La Loge*, is situate upon the Key over against the Galleys. Below is a large Hall, which serves the Merchants and Sea-faring Men for an Exchange; and above Stairs the Consuls, Town-Councillors, and others concerned in the Civil Administration have their Meeting. The most valuable Piece in this Building, is the City Arms in the Front, Carved by the famous *Puget*.

‘*Marseilles* seems still to retain somewhat of the ancient Government, of its four Courts, being divided into four Quarters, viz. S. *John*

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