

History of Medicine in Massachusetts.

A

CENTENNIAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY

AT CAMBRIDGE,

JUNE 7, 1881.

BY

SAMUEL ABBOTT GREEN, M.D.

C BOSTON:

A. WILLIAMS AND COMPANY.

OLD CORNER BOOKSTORE.

1881.

one of the best works extant upon the subject of which it treats" (XIV. 1-13).

The disease was so malignant and the public so much alarmed, that the town of Boston, in its corporate capacity, took action in the matter; and the following circular in "The Boston Weekly News-Letter," April 29, 1736, will explain itself:—

THE *Select-Men of the Town of Boston*, in order to inform the Trading Part of our neighbouring *Colonies*, concerning the State of the present *prevailing Distemper* in this Place, did desire a Meeting of as many of the *Practitioners in Physick* as could then be conveniently obtain'd. The Practitioners being accordingly met, did unanimously agree to the following *Articles*;

1. THAT upon the first appearance of this *Illness* in *Boston* the *Select-Men* did advise with the *Practitioners*; but they at that Time having not had Opportunities of observing the Progress of the *Distemper*, it was thought advisable (until further Experience) to shut up that *Person* who was supposed to have received it in *Exeter* to the Eastward; upon his Death the Watch was soon removed, but no Infection was observed to spread or catch in that Quarter of the Town; therefore no Watches were appointed in the other Parts of the Town where it afterwards appeared, the Practitioners judging it to proceed from some *occult Quality in the Air*, and not from any observable *Infection communicated by Persons or Goods*.

2. THE *Practitioners* and their Families have not been seized with this Distemper in a more *remarkable* manner (and as it has happened not so much) than other Families in Town, even than those Families who live in solitary Parts thereof.

3. AS to the *Mortality* or Malignity of this Distemper, all whom it may concern are referred to the *Boston Weekly-Journal of Burials*: by the Burials it is notorious, that scarce any Distemper, even the most favourable which has at any Time prevail'd. so generally, has produc'd fewer Deaths.

4. AS formerly, so now again after many Months Observation, we conclude, That the present prevailing Distemper appears to us to proceed from some *Affection of the Air*, and not from any personal *Infection receiv'd from the Sick, or Goods in their neighbourhood*.

NATHANIEL WILLIAMS
WILLIAM DOUGLASS
JOHN CUTLER
HUGH KENNEDY
WILLIAM DAVIS
THOMAS BULFINCH.