

I. *Part of a Letter from Dr. Charles Leigh of Lancashire to the Publisher, giving an account of strange Epileptick Fits.*

June 26. 1702.

WE have this Year had an epidemical Fever, attended with very surprizing Symptoms, in the beginning the Patient was frequently attacked with the *Colica Ventriculi*; Convulsions in various parts, sometimes violent Vomitings and a Dysentery; the Jaundice, and in many of them a suppression of Urine; and what Urine was made, was highly saturated with Choler: About the state of the Distemper, large Purple Spots appear'd, and on each side of 'em two large Blisters, which continued 3 or 4 days; these Blisters were so placed about the Spots, that they might in some measure be term'd Satellites or Tenders; of these, there were in many four different eruptions; but the most remarkable instance I saw in this Fever, was in a poor Boy of *Lymm* in *Cheshire*, one *John Pownel*, about 13 years of Age, who was afflicted with the following Symptoms; upon the Crisis or turn of the Fever, he was seized with an *Aphonia*, and was speechless 6 weeks, with the following Convulsions; the Distemper infested the Nerves of both Arms and Legs, which produc'd the *Chorea Sancti Viti*, or *St Vitus's Dance*; the Legs sometimes were both so contracted, that no person could reduce them to their natural position; besides these, he had most terrible Symptoms, which begun in the following manner; he cou'd perceive the Fits to come on about the *Os-Sacrum* or extremity of the Back-bone, and the Region of the Navel, and then the disorder, as he imagined, united about the top of his Head; he immediately afterwards fell into violent Convulsions in the

the Abdomen or lowest Cavity, with that violence, that sometimes two or three persons were forced to lye upon him to keep him in Bed, his Body being frequently rais'd from it; after this, the Nerves of the Lungs were immediately affected, and then he barked in all the usual notes of a Dog, sometimes Snarling, Barking, and at the last howling like an Hound; after this, the Nerves of the Mandibles were convuls'd, and then the Jaws clash'd together with that violence, that several of his Teeth were beaten out, and then at several times there came a great foam from his Mouth; afterwards he had an extream wild look, snatching at any thing near him, and would have tore off his Flesh, had he not been prevented by the persons about him; this made me conjecture he might formerly have been bit by a mad Dog, which had introduced the *Hydrophobia*; but I was convinced to the contrary, for I put a Bason of Water by him, and he was not in the least afraid of it, nor attempted to lap it. I saw him in three of these Fits, but at other times in these Convulsions, he roared like a Bull, made a noise like a Hog, and sometimes like that of a Gosling; all which different sounds, (I take it) proceed from the different contractions of the Lungs, variously forcing out the Air, and consequently as they were differently convuls'd, form various sounds; these Symptoms were so amazing, that several persons about him believ'd he was possess'd: I told them there was no ground for such Suppositions, but that the Distemper was natural, and a Species of an Epilepsy, and by the effects I convinc'd 'em of the truth of it; for in a week's time I recover'd the Boy his Speech, his Senses return'd, his Convulsions vanish'd, and the Boy is now very cheerful: there have been other persons in this Country much after the same manner: From this Case it is evident, that these Distempers are natural, since it cannot be imagined, that a Diabolical Spirit should be ejected
by

by a regular course in Physic, it makes it appear to be an impious Cheat, to amuse the Populace with those Artifices; and if a man be not Bigotted, this instance may sufficiently convince him, how vain it is to pretend to those needless Miracles.

We whose names are Subscribed, do know this case relating to *John Pownel* to be true.

William Domvile, Esq;
Susanna Domvile his Wife.
Franck Pyott, Housekeeper.

John Pownell the Patient.
Alice Pownell his Mother.