

**EPIDEMICS EXAMINED AND  
EXPLAINED: OR, LIVING  
GERMS PROVED BY ANALOGY  
TO BE A SOURCE OF DISEASE**

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Epidemics examined and explained: or, Living germs proved by analogy to be a source of disease by John Grove

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**JOHN GROVE**

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*from the Author*  
EPIDEMICS

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OR,

LIVING GERMS

PROVED BY ANALOGY TO BE

A SOURCE OF DISEASE.

BY

JOHN GROVE, M.R.C.S.L.

AUTHOR OF "SULPHUR AS A REMEDY IN EPIDEMIC CHOLERA."

LONDON:

JAMES RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY.

MDCCCL.

*C. Mior.*

"The tendencies of the mind, the turn of thought of whole ages, have frequently depended on prevailing diseases; for nothing exercises a more potent influence over man, either in disposing him to calmness and submission, or in kindling in him the wildest passions, than the proximity of inevitable and universal danger."—*Hecker's Epidemics of the Middle Ages.*

"The grand field of investigation lies immediately before us; we are trampling every hour upon things which to the ignorant seem nothing but dirt, but to the curious are precious as gold."

*Sewell on the Cultivation of the Intellect.*

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TO

**BENJAMIN GUY BABINGTON, F.R.S., M.D.,**

**PHYSICIAN TO GUY'S HOSPITAL,**

AND

**PRESIDENT OF THE EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SOCIETY,**

ETC. ETC.

THESE PAGES ARE, BY HIS KIND PERMISSION,

**Respectfully Dedicated,**

BY HIS OBLIGED AND FAITHFUL SERVANT,

**THE AUTHOR.**

## P R E F A C E.

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THE following pages have been written with a view to render some aid in establishing a sound and firm basis for future research, on that absorbing topic, the Causes and Nature of Epidemic Diseases.

The amount of information already published on Fevers, on the Exanthemata, and on the Plague, is truly astonishing, and the more so when it is considered, that at present no rational account or explanation is given of the causes of these affections.

It appears to me but reasonable to suppose that as every thing on this earth has been created on a wise and unerring principle, Epidemic and Infectious Diseases are only indicative of some serious errors in our social arrangements and habits. The dangers and misery brought upon us by disease, may, as shewn by Dr. Spurzheim and Mr. Combe, be warnings against the infringement of the natural laws.

Indeed, what is more rational than to suppose that the Seeds of Disease are coeval with the fall of man. His first disobedience



brought death :—that his subsequent errors should hasten its approaches is not to be marvelled at. The undetected murderer, though he may escape the punishment human justice would inflict upon him for his delinquency, suffers a penalty in the tortures of conscience, infinitely more horrifying than the most ignominious death. The law of nature is triumphant.

No less certain, though after a different manner, are the consequences of minor forms of disobedience. It is so ordained, that certain diseases shall arise, under peculiar conditions, which may have been brought about by a train of causes, easily imagined, and difficult to be explained, but all having their origin in the vices and errors of man in his moral and social relations.

If man neglects the cultivation of the ground ; with rank vegetation, the germs of fever will invisibly grow and multiply ; if he harbours that which is rotten and corrupt, he is himself consumed by those agents destined to remove the rottenness and corruption ; it is a part of the law of nature that there should be active and energetic agents for this purpose. The seeds of disease, like the seeds of plants, may be shewn to have

their indigenous localities ; like them they may be spread and multiplied ; like them they may lie dormant, and after awhile spring as it were into active existence ; like them, when the soil and other conditions favour, they are ever ready to make their appearance. And this is the law, the germs of all disease exist, and have existed. Despise the dictates of nature, be careless of yourself and those around you, neglect to use the means which a noble intelligence has placed at your command, and above all, transgress the laws of God, then will disease pursue and attend you, as the conscience of the murderer pursues and attends him until he is finally cut off.

His wants and necessities, his sufferings and privations, are the basis of the intellectual progress of man. The wonders of Omnipotence are revealed through the whirlwind, the storm, the pestilence, and the famine.

The constructive and perceptive faculties of man have been developed by the necessity of protecting himself from injury by winds and rains ; his intellectual faculties have been cultivated, by the sufferings of disease having led him to the study of

organization and life, to discover the cause, —and to chemistry, and other sciences for the cure of his ailments.

Famine and distress have aroused his emotions, and softened down his asperities, so that what appears at first to be the infliction of a Curse without Pity, is in reality a Judgment with Mercy.

It occurred to me, that on the formation of the Epidemiological Society, the first question for consideration should be, What is the nature of those agents, which induce Epidemic Diseases? are they composed of animate or inanimate matter? In other words, do the manifestations of these diseases exhibit the operations of living or of chemical forces.

Having, in my study, dwelt on the subject with an earnest desire to find the truth, I put the suggestion, with my ideas, before the public to reject or receive them. If they be rejected, I can but think a full discussion of the enquiry will lead to the most important results. If they be received with favour, I doubt not others, with more ability, will take up the strain and resolve the discords into harmony.

J. G.