

SOME MEDICAL PRACTICE AMONG THE NEW ENGLAND INDIANS AND EARLY SETTLERS.

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So far as I know, we have no accurate observation and record of medical practice among the New England Indians, especially such as existed prior to their contact with the early settlers. There were good reasons for this: the early settlers were too busy trying to get a living, there were no trained scientific observers among them; medical practice even in England was almost wholly empirical at that time. The Pilgrims and Puritans were particularly free from incantations and the rites of magic in their medical practice for the reason that they had broken away from all those who would be led to attach importance to such agencies, although they had an abiding belief in a personal devil and in witches. Their medicine was the folk medicine of tradition and personal experience, consisting as it did largely of roots and herbs. It is very hard to tell, many times, how much they learned from the Indians and how much the Indians learned from them. We have two early books written about New England from which some idea of Indian medicine may be gained (Wood and Josselyn). Wood was a sort of press agent for New England and the reference to medical matters is only incidental, but Josselyn was a good deal of a naturalist and something of a physician.

Before giving an account of the medical practice of the New England Indians it seems necessary to say just a word in regard to medical superstition among them. Payne remarks that "The belief that internal maladies due to no visible cause are the work of evil spirits is traceable in the earliest records of ancient medicine which we possess, and is found among uncivilized races in most parts of the world, as the accounts of travelers and investigators clearly prove. It is evident that we have here one of the most fundamental, perhaps the most universal conception of the origin of internal disease." This is a true picture of the New England Indian. He believed in evil spirits and did things to drive them away, but he had never been contaminated by Eastern magic, neither did he use the elaborate methods employed, in later times at any rate, among the Indians of the West. Wood describes their Pow Wow. He says they worship Ketan who is their good God, to him "they invoke for fair weather, for rain in time of drought, and for the recovery of their sick." After giving some of the tricks of which, he says, the Indians told him, he goes on to give an account of a Pow Wow. "An honest Gentleman related a story to me, being an eye witness of the same: A Pow Wow having a patient with the stump of some small tree run through his foot, being past the cure of his ordinary surgery, betook himself to his charmes, and being willing to show his miracles before the English stranger, he wrapt a piece of cloth about the foot of the lame man; upon that wrapping a Beaver skin, through which he laying his mouth to the Beaver skin, by his sucking charmes he brought out the stump, which he spat into a tray of water, returning the foot as whole as its fel-

low in a short time. The manner of their action in their conjuration is thus: The parties that are sick or lame being brought before them, the Pow Wow sitting down, the rest of the Indians giving attentive audience to his imprecations and invocations, and after the violent expression of many a hideous bellowing and groaning, he makes a stop, and then all the auditors with one voice utter a short Canto; which done, the Pow Wow still proceeds in his invocations, sometimes roaring like a Bear, other times groaning like a dying horse, foaming at the mouth like a chased bore, smiting on his naked breast and thighs with such violence, as if he were mad. Thus will he continue sometimes half a day, spending his lungs, sweating out his fat, and tormenting his body in this diabolical worship; sometimes the Devil for requital of their worship, recovers the party, to nuzzle them up in their devilish religion. In former time he was wont to carry away their wives and children, because he would drive them to these Mattens, to fetch them again to confirm their belief of this his much desired authority over them: but since the English frequented those parts, they daily fall from his colour, relinquishing their former fopperies, and acknowledge our God to be supreme. They acknowledge the power of the Englishman's God, as they call him, because they could never yet have power by their conjurations to damnify the English either in body or goods; and besides, they say he is a good God that sends them so many things—so much good corn, so many cattle, temperate rains, fair seasons, which they likewise are the better for since the arrival of the English; the times and seasons being much altered in seven or eight years, free from lightning and thunder, long droughts, sudden and

tempestuous dashes of rain, and lamentable cold winters.”—“New England Prospect.” Wood wrote this in 1633. Both Wood and Josselyn consider the country healthful. Wood especially took a very optimistic view. The climate seemed to impress him favorably in comparison with that of England, as did also the abundance of food. He explains the death rate among the new arrivals and claims it was not due to the climate. “It is observed by the Indians that every tenth year there is little or no winter, which hath been twice observed of the English; the year of the new Plymouth men’s arrival was no Winter in comparison; and in the tenth year after likewise when the great company settled themselves in Massachusetts Bay, was a very mild season, little frost, and less snow, but clear serene weather, few North-West winds, which was a great mercy to the English coming over so rawly and uncomfortably provided, wanting all utensils and provisions, which belonged to the well being of planters: and whereas many died at the beginning of plantations, it was not because the country was unhealthfull, but because their bodies were corrupted with sea-diet, which was naught, their Beef and Pork being tainted, their Butter and Cheese corrupted, their Fish rotten, and voyage long, by reason of cross Winds, so that winter approaching before they could get warm houses, and the searching sharpness of that purer climate, creeping in at the crannies of their crazed bodies, caused death and sickness; but their harms having taught future voyagers more wisdom, in shipping good provision for sea, and finding warm houses at landing.” He seems to consider New England a health resort. “In New England both men and women keep their natural complexion; and as it

is for the outward complexion, so it is for the inward constitution; not very many being troubled with inflammations, or such diseases as are increased by too much heat: and whereas I say, not very many, yet dare I not exclude any; for death being certain to all, in all nations there must be something tending to death of like certainty. The soundest bodies are mortal and subject to change, therefore fall into diseases, and from diseases to death. Now the two chief messengers of mortality, be feavers and Callentures; but they be easily helped, if taken in time, and as easily prevented of any that will not prove a mere fool of his body. For the common diseases of England, they be strangers to the English now in that strange land. To my knowledge I never knew any who had the Pox, Measels, Green-sickness, Head-aches, Stone, or Consumptions, etc. Many that have come infirm out of England, retain their old grievances still, and some that were long troubled with lingering diseases, as Coughs of the lungs, Consumption, etc., have been restored by that medicineable Climate to their former strength and health."

All through the early writings about New England we find the question of drinking water taken very seriously. It was one of the doubts about making a success of the undertaking. The people came very naturally to view the subject in this light, for they had drunk beer for many centuries in England. Rogers says that during the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries fully one third of the cost of maintaining the family was for malt. Probably the lack of sugar had something to do with this use of malt. The Pilgrims began to experiment with water drinking soon after they reached

Plymouth. Bradford says: "Monday, the 25th, being Christmas day, we began to drink water abroad. But at night the master caused us to have some beer; and so on board we had divers times now and then some beer, but on shore none at all." Wood, writing thirteen years after, thinks the water good but is a little doubtful about drinking it himself, and says "he dare not prefer it before good beer. For the country it is as well watered as any land under the Sun, every family, or every two families, having a spring of sweet waters betwixt them, which is far different from the waters of England, being not so sharp, but of a fatter substance, and of a more jetty color (sparkling), it is thought there be no better water in the world, yet dare I not prefer it before good Beer, as some have done, but any man will choose it before bad Beer, Whey, or Buttermilk. Those that drink it be as healthful, fresh, and lusty, as they that drink beer." Both Wood and Josselyn seem quite taken with the physical perfections of the Indians.

"First of their Stature, most of them being between five or six foot high, straight bodied, strongly composed, smooth skinned, merry countenanced, of complexion something more swarthy than Spaniards, black haired, high foreheaded, black eyed, out-nosed, broad shouldered, brawny armed, long and slender handed, out breasted, small waisted, lank bellied, well thighed, flat kneed, handsome grown legs, and small feet: In a word, take them when the blood brisk in their veines, when the flesh is on their backs, and marrow in their bones, when they frolick in their antique deportments and Indian postures; and they are more amiable to behold (though only in Adams Livery) than many a

compounded phantastick in the newest fashion. It may puzzle belief, to conceive how such lustie bodies should have their rise and daily supportment from so slender a fostering; their houses being mean, their lodging as homely, commons scant, their drink water and Nature their best clothing, in them the old proverb may well be verified: (*Natura paucis contenta*) for though this be their daily portion, they still are healthful and lusty. I have been in many places yet did I never see one that was born either in redundance or defect a monster, or any that sickness had deformed, or casualitie made decrepit, saving one that had a bleared eye, and another that had a wenne on his cheek. The reason is rendered why they grow so proportionable, and continue so long in their vigor (most of them being 50 before a wrinkled brow or gray hair bewray their age) is because they are not brought down with suppressing labor, vexed with annoying cares, or drowned in the excessive abuse of overflowing plenty, which oftentimes kills them more than want, as may appear in them. For when they change their bare Indian commons for the plenty of England's fuller diet, it is so contrary to their stomachs, that death of a desperate sickness immediately accrews, which makes so few of them desirous to see England. Their swarthinness is the sun's livery, for they are born fair. Their smooth skins proceed from the often anointing of their bodies with the oil of fishes, and the fat of Eagles, with the grease of Rackoones, which they hold in summer, the best antidote to keep their skins from blistering with the scorching Sun, and it is their best armour against the Musketoos, and the surest expeller of the hairy excrement, and stops the pores of their bodies

against the nipping winters cold. . . If their fancy drive them to trade, they choose rather a good coarse blanket, through which they cannot see, interposing it between the sun and them; or a piece of broad cloth, which they use for a double end, making it a coat by day, and a covering by night; they love not to be imprisoned in our English fashion: they love their own dog-fashion better (of shaking their ears, and being ready in a moment) than to spend time in dressing them, though they may as well spare it as any man I know, having little else to do. But the chief reasons they render why they will not conform to our English apparel, are, because their women cannot wash them when they be soiled, and their means will not reach to buy new when they have done with their old; and they confidently believe, the English will not be so liberal as to furnish them upon gifture: therefore they had rather go naked than be lousie, and bring their bodies out of their old tune, making them more tender by a new acquired habit, which poverty would constrain them to leave." (Wood's "New England Prospect.")

Josselyn was particularly struck with the Indian women.

THE INDIAN.

"The Men are somewhat Horse Faced, and generally Faucious, that is, without beards, but the women many of them have very good features, seldome without a Come to me, or Cos Amoris, in their Countenance, all of them black eyed, having even short teeth, and very white, their hair black, thick and long, broad breasted, handsome straight bodies, and slender, considering their constant loose habit. Their limbs cleanly, straight, and of a convenient stature, gener-

ally, as plump as Partridges and saving here and there one, of a modest deportment.

“Their Garments are a pair of sleeves of deer, or Moose skin drest, and drawn with lines of several colours into Asiatick Works, with Boskins of the same, and short Mantle of Trading Cloth, either Blew or Red, fastened with a knot under the chin, and girt about the middle with a Zone wrought with white and blew Beads into pretty Works; of these Beads they have Bracelets for their Neck and Arms, and Links to hang in their Ears, and a fair Table curiously made up with Beads likewise, to wear before their breast, their Hair they comb backward, and tie it up short with a Border, about two handfulls broad, wrought in Works as the other with their Beads.” (“New England Rarities.”)

Wood goes fully into their diet, and from his description one gathers the impression that it was turkey one day and feathers the next. “Some of their scullerie having dressed these homely cates, presents it to his guests, dishing it up in a rude manner, placing it on the verdent carpet of the earth which Nature spreads them, without either trenchers, napkins, or knives, upon which their hunger-fawced stomachs impatient of delayes, falls aboard without scrupling at unwashed hands, without bread, salt, or beer, lolling in the Turkish fashion, not ceasing till their full bellies leave nothing but empty platters: they seldom or never make bread of their Indian corn, but seeth it whole like beans, eating three or four cornes with a mouthful of fish or flesh, sometimes eating meat first, and corns after, filling in chinkes with their broth. In summer, when their corn is spent, Isquouter-squashes is their best bread, a fruit like a young Pumpion. To say and to speak paradoxically,

they be great eaters, and yet little meat men; when they visit our English, being invited to eat, they are very moderate, whether it be to show their manners, or for shamefastness, I know not; but at home they will eat till their bellies stand forth, ready to split with fullness; it being their fashion to eat all at some times, and nothing at all in two or three days, wise Providence being a stranger to their wilder ways: they be right infidels, neither caring for the morrow, or providing for their own families; but as all are fellows at foot-ball, so they all meet friends at the kettle, saving their wives, that dance a Spaniel-like attendance at their backs for their bony fragments. If their imperious occasions cause them to travel, the best of their victuals for their journey is Nocake (as they call it), which is nothing but Indian corn parched in the hot ashes; the ashes being sifted from it, it is afterward beaten to powder, and put into a long leathern bag, trussed at their back like a knapsack; out of which they take thrice three spoonefulls a day, dividing it into three meals. If it be in Winter, and Snow be on the ground, they can eat when they please, stopping Snow after their dusty victuals, which otherwise would feed them little better than a Tiburne halter. In Summer they must stay till they meet with a Spring or Brook, where they may have water to prevent the imminent danger of choaking. With this strange viaticum they will travel four or five days together, with loads fitter for Elephants than men."

Wood mentions the pestilence which carried off many Indians just previous to the landing of the Pilgrims. He still acts the press agent and claims that the Indians were a particularly healthy race. To quote again from the "New

England Prospect," "Although the Indians be of lusty and healthful bodies, not experimentally knowing the Catalogue of those health-wasting diseases which are incident to other countries, as Fevers, Pleurisies, Callentures, Agues, Obstructions, Consumption, Subfumigations, Convulsions, Apoplexies, Dropsies, Gouts, Stones, Toothaches, Pox, Measels, or the like, but spinne out the thread of their days to a fair length, numbering three-score, four-score, some a hundred years, before the worlds universal summoner cite them to the craving Grave."

All the English who came in contact with sick Indians were impressed with their ceremonies to drive away the devil. Winslow went to Gardner's Neck in Swanzy to visit Massassowat and found him very sick; he says, "When we came thither, we found the house so full of men, as we could scarce get in, though they used their best diligence to make way for us. There were they in the midst of their charms for him, making such a hellish noise, as it distempered us that were all well, and therefore unlike to ease him that was sick. About him were six or eight women, who chafed his arms, legs, and thighs, to keep heat in him." Winslow gave him some conserve which he had brought, and cleaned his mouth and tongue, and Massassowat began to improve. They did not appear to know anything of sick nursing or sick diet. Roger Williams says of them, "When they are sick, their misery appears, that they have not but what sometimes they get from the English, a raisin or currant, or any physic, fruit, or spice, or any comfort more than their corn and water. In which bleeding case, wanting all means of recovery or present refreshing, I have been constrained, to and beyond my power, to refresh

them, and to save many of them from death, who I am confident perish many millions of them, in that mighty continent, for want of means.”

My impression is that for slight ailments, and for wounds and bruises they used medicine so far as their limited knowledge and limited resources went, but if a patient became very sick they lost confidence in medicine and resorted to the superstitious practices which are common to all people of their grade of intelligence, i. e., they tried to drive away the devil by making noise enough so that he would prefer a quieter place. This may have had a hypnotic effect upon the patient even if it did not upon the devil.

From these quotations we get the impression that the use of remedies by the Indians was extremely limited; in fact, Wood mentions but one herb which was so used, snake weed for snake bite; and Mourt's relation mentions the use of medicines but does not go into details. As a matter of fact they did use quite a number of remedies and with quite as much sense as the settlers used theirs. We are indebted to John Josselyn for a description of many of their methods of treating diseases and wounds.

John Josselyn made two voyages to New England, the first in 1638, arriving in Boston harbor July 3d, and remaining with his brother at Black Point in the town of Scarborough, Me., till October 10 of the following year. His second voyage was made in 1663. He arrived at Nantasket the 27th of July, and soon proceeded to his brother's plantation, where he tells us he staid eight years, and got together the matter for his book.

The book was not intended for a treatise on medicine but rather as a work on natural history. For this reason there is no arrangement of dis-

eases and remedies, but he puts down anything he has learned of medical practice when he describes the bird, beast, or plant which is attracting his attention at the time. Occasionally he gives a remarkable cure of which he has heard, but generally he confines himself to what he has seen. He says he has seen pond frogs a foot high, and that the Indians told him that back in the country there were frogs as large as a child a year old. Either the story, or the frog, seems pretty large, but Josselyn makes no comment. One curious fact is that he does not mention the Pow Wow or any medicine man among the Indians in "New England Rarities," but does mention them in his "Voyages," but he describes what the common people did for their ailments.

I have gone through his books, "New England Rarities" and "Voyages" very carefully and have tried to arrange the diseases which he mentions and remedies which he says were used. So far as possible I have let him tell his own story.

Josselyn does not take so rosy a view of the New England climate as does Wood; he says, "The Sea Coasts are accounted wholsomest, the East and South Winds coming from the sea produceth warm weather, the Northwest coming over land causeth extremity of Cold, and many times strikes the Inhabitants, both English and Indian, with that sad Disease called there the Plague of the back, but with us Empiema." He evidently found more disease in New England than did Wood and the list as he gives it is what one would expect to find.

"THE MOST COMMON DISEASES IN NEW ENGLAND."

"The Black Pox, the Spotted Fever, the Griping of the Guts, the Dropsie, and Sciatica are

the killing Diseases of New England." ("New England Rarities.")

"In New England the Indians are afflicted with pestilent Fevers, Plague, Black-pox, Consumption of the Lungs, Falling-sickness, Kings-evil, and Disease called by the Spaniard the Plague in the back, with us Emphyema, their physicians are the Powaws, or Indian Priests who cure sometimes by charms and medicine, but in a general infection they seldom come amongst them, therefore they use their own remedies, which is sweating, etc. Their manner is when they have plague or small pox amongst them to cover their Wigwams with Bark so close that no Air can enter in, lining them (as I said before) within, and making a great fire they remain there in a stewing heat till they are in a top sweat, and then run out into the Sea or River, and presently after they are come into their Hutts again they either recover or give up the Ghost." (Josselyn's "Voyages.") Josselyn's "Spotted Fever" and Wood's "Callentures" were undoubtedly typhus fever.

People living under primitive conditions are very liable to accidents and we find a full list of remedies to be used in such emergencies.

"WOUNDS."

Cod Fish.—"About their Fins you may find a kind of Lowse, which healeth a green cut in a short time."

White Hellebore.—"The Indians cure their wounds with it, anointing the wound first with Raccoon grease, or Wild Cat grease, and then strewing upon it the powder of the Roots."

Alder.—"An Indian Bruising and cutting of his knee with a fall, used no other remedy, than Alder Bark, chewed fasting and laid to it, which

did soon heal it. For wounds and cuts make a strong decoction of Bark of Alder, pour it into the wound, and drink thereof."

Birch.—"White and black, the bark of the birch is used by the Indians, for bruised wounds and cuts, boiled very tender and stampt between two stones to a plaster, and the decoction thereof, poured into the wound."

Board Pine.—"It yields a very soverign Turpentine for curing of desperate wounds. The Indians make use of the moss boiled in Spring Water, for Stabbs, pouring in the liquor, and applying the boiled moss well stamped or beaten between two stones."

"An Indian, whose knee was bruised with a fall, and the skin and flesh striped down to the middle of the Calf of his Leg cured himself with Water Lilly Roots boiled and stamped."

"Winter Green, the leaves are excellent Wound Herbs."

"Clounes all heal, of New England, is another wound Herb not Inferior to ours, but rather beyond it."

The Larch Tree.—"The leaves and gum are both very good to heal wounds and cuts. I once cured a desperate bruise with a cut upon the knee-pan with an Unguent made with the Leaves of the Larch Tree, and Hogs Grease, but the gum is best."

Proud Flesh.—"To eat out proud flesh, they take a kind of earth Nut boiled and stamped and last of all, they apply to the sore the roots of water lilies boiled and stamped between two stones to a plaster."

INJURIES, BRUISES, SPRAINS.

"The Rattle Snake, they have leafs of Fat in their bellies, which is excellent to annoint frozen

limbs, and for Aches and Bruises wondrous sovereign."

"An Indian whose thumb was swelled, and very much inflamed, and full of pain increasing and creeping along to the wrist, with little black spots under the thumb, against the nail, I cured it with this Umbellicus Veneris Root and all, the yolk of an egg, and wheat flour."

"The root of the Humming Bird Tree, the Indians make use of it for aches, being bruised between two stones, and laid to cold, but made (after the English manner) into an unguent with Hogs Greese, there is not a more sovereign remedy for bruises for what kind soever, and for Aches upon the Strokes."

"The Raccoon, their Fat is excellent for bruises and Aches."

"Blew Flower-de-luce.—For Bruises of the Feet and Face."

"Sperma Ceti Oil.—Is admirable for Bruises and Aches."

"Sassafras.—The leaves of the same Tree are very good made into an ointment for bruises and dry blows."

BURNS AND SCALDS.

"Seal Oil.—It is very good for Scalds and Burns."

Pond Frogs.—"They are of a glistening brass colour and very fat, which is excellent for Burns and Scaldings, to take out the Fire, and heal them, leaving no scar."

Decoction of Alder Bark.—"Is also excellent to take fire out of a Burn or Scald."

"Birch Bark.—Boiled very tender and stamped between two stones to a plaister, and a decoction thereof—to take the fire out of burns and scalds."

“Tobacco.—There is not much of it planted in New England, the Indians make use of a small kind with short round leaves called Pooke. With a strong decoction of tobacco, they cure Burns and Scalds, boiling it in water, from a Quart to a Pint, then wash the sore therewith, and strew on the powder of dried tobacco.”

“The New England Daisy, or Primrose, is very good for Burns and Scalds.”

“And for Burning and Scalding, they first take out the fire with a strong decoction of Alder Bark, then they lay upon it a plaster of the Board Pine (bark) first boiled tender, then beaten to a plaster between two stones. One Christopher Luxe, a fisherman, having burnt his knee pan, was healed again by an Indian Webb, or wife, for so they call those women who have husbands. She first made a strong decoction of Alder Bark with which she took out the fire, by Imbrocation, or letting of it drop upon the sore, which would smoke notably with it, then she plastered it with the Bark of Board Pine, or Hemlock Tree, boiled soft and stamped between two stones, till it was as thin as brown paper, and of the same colour. She annointed the plaster with Soyles Oil, (Seal oil) and the Sore likewise, then she laid it on warm, and sometimes she made use of the bark of the Larch Tree.”

“Water Plantane.—Called here Water suck-leaves. It is much used for Burns and Scalds.

INFLAMMATION.

“Fat of the pond frog.—Very good to take away any inflammation.”

“Wood-bine.—Good for hot swelling of the legs, fomenting with the decoction, and applying the Feces in the form of a Cataplasme.”

“An Indian Webb, her Foot being very much swelled and inflamed, asswaged the swelling, and took away the inflammation with our Garden or English Patience, the Roots roasted.”

ABSCESS.

“Indian Wheat (wild rice).—It is hotter than our wheat and clammy, excellent in Cataplasms to ripen any swelling or impostume.”

“The Indians break and heal their Swellings and Sores with it, boiling the inner Bark of young Hemlock very well, then knocking it between two stones to a plaster and anointing, or soaking it in Soyls Oil, they apply it to the Sore, it will break a Sore Swelling Speedily.”

Josselyn mentions two cases of cancer which were cured: the first is an example in an English woman of the arsenic treatment; it also contains a curious little touch showing where prohibition Maine got its beer even in those days.

“I shall conclude this Section with a strange Cure effected upon a Drummer’s Wife, much afflicted with a Wold in her Breast; the poor Woman lived with her Husband at a Town called by the Indians, Casco, but by the English, Falmouth; where for some time she swaged the Pain of her Sore by bathing it with strong Malt Beer, which it would suck in greedily, as if some living Creature: when she could not come to obtain more beer (for it was brought from Boston, along the Coasts by Merchants.) she made use of Rhum, a strong Water drawn from Sugar Canes, with which it was lull’d asleep, at last, (to be rid of it altogether) she put a quantity of Arsnick to the Rhum, and bathing of it as formerly, she utterly destroyed it, and Cured herself; but her kind Husband, who sucked out the Poison as the Sore was healing, lost all his

Teeth, but without further danger or inconvenience."

In the description of the next case it is very hard to tell just what disease he meant. Bailey's definition of scirrhus is "A hard immovable Swelling that resists the Touch, and is without Pain."

"An Indian dissolved a Scirrhus Tumour in the arm and hip, with a fomentation of Tobacco, applying afterwards the Herb stamped between two stones."

BRONCHITIS—SHORTNESS OF WIND—COLDS.

"Oak of Cappadocia, both much of a nature, but Oak of Hierusalem is stronger in operation, excellent for stuffing of the lungs upon colds, shortness of Wind, and Ptisick, maladies that the natives are often troubled with: I helped several of the Indians with a drink made of two Gallons of Molasses wort, (for in that part of the country where I abode we made our beer of Molasses, Water, Bran, chips of Sassafras Root, and a little Wormwood well boiled), into which I put of Oak of Hierusalem, Catmint, Sowthistle, of each one handful, of Enula Campana Root one Ounce, Liquorice scraped bruised and cut in pieces, one Ounce, Sassafras Root cut in thin chips, one Ounce, Anny-seed and sweet Fennel seed, of each one Spoonful bruised; boil these in a close Pot, upon a soft Fire to the Consumption of one Gallon, then take it off, and strein it gently, you may if you will boil the streined liquor with Sugar to a Syrup, then when it is Cold, put it in Glass Bottles, and take thereof three or four spoonfuls at a time, letting it run down your throat as leasurely as possible you can; do thus in the Morning, in the Afternoon, and at Night going to Bed."

Sumach, "The English used to Boil it and drink it for a cold, and so do the Indians, from whom the English had the Medicine."

PLAGUE OF THE BACK.

"The Firr Tree, or Pitch Tree, the tar is made of all sorts of pitch wood is an excellent thing to take away those desperate Stitches of the Sides, which perpetually afflicteth those poor people that are stricken with the Plague of the Back." Note.—"You must make a toast, or Cake, slit and dipt in the Tar, and bind it warm to the side."

CONSUMPTION.

"The Land Turtle, they are good for Physick and Consumptions, and some say the Morbus Callicus." (Syphilis.)

They seem to have had fewer remedies for fevers than their frequency and importance would seem to warrant. The use of a decoction of black birch bark for chills was, of course, an accidental discovery of the effect of salicylic acid. They undoubtedly used it much as we do aspirin.

FEVERS.

"Water-Mellon, it is often given to those sick of Fevers, and other hot diseases with good success."

"Bill Berries, two kinds, Black and sky coloured, which is more frequent. They are very good to allay the burning heat of fevers, and hot Agues, either in syrup or conserve."

Agues.—Black birch for chills. The Indians are said to have used a decoction of black birch bark for chills. (Tradition.)

"Ravens-Claw is admirable for Agues."

"Sassafras, or Ague Tree, the Root boiled in Beer is excellent to allay the hot rage of Fevers, being drunk."

By aches Josselyn evidently means acute and chronic rheumatism. Here are his remedies.

ACHES.

“The Wobble, For aches, our way, for they are sovereign for aches, is to make mummies of them, that is, to salt them well, and dry them in an earthen pot well glazed in an oven; or else, which is the better way, to burn them underground for a day or two, then quarter them and stew them in a stew-pan with a very little water.”

“The Bear, their grease is very good for Aches and Cold Swellings, the Indians annoint themselves therewith from top to toe, which hardens them against the cold weather.” “One Edward Andrews being Foxt, that is drunk, and falling backward across a Thought (Thwart) in a Shallop, or Fisher-boat and taking cold upon it, grew crooked, lame, and full of pain, was cured, lying one winter upon Bears Skins newly flead off, with some upon him, so that he sweat every night.

“A black Wolf’s skin is worth a Beaver Skin among the Indians, being highly esteemed for helping old aches in old People, worn as a Coat.”

“The Ounce, a wild cat, their grease is sovereign for all manner of Aches and shrunk Sinews.”

White Hellebore.—“For Aches they scarify the grieved part, and annoint it with one of the foresaid Oils, (Raccoon or Wild Cat grease) then strew upon it the powder.”

Dropsy was one of the deadly diseases which he mentions, but the remedies are very few, as they are today.

DROPSY.

Water Plantane.—“To draw water out of swelled Legs.”

“Stone.—Likewise there is a stone found in their bellies (Cod fish) in a bladder against their navel, which being pulverized and drank in White-wine Posset or Ale, is a present Remedy for stone.”

“Manaty.—There is a stone taken out of the head that is rare for the Stone and Collect. Their bones beat to a Powder and drank with convenient liquors, is a gallant Urin Provoking Medicine.”

Scurvy was one of the most common diseases with the early settlers; it was one of the causes of the great sickness among the Pilgrims during the first winter. They knew that lemons and limes were good for the disease but they did not grow here and so they sought for other remedies, and the following are what they found.

SCURVY.

“Sea-tears, they grow upon the sea banks in abundance, they are good for Scurvy and Dropsie.”

“The tops of Green Spruce Boughs boiled in Beer, and drunk, is assuredly one of the best Remedies for the Scurvy, restoring the Infected party in a short time.”

“Cran Berry,—they are excellent against the scurvy.”

Wood says that the danger of snake bite was not very great, and that he never heard of but one man who lost his life in this way, still it was an 'ever-present fear to the settlers. The remedies were few but heroic.

SNAKE BITE.

“When any man is bitten by any of these creatures, the poison spreads so suddenly through the veins and so runs to the heart, that in one hour it causeth death, unless he hath the Antidote to expell the poison, which is a root called snakeweed, which much be champed, the spittle swallowed, and the root applyed to the sore; this is present cure against that which would be present death without it: this weed is ranck poison, if it be taken by any man that is not bitted: whosoever is bitte by these snakes his flesh becomes as spotted as a Leaper until he be perfectly cured. It is reported that if the party live that is bitten, the snake will die, and if the party die, the snake will live.” (Wood’s “New England Prospect.”)

“The Rattle Snake.—Their hearts swallowed fresh, is a good Antidote against their Venome, and their liver, the Gall taken out, bruised and applied to their Bitings is a present Remedy.” (“New England Rarities.”)

“Wind in the Stomach.—The skin of the Gripe drest with the down on, is good to wear upon the stomach for the pain and coldness of it.”

“The Beaver, their solid Cods are much used in Physick: Our English women in this Country use the powder grated, as much as will lie upon a shilling in a draught of Fiol Wine, for wind in the Stomach and Belly, and venture many times in such cases to give it to Women with Child.”

Teething necklace.—“The Indian Webbes make use of the broad teeth of the Fauns (Moose) to hang about their children’s necks when they are breeding their Teeth. The tongue of a grown Moose, dried in the smoke

after the Indian manner, is a dish for a Sagamore."

Menorrhagia.—"The Codfish, in the head of this fish is found a Stone, or rather a bone which being Pulverized and drank in any convenient liquor, will stop Women's overflowing Courses notably."

Codfish.—"Their livers and Sounds eaten is a good Medicine for to restore them that have melted their Grease."

Emetics.—"Blew Flower-de-luce; it is excellent to provoke Vomiting."

Love philtre.—"Dogstones, a kind of Satyrion, whereof there are several kinds groweth in our salt Marshes. I once took notice of a wanton Woman compounding the Solid Roots of this Plant with wine, for an Amorous Cup, which wrought the desired effect."

Film of the eyes.—"The Sheath Fish, which shell Calcined and Pulverized, is excellent to take off a Pin and Web, or any kind of Filme growing over the Eye."

Piles.—"Morse, or Sea Horse, having a great head, a wide jaw, armed with Tushes as white as Ivory, a body as big as a cow, proportioned like a Hog, of brownish bay, smooth skinned and impenetrable, they are frequent at the Isle of Sables, their teeth are worth eight Groats the Pound, the best Ivory being sold but for half the money. It is very good against Poison. As also for Cramp, made into rings. And a secret for the Piles, if a wise man have the ordering of it."

SCURVY SORES.

"Coals of Birch pulverized and wrought with the white of an egg to a salve, is a gallant remedy for dry scurfy sores upon the shins, and for bruised wounds and cuts."

SCIATICA.

“Spunk, an excrescence growing out of Black Birch, the Indians use it for Touchwood, and therewith they help the Sciatica, or Gout or the Hips, upon the Thigh, and upon certain Veins.”

HERPES MILIARIS.

White Hellebore.—“The Root sliced thin and boiled in Vinegar, is very good against Herpes Miliaris.”

SORE MOUTH AND FALLING OF THE PALATE.

“The decoction of blew corn is good to wash sore mouths with.

“Hasel, for sore mouths, falling of the Palat.”

Filberd.—“Both with hairy husks upon the nuts, and setting hollow from the nut, and filled with a kind of water, of an astringent taste, it is very good for sore mouths, and falling of the Pallat, as is the whole green nut, before it comes to Kernel, burnt and pulverized.”

SCALLED HEAD.

“Of the Moss that grows at the roots of the White Oak the Indians make a strong decoction, with which they help their Papouses or young Children’s scalled Heads.”

TO KEEP THE FEET WARM.

“Bastard Calamus Aromaticus, the English make use of the leaves, to keep their feet warm.”

MOTHER FITS.

Seal oil.—“Some of it, being cast upon Coals, will bring Women out of the Mother Fits.”
(Hysteria, Eclampsia?)

TOOTHACHE.

“The Osprey, their beaks excell for the toothache, picking the Gums therewith until they bleed.”

“The dogfish, upon whose Back grows a Thorn two or three Inches long, that helps the Toothache, scarifying the Gums therewith.”

“Hellibore.—The powder of the Root put into a hollow tooth, is good for the Tooth-ache.”

EARACHE.

Oil of the red fox.—“Their fat liquified and put into ears easeth pain.”—Josselyn’s “Voyages.”

FALLING SICKNESS.

“The Indians tell of a tree that growes far up in the land, that is as big as an Oake, that will cure the falling-sickness infallibly, what part thereof they use, Bark, Wood, or fruit, I could never learn; thay promised often to bring of it to me, but did not.”—Josselyn’s “Voyages.”

INDIAN TURKISH BATH.

“This Hot-house is a kind of little Cell or Cave, six or eight foot over, round, made on the side of a hill (commonly by some Rivulet or Brooke) into this frequently the Men enter after they have exceedingly heated it with store of wood, laid upon an heape of stones in the middle. When they have taken out the fire, the stones keepe still a great heat: Ten, twelve, twenty more or less, enter at once starke naked, leaving their Coats, small breeches, (or aprons) at the doore, with one to keepe all: here doe they sit round these hot stones an houre or more, taking tobacco, discoursing and sweating to-

gether; which sweating they use for two ends: First, to cleanse their skin: Secondly, to purge their bodies which doubtless is a great means of preserving them, and recovering them from diseases, especially from the French disease, which by sweating and some potions, they perfectly and speedily cure: when they come forth (which is matter of admiration) I have seen them runne (Summer and Winter) into the brookes to coole them, without the least hurt.” —Roger Williams’ Key to the Indian language.

This seems to be a description of a primitive but effectual Turkish bath. This was used, evidently, as a general hygienic measure and not for the treatment of the serious diseases such as Josselyn describes.

DISEASES COMMON TO THE ENGLISH.

“The Diseases that the English are afflicted with, are the same that they have in England, with some proper to New England, griping of the belly (accompanied with Feaver and Ague) which turns to the bloody-flux, a common disease in the Countrey, which together with the small pox hath carried away abundance of their children.”

“Also they are troubled with a disease in the mouth or throat which hath proved mortal to some in a very short time,* Quinsies, and Impostumations of the Almonds, with great distempers of cold.”—Josselyn’s “Voyages.”

The Indians were great users of oil, both as an article of diet, and to anoint their bodies. They used any kind of oil they could get, rattlesnake oil, eagle oil, seal oil, raccoon and bear’s grease, and they had an elaborate method of obtaining oil from white oak acorns.

* Was this diphtheria?

The remedies used by the New England Indians were entirely different from those used by the Western and Southern Indians, i. e., each used the plants which were native to their locality. The medicine used by the Indians and early English are of no use today, but the study of this primitive folk medicine is of interest, not alone from an historical point of view, but as showing the origin of many methods in use among the people as well.