
NATURE OF MAN

Those that withdraw phlegm first withdraw absolutely pure phlegm, and then phlegm that is mixed. And when men are cut,¹ the blood that flows is at first very hot and very red, and then it flows with more phlegm and bile mixed with it.

VII. Phlegm increases in a man in winter; for phlegm, being the coldest constituent of the body, is closest akin to winter. A proof that phlegm is very cold is that if you touch phlegm, bile and blood, you will find phlegm the coldest. And yet it is the most viscid, and after black bile requires most force for its evacuation. But things that are moved by force become hotter under the stress of the force. Yet in spite of all this, phlegm shows itself the coldest element by reason of its own nature. That winter fills the body with phlegm you can learn from the following evidence. It is in winter that the sputum and nasal discharge of men is fullest of phlegm; at this season mostly swellings become white, and diseases generally phlegmatic. And in spring too phlegm still remains strong in the body, while the blood increases. For the cold relaxes, and the rains come on, while the blood accordingly increases

¹ Literally "have their throats cut."

NATURE OF MAN

through the showers and the hot days. For these conditions of the year are most akin to the nature of blood, spring being moist and warm. You can learn the truth from the following facts. It is chiefly in spring and summer that men are attacked by dysenteries, and by hemorrhage from the nose, and they are then hottest and red. And in summer blood is still strong, and bile rises in the body and extends until autumn. In autumn blood becomes small in quantity, as autumn is opposed to its nature, while bile prevails in the body during the summer season and during autumn. You may learn this truth from the following facts. During this season men vomit bile without an emetic, and when they take purges the discharges are most bilious. It is plain too from fevers and from the complexions of men. But in summer phlegm is at its weakest. For the season is opposed to its nature, being dry and warm. But in autumn blood becomes least in man, for autumn is dry and begins from this point to chill him. It is black bile which in autumn is greatest and strongest. When winter comes on, bile being chilled becomes small in quantity, and phlegm increases again because of the abundance of rain and the length of the nights. All these elements then are always comprised in the body of a man, but as the year goes round they become now greater and now less, each in turn and

NATURE OF MAN

according to its nature. For just as every year participates in every element, the hot, the cold, the dry and the moist—none in fact of these elements would last for a moment without all the things that exist in this universe, but if one were to fail all would disappear, for by reason of the same necessity all things are constructed and nourished by one another—even so, if any of these congenital elements were to fail, the man could not live. In the year sometimes the winter is most powerful, sometimes the spring, sometimes the summer and sometimes the autumn. So too in man sometimes phlegm is powerful, sometimes blood, sometimes bile, first yellow, and then what is called black bile. The clearest proof is that if you will give the same man to drink the same drug four times in the year, he will vomit, you will find, the most phlegmatic matter in the winter, the moistest in the spring, the most bilious in the summer, and the blackest in the autumn.

VIII. Now, as these things are so, such diseases as increase in the winter ought to cease in the summer, and such as increase in the summer ought to cease in the winter, with the exception of those which do not change in a period of days—the period of days I shall speak of afterwards. When diseases arise in spring, expect their departure in autumn. Such diseases as arise in autumn must have their