

Perhaps there is no subject, which, apparently easy to investigate, has led to more extraordinary differences of opinion, than that of Contagion. The remarkable manner in which the *same series* of facts have been brought to support *opposite results*, should make us very cautious in drawing our references. The talented, clear-minded, and highly-educated Sir Gilbert Blane, affords a remarkable instance of how far even deep investigation and patient research, may be misled. He speaks of the "criminal folly" and wilful "self-deception" of those who believe that Yellow Fever is not contagious, whereas the united experience of *almost all* the numerous British military surgeons, of the highest class, under whose observation this disease has fallen within the last thirty years, as well as of every civil practitioner with whom I had the pleasure of being associated for several years in the West Indies, has proclaimed their conviction to the contrary.

I will not now enter into any distinction between contagious and infectious diseases; let it suffice that by either term I mean diseases which, being found in one human individual, may be communicated to another by the actual touch, or insertion of some peculiar fluid, or by exhalation from the lungs or surface.

In order to establish the fact of contagion or infection, it is necessary to observe, 1st, whether the exhalations or breath of the diseased person will (not invariably, but *commonly*) produce the same disease in others, whose exemption is not secured by previous circumstances. 2ndly, whether this *apparent* communication is or is not influenced by circumstances of location. 3rdly, whether the disease may not spread from some general cause (atmospheric constitution, as Sydenham calls it), independent of contagion or location.

Thus, in illustration, First, let us take Typhus Fever, Measles, or Small Pox. Exposure to the exhalations of an individual labouring under any of these, will produce the same disease in all individuals, except when these exhalations are much diluted, or when the constitution is originally or temporarily insusceptible, or rendered so by a former attack, as in the two last named cases. This reproduction of disease is irrespective of location; and such diseases, together with those in which inoculation is necessary to such reproduction, as Vaccinia, Syphilis, Frambœsia, &c., are what we correctly term contagious or infectious.

2dly. In places very liable to the production of malarious fever and its various grades, including Remittent and Yellow Fever, we find whole families, and bodies of men (*e. g.*, military and naval), attacked sometimes successively, sometimes simultaneously—witness the intermittents in this country and Eng-