

ANTIQUARIAN NOTICES OF LEPROSY AND LEPER HOSPITALS IN
SCOTLAND AND ENGLAND.

This is an extremely elaborate and erudite paper, to show the former frequency and severity of this loathsome disease in these kingdoms. According to the Anglo-Saxon lexicographies of Sommer, Lye, and Bosworth, "leprosy" was heretofore known by the singular and striking term, "seo mycle adl," "the muckle or great evil" or disease. In the year 1200, there were in the counties of Northumberland, Cumberland, and Durham, a variety of hospitals, exclusively devoted to lepers. Three of these contained so many as ninety-five lepers; namely, those of Sherburne, near Durham, of Carlisle, and Bolton in Northumberland. Bloomfield, in his history of Norfolk, states that there were eighteen lazar-houses in Norfolk alone. In some of these the patients were amply provided for.

Astruc, Bach, and our own historians, Fuller and Heron, supposed that leprosy was introduced by those who returned from the Crusades, and brought it from the east. But the author of the present paper remarks that, even allowing that the disease is contagious, and that the increased national intercourse of that period may have tended to propagate it, there is ample evidence of its having existed in Europe, and even as far west as England, before the Crusades. It lingered long in Scotland after it had disappeared in England, and long in the northern islands of the former kingdom, as in Shetland, after it had left the mainland. In the Faroe islands (the land nearest the Shetland, northward), and in Iceland, it either still exists or existed at a very late period. In 1768, Peterson found 280 lepers in hospitals in Iceland. Olafsen and Henderson described the disease as existing when they visited the island in 1818. And the French expedition of 1836 brought back coloured sketches of natives affected with tubercular leprosy, which sketches are now in course of publication.—*Dr. Simpson, Prof. of Midwifery in University of Edinburgh—Edinburgh Med. and Surg. Journal, Oct. 1, 1841.*

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