

Modest observations on the present extraordinary frost : containing I. A brief description thereof ... II. An account of the most eminent frosts that have happen'd for many hundred years past ... III. Philosophical presages of what may be feared now to ensue, viz. Scarcity of corn and victuals, general sicknesses, and pestilences ... IV. The cries of the poor; and an easy way proposed how there may be twenty thousand pounds a week, at least, raised for their relief, about London ... / By T.T.

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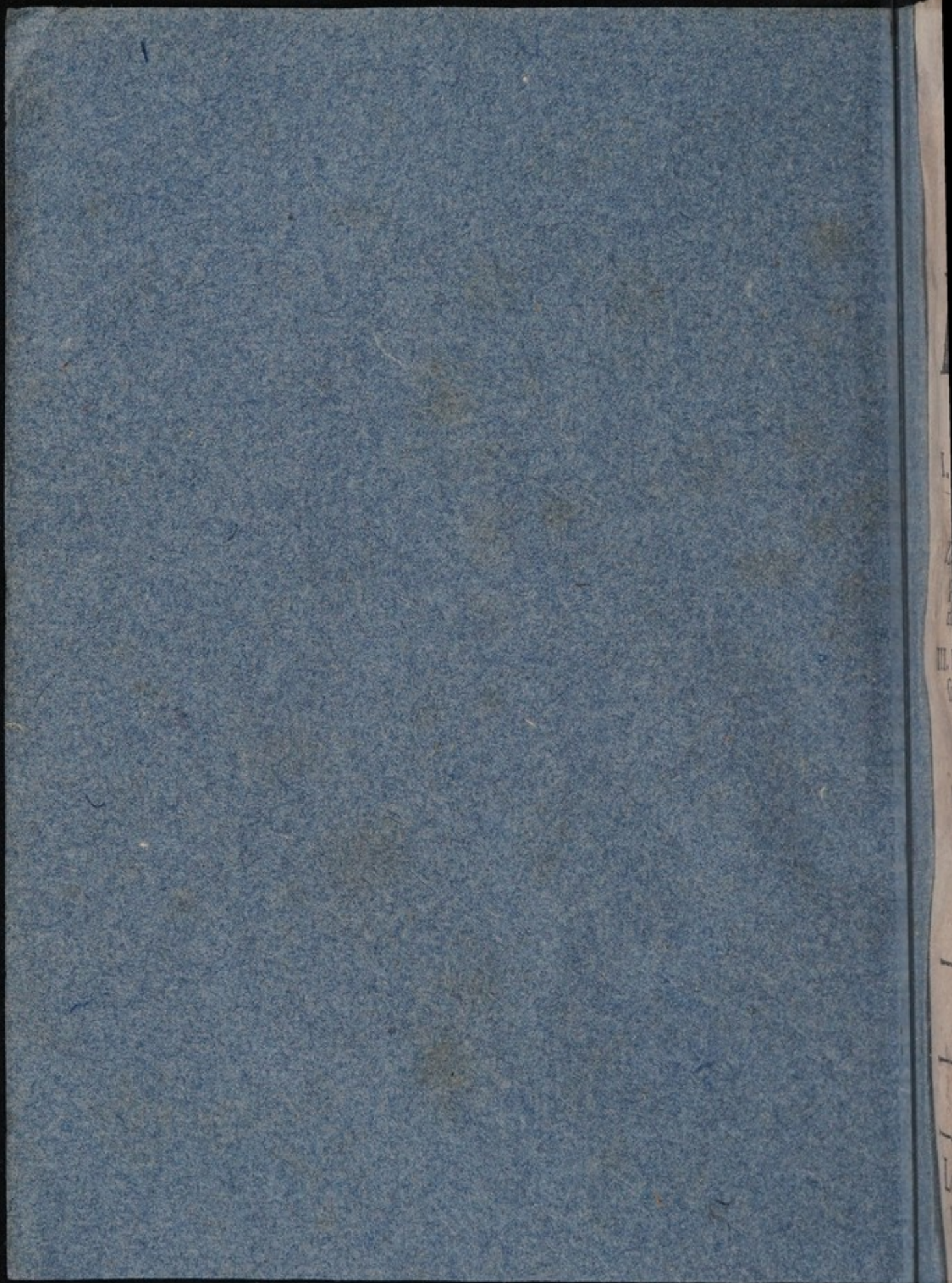
Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
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Modest Observations

ON

The Present Extraordinary

FROST:

CONTAINING

- I. A Brief *Description* thereof, and its Natural *Celestial Causes* inquired into.
- II. An Account of the most Eminent *Frosts* that have hap-
pen'd for many Hundred years past, and what followed
thereupon.
- III. Philosophical *Presages* of what may be feared now to en-
sue, viz. *Scarcity* of Corn and Victuals, General Sickneses,
and *Pestilences* in the next, or within some very few Suc-
ceeding years; with Cautionary Preventions.
- IV. The *Cries of the Poor*; and an easy Way Proposed how there
may be Twenty *Thousand Pounds* a Week, at least, raised
for their Relief, about LONDON, and all Wanting People
Plentifully Provided for, During this and the like *hard Sea-*
sons, yet no Man be a Penny the worse in his Estate.

By T. T.

Entered According to Order.

London, Printed by George Larkin, at the
lower End of Broadstreet, next to London Wall, 1684.

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OBSERVATIONS ON THE FROST &c.

THe present Wonderful *Frost*, which is the General Theme of Discourse, and under the sad Effects whereof so many Thousands of Poor Creatures Shiver and Pine, and Languish; began about the midst of *December* 1683. at first by mean and ordinary Degrees, but towards *Christmas* became very Sharp; The first Week of *January* the River of *Thames* was so Frozen, that People began to Walk over; On *Monday January* the 7th, on the Change of the *Moon* in *Aquary*, there were Expectations, and some Likelihood, of a *Thaw*; but presently after it Froze more violently, and on the 10th and 11th in the morning, a *Coach* Plyed between the *Temple* and the *Old Barge-house*; yet towards Night the 11th (the *Moon* having been in Opposition to *Jupiter*) it Thaw'd a little; and the 12 and 13th was fine Gentle Weather, yet not much Thawing; the Wind continuing still at *North-East*; On the 13th it Froze gain briskly, till the 17th, when a great *Snow* fell; the 18th high, most sharp, and peircing Winds, and on the 23d the Air was more severely Peircing than ever, and more *Snow* fell; And being the first day of the *Term*, *Coaches* Ply'd at the *Temple-Staires*, and carried the *Lawyers* to *Westminster* on the *Ice*; and thence forwards the same Continued, and whole Streets of *Shedds* every where built on the *Thames*, Thousands Passing, Buying, Selling, Drinking, and Revelling; (I wish I could not say on the *Lords Day* too,) and most sorts of Trades-Shops on the *Ice*, (and amongst the rest a Printing-house there Erected) *Bulls Baited*, and Thousands of Spectators; all which still continues at the Writing hereof, being *January* the 29th 1684.

Nay, below the *Bridge*, hundreds daily pass; The River *Humber* (as I am credibly informed) where 'tis several Miles broad, is Frozen over, and Vast Flakes of *Ice* are seen Floating in the *Downes*, of Diverse Miles in Length, and proportionable Breadth.

As for *Celestial Causes* of this unusual Coldness, though undoubtedly they were not wanting (For God generally Governs *Inferiors* by *Superiors*) yet I find not that any of our *Common Pretenders* had the least *Apprehension*, or gave any *Hints* thereof. Not that I wholly *Explode Astrology*; I believe there is something in it, and that it may not be unfit for a *Wise and Modest Man* to Study: but our *Annual Prognosticators* are generally Men of little *Learning*, and less *Philosophy*, and (what is worse) many times very irregular in their Lives; The God of *Purity*, who Communicates his Secrets to those that fear him, Illuminates not *Debauchees*, *Sordid Flatterers*, and *Time-servers*, (whose whole end is to make a *Noise*, and Cheat People of their money,) with the knowledge of *Supernal Mysteries*; Nor can it be expected, That those who neither know things past, by *History*; nor take Notice of things *Present*, by any steady *Judicious Observation*, should yet foresee things to come.

Whether from any of the Late Tripple Conjunctions of the two Superior Planets, *Saturn* and *Jupiter*, or from some of the late unusually frequent Comets, particularly the last in *August* 1682: which in 20 days with a Rapid motion, making its appearance in *Leo*, hurried through all the Signs *Virgo*, and *Libra*, and disappear'd in *Scorpio*, A Sagacious Artist might not have given some *Items* of this Strange Weather, I will not Determine: But if Comets be only (according to *Aristotles* Notion, which I question) hot and dry Exhalations drawn up from the Earth, it would not be difficult to Judge that Severe Colds should ensue here below: For *Extreams* in Nature, if they are not *Causes*, are at least *Fort-Runners* of their *Contraries*: Nor have there wanted Grand *Configurations* of the Superior Bodies; During the time of this violent Frost, As a *Trine* of the *Sun* and *Jupiter*, an *Opposition* of *Saturn* and *Mars*. But leaving the Disquisition of these to the *Curious*, having not Room to Inlarge here, upon them; I hasten to satisfy the *Common Reader* with an *Historical Review* of former Occurrences of this kind; which may check that *Vulgar Cry* of Ignorance, That *Never, O Never was known the Like*.

Livy in his fifth Book tells us of a Winter so hard, That the River *Tyber* was frozen over, a matter very strange in such a Climate as *Italy*. In the year 1234. the *Adriatick Sea* was so frozen, that the *Venetians* went over the Ice thereof with *Carts*. *Zonaras* assures us, that in the Reign of that Emperour *Constantine* (who for a Nasty Reason in his Christning, was call'd *Copronymus*) about the year 750. the *Pontick Sea*, was so Congealed, That people for many miles travelled it on foot: And *Horses* and *Carts* loaden, passed over the *Fretum*, or Narrow part of it; But withal he adds, that the Summer following was so excessive hot and dry, that great Rivers and most Fountains were wholly dried up, and People and Cattel

Cattel perisht for want of water. In the year 821. the greatest Rivers of Europe, as the *Rhine*, the *Danubius*, the *Elb*, and the *Sein*, were so incrusted with Ice, that for the space of above 30 days, *Carriages* freely passed along on them, as on the Land.

But to look nearer home---In the year of our Lord 1365. and 49th year of K. *Edward* the 3d, A *Frost* lasted from the midst of *September* to the Month of *April*; but though so tedious, the Cold was nothing so intense or violent as now. In the 15th year of the Reign of K. *Henry* the Eighth, after great Rains and Winds, there followed so sore a Frost, that many dyed for cold, and some lost *Fingers*, some *Toes*, and many their *Nails*. [I follow the very words of Sir R. Baker, fol. 297.] The same Author tells us, That in the seventh year of Q. *Elizabeth*, on the 21. of *December*, began a Frost so extream, that on *New-Years-Day* Even people passed over the *Thames* on foot, some plaid at *Foot Ball*, some shot at *Pricks*, as if it had been firm ground; yet this great Frost, the third of *January* at night, began to *Thaw*; and by the fifth day, there was no Ice to be seen, but great *Inundations* followed.

In the year 1609. [which 'tis not impossible, but some *Living* might remember, being but 74 years ago] a Frost began in *December*, which continued till *April* following, with such violence, that the *Thames* was so frozen that *Carts* laden, were frequently driven over it, most *Fowls* and *Birds* were destroyed. In the year 1637. was another Frost, which rendered the *Thames* passable; so in the year 1664. immediately followed by the *Great Sickness*; And the like towards the latter end of the year 1676.

Some of the *Consequences* of these extream *Frosts*, I have mentioned, more I might, all are not Convenient; those that consult *Chronology*, may easily satisfy themselves; a man may soon err in assigning *Effects* to such or such particular *Causes*, or adapting *Events* to *Significators*; *Moderesty* is the first Lesson in *Wisdoms School*. Therefore as we have been studious in *matter of Fact*, past; but sparing as to *Sequels*; so we shall retain the same becoming *tendernefs* as to *Futures*; wherein we shall steer our Course rather by the Guidance of *Nature* in her usual Operations here below, than by curious Researches into remoter *influential Causes* above; though not neglecting them neither. For the *Universe* is *intire*, *Harmonical*, and *Sympathetical*, and he that does not competently understand the right *Tone* of the whole, and the true *Key* of every part, will make but *bad Musick* wherever he lays his Clumsy Fingers.

First then I say, This Extremity of Cold presages many Calamities and evils to attend Mankind, and the rest of their Fellow-Creatures; for as the Innocent Inhabitants of the *Air*, or expanded *Suburbs* of *Heaven*,

viz.

viz. Birds and Fowls, are endangered by the Elements denying their usual Benefits and Provisions (wherein another fourth part of the Creation, *viz. Fishes*, are somewhat Concern'd) so *degrad'd man*, taking advantage of this *Cruel Weather*, does for *profit*, or *pleasure*, or *vanity*, destroy many thousands of them: Now this great destruction of them, is but a Fore runner of *Mortality* amongst Creatures of greater value, and even of men themselves. Would you know the reason? I told you but now, *Universal Nature is Sympathetical*.

2dly. This immoderate *Cold* locks up the *Pores* of mens Bodies, and drives the natural *Heat* more *Central*, which occasions great *Appetite* and *Drought*, whence follows much and excessive *Eating* and *Drinking* of gross, fatt, succulent Foods, and *strong Drinks*; in all that have where-withal to procure them; which the voracious desires do at present seem able to bear and *digest*, yet really *Nature* is not able to do it, and so by degrees there are *seeds* sown and *Foundations* laid for *Diseases*. On the other hand, amongst the *Poor*, Necessity of feeding on *unsit* and *unusual Viands*, for their support at present, or defect of due Nourishment, must to them do as much mischief; For want is as great (tho I think not so *Common*) an Enemy to Nature, as *Superfluity*; The way to prevent these mischiefs is, for the *Rich* to observe *Sobriety* and *Temperance*, and for the *Poor* to use *Discretion* in their *Diet*, for a pint of *Milk* with a quarter of a pint of *Water*, thickned with one Spoonful of *Flower*, and heated just to *Boyling*, and then putting into it a few Crums of *Bread* (all which will not cost above a Penny) shall give any person as *nourishing* a Meal as the best *Surloyn* of *Beef* or *Capon*. I mention not this to prevent *Benevolences* towards the *Poor*, which all that are able are bound to *Afford*, but only to Advise them how to supply themselves when they meet not with other *Accomodations*, but find *Rich Mens Charity* more *Frozen* than the *Thames*.

3dly. This Excessive Frost Condenses the Air, and renders it *Sulphureous* and *Unhealthy*, especially in such Cities as *London*, where *Sea-coals* are generally used for *Firing*, and most People (especially *Women*) creep close to those fulsome Fires, without using themselves to proper *Exercises*, whereby their *Blood* stagnates, and becomes *thick* and *fermenting*, whence are Generated the *Scurvy*, stoppages of the *Breast*, *Coughs* and *shortness of Breath*; the ill effects whereof will more manifest themselves next *Spring* and *Summer*.

4thly. This Disharmony and Inequality of the Elements, portends a *dry hot Summer* to ensue, for all *Extremes* (as before observ'd) produce their *Contraries*, which will not only Encrease *Distempers*, but I fear some *Epidemical Disease*, and it is also a Fore-runner of *Dearth* and *Scarcity*.

forward to Contribute to the Common Necessities; And what if you should resolve for *one Day in a week*, (at least during such an hard time) to restrain your selves from large Eating and *set Meals*, and wholly on that day forbear *Bibbing* of *Wine* and strong Liquors (I dare promise you, it shall be never the worse for your *Health*, but the better, as also for your *Business*) and Imploy what you *so Save*, in Charitable Uses to the Relief of the *Poor*? Such a thing *has been done* on a worse occasion within our Memory, and therefore is not Impracticable. By this only means within *Londons* Bills of Mortality might easily be raised *Twenty Thousands pounds* a week for the *Poor*; And no Man a *Farthing* the worse, but even in his Estate the better (and much more in his *Health*, which is more Valuable than the greatest *Estate* in *Christendome*) for without dispute there are within that Circuit more than an Hundred thousand Families whose *Dinners* each Day Cost them (one with another) more than three Shillings each, I mean extravagantly, in *Flesh, Fowls or Fish*, when a little Bread and Cheese, *Milk* or the like, might as well, (nay I am sure would better) for once at least in a Week, supply Nature; Now one hundred thousand three Shillings is Fifteen thousand pound; and then 'tis not to be doubted (since in this Age Generally more is spent in *Drink*, than *Victuals*) but that there are above one Hundred thousand Persons that daily lavish away above twelve pence a Day in *Wine, Brandy, Ale*, or some strong Liquors, which they forbearing but for one day in a week, and bestowing as aforeaid, thereby may be raised Five thousand pound more, and so in the whole twenty thousand pounds a week, which justly distributed, would bravely supply *Four-score thousand* Families, at Five shillings a week a peice, or afford an hundred and threescore thousand Poor People *half a Crown* a peice every week. And will you suffer such a Number of *Souls* to perish, for want, rather than abridge your wanton *Palates* and Insatiate *Faunches* of unnecessary, nay pernicious Danities, one only Day in a week? Look up thou *Sottish Epicure* that *Denyest* it, and call thy self *Christian* hence forwards if thou *Darest*.

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