[**Bos'n Cross**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11032-bosn-cross/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 536 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Portsmouth
* Interests:many things.......

[Posted March 26, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=397979) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=397979)

i already has the french pox...i think iv enough of the wenches........for now....but not of the ale.....

[**Jas. Hook**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11157-jas-hook/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,650 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Long Island NY
* Interests:Fishing & Piracy

[Posted March 27, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398012) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398012)

 On 3/26/2011 at 8:44 PM, Bos said:

i already has the french pox...i think iv enough of the wenches........for now....but not of the ale.....

Then a full tankard with ye Mr Cross

By the way, have ye been seen by that Mission fellow? A good fellow with a dose o' mercury.

Jas. Hook 

[**Bos'n Cross**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11032-bosn-cross/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 536 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Portsmouth
* Interests:many things.......

[Posted March 28, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398041) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398041)

last dose from the likes of him...had me foaming black at the mouth.......im feeling better now.......see ------------->

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

* Goat Specialist
* 
* 
* Admin
* 5,082 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Monroe, MI
* Interests:Scholarly piracy, designing and creating haunted house rooms and props, movies, abstract thinking, abstruse thinking, obstructive thinking, ideating, random thinking, movies, cartoons, movies, movies scores, cycling, world peace and small furry dogs, movies, writing, drawing, personal skills training, gremlins and, of course, lest I forget, movies.

[Posted March 29, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398052) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398052)

Mercury would cause you to salivate, not foam black at the mouth. In fact, that was one of the reasons they gave it - the salivation was thought to remove the syphilitic illness, probably along the lines of balancing the humors. (Phlegm is one of the humors.)

Here's something related from John Moyle's account of 'curing' a syphilitic patient, "A Man aged 42 Years had the Siphylis to a high Degree". It's taken from his book *Memoirs: Of many Extraordinary Cures*.

"Sometimes he washed his Mouth with warm Milk, which eased much, besides he had a Linteolum rouled, which he held between his Teeth to keep his Mouth open, in time of Salivating, as also a Spitting Pot, so that it was known what quantity he Salivated in the Day and Night, which was three Pints a Day at first, and at last two Quarts, to which stent I held him, for when it grew Languid, through Cold accidentally taken, he had a warm Enema Injected, which caused him to Spit the better, or if a Looseness happened, he had Diacordium, or Laudanum given to stop it." (Moyle, p. 87)

(Sorry, Matthew. I was trying to stay out of this and hoped it would get back on topic, but we can't have Cross going about spreading vicious and untrue rumors about the *Mercury* ship's surgeon and his methods, which follow the practices prescribed by the Ancients and affirmed by contemporary Chyrurgical authors like Moyle.)

[**Bos'n Cross**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11032-bosn-cross/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 536 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Portsmouth
* Interests:many things.......

[Posted March 29, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398082) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398082)

not sure if it was a mercury derivative or what, but, i had 3 different un-related sources tell me the black spit thing.....one being the guys in james fort, another being to rev war era surgeons, and the last being an actually doctor, who just found my make-up- entertaining...and they all very specifically mentioned either black spit, black foam, or both....they agreed on it making you salivate...just the added part of it not being a lovely colour.......

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

* Goat Specialist
* 
* 
* Admin
* 5,082 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Monroe, MI
* Interests:Scholarly piracy, designing and creating haunted house rooms and props, movies, abstract thinking, abstruse thinking, obstructive thinking, ideating, random thinking, movies, cartoons, movies, movies scores, cycling, world peace and small furry dogs, movies, writing, drawing, personal skills training, gremlins and, of course, lest I forget, movies.

[Posted March 30, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398089) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398089)

Interesting. I found no reference in the stuff I'm reading to black salivation and they do so love to talk about the colors of things in many period medical books. Wiki doesn't mention it in the article on Mercury poisoning either. This doesn't mean it wouldn't happen (and I certainly am no expert on Mercury poisoning - all I know is what I read in the papers.) [Here](http://books.google.com/books?pg=PA258&lpg=PA259&dq=mercury%20black%20saliva&sig=5AugULqPHuO3-66j6Y4TZA0FiYc&ei=cB6TTfbTOIqFtgfso7RT&ct=result&id=lDtPAAAAYAAJ&ots=EiB5hh_2xd&output=text) is a very interesting article on Mercury poisoning from the 1850s - which is when Mercury must still have been used as a medicine based on the content of the paper. (Most modern references to Hg poisoning seem to relate to small quantities as opposed to what would have been administered during period.)

It would be interesting to see a source for black saliva since a Googled glance around the internet for Mercury in combination with black spit, black spittle and black saliva didn't turn anything salient up. Hg poisoning does cause bleeding of the lungs which might look black when coughed up. Mercury can also oxidize and turn black, so if it were vomited up after being ingested that may suggest a black substance coming from the mouth.

Actually, if this were true, I wonder if it would be related to their concept of the humor called "black bile"? I haven't really found much to explain why they thought on of the humors would be black bile, although it seems to me Hippocrates mentions it somewhere...

I found this interesting from the article I cite (as related to my previous post): "In many old histories of syphilis, it is too painfully apparent to as that a large part at least of the recorded symptoms was due to the enormous amounts of mercury given. This practice generally arose from the notion that the elimination of the morbid poison depended solely on the continuance and degree of salivation."

[**Jas. Hook**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11157-jas-hook/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,650 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Long Island NY
* Interests:Fishing & Piracy

[Posted March 30, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398091) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398091)

Mr. Cross -

Ye not going to the next couple o' events with a mouthful o' licorice jelly beans are ye? ;)

Jas. Hook 

[**Cascabel**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/30-cascabel/)

* Evil Drooling Henchman
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 848 posts
* Gender:Male

[Posted March 30, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398092) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398092)

Hmmmmmm.....

Kinda makes me wonder if that's how the Mercury crew got it's name !!!

"Oh.... you're spitting up nasty looking black stuff..... You must be part of the MERCURY crew !!!" ;) 

And all this time I thought it had to do with the name of the ship....... ;)

>>>>> Cascabel

[**Capt. Sterling**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2648-capt-sterling/)

* Sticky Fingers Sterling Needs a New Hat
* 
* 
* Member
* 10,302 posts
* Gender:Pyrate Hunter
* Location:here
* Interests:Killing pirates, haven't met one yet worth keeping alive....

[Posted March 30, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398093) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398093)

 On 3/30/2011 at 9:40 AM, Jas. Hook said:

Mr. Cross -

Ye not going to the next couple o' events with a mouthful o' licorice jelly beans are ye? ;)

Jas. Hook 

Belay that, do not give him any crazy ideas, he has enough of his own...and yet... hmmm, I rather like the idea of this one...

[**Capt. Sterling**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2648-capt-sterling/)

* Sticky Fingers Sterling Needs a New Hat
* 
* 
* Member
* 10,302 posts
* Gender:Pyrate Hunter
* Location:here
* Interests:Killing pirates, haven't met one yet worth keeping alive....

[Posted March 30, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398094) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398094)

 On 3/30/2011 at 10:18 AM, Cascabel said:

Hmmmmmm.....

Kinda makes me wonder if that's how the Mercury crew got it's name !!!

"Oh.... you're spitting up nasty looking black stuff..... You must be part of the MERCURY crew !!!" ;) 

And all this time I thought it had to do with the name of the ship....... ;)

>>>>> Cascabel

there goes my tea... all over the bleeding keyboard....

well played Cascabel

**Edited March 30, 2011 by Capt. Sterling**

[**Bos'n Cross**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11032-bosn-cross/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 536 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Portsmouth
* Interests:many things.......

[Posted March 30, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398095) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398095)

i think i need to ask the people at jamesfort about this...and figure out which surgeon mentioned this........as for now, i shall go with missions statement........he is so well researched...i actually have something on black bile i believe...though its in a middle ages book.....i shall now look

[**Bos'n Cross**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11032-bosn-cross/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 536 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Portsmouth
* Interests:many things.......

[Posted March 30, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398096) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398096)

also, the surgeon that mentioned this seemed very sure about something in it causing black foaming of the mouth...though this makes me wonder......if it might be combined with other side effects, Mission, do you know of any remedies that were combined with the mercury for the great pox? or was it just mercury?

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

* Goat Specialist
* 
* 
* Admin
* 5,082 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Monroe, MI
* Interests:Scholarly piracy, designing and creating haunted house rooms and props, movies, abstract thinking, abstruse thinking, obstructive thinking, ideating, random thinking, movies, cartoons, movies, movies scores, cycling, world peace and small furry dogs, movies, writing, drawing, personal skills training, gremlins and, of course, lest I forget, movies.

[Posted March 30, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398097) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398097)

Don't misunderstand me; I could very well be wrong about this. I've just never seen a reference to it in the period or pre-period books I've read. Remember too that they might have seen black foam and not managed to connect it to mercury. On top of that, the medicines used are probably the area of least interest to me in period medicine, so I would not call myself an 'expert' by any stretch of the word.

They used all sorts of combinations of ingredients because medicines were very much trial-and-error things. Some of the crazy patent concoctions in use during period had 50 or 60 ingredients in them including weird ingredients that you would probably be more likely to associate with a witch's brew. In fact, one of the short pamphlets I read was all about a mixture that a apothecary was trying to convince the BR Navy was an effective cure all.

Calomel (mentioned in that document I linked to above) was definitely in use. I also vaguely recall references to the blue pill he mentions there. Naturally recipes varied from book to book, apothecary to apothecary and sea surgeon to sea surgeon, so I would be hard-pressed to give you a particular list of ingredients. (On top of that they are usually written in badly abbreviated Latin - I have occasionally tried to decipher these recipes using a medical ingredients encyclopedia from the mid 1800s and a Latin dictionary from that period, but it's very hit-and-miss.) They even used licorice as a flavoring agent, although not the black (or red) twisted candy we commonly think of.

Hey, this is getting interesting and you're forcing me to do research so I'd like to split the relevant bits of this out under an appropriate heading and put in Twill so I can find it again. Is that OK?

[**Bos'n Cross**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11032-bosn-cross/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 536 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Portsmouth
* Interests:many things.......

[Posted March 30, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398099) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398099)

split away!

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

* Has anyone seen my cousin?
* 
* 
* Admin
* 1,773 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted March 30, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398115) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398115)

licorice root was used to relieve constipation. So if we are looking for ways to rid the body of humors, it would fall in line. Cross, I believe greenhower or maybe prentis' in CW sells it. Thats where I got the bit I carry in my rations bag.

[**Bos'n Cross**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11032-bosn-cross/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 536 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Portsmouth
* Interests:many things.......

[Posted March 30, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398118) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398118)

tarpleys store has it for sure, though im not after licorice......at the moment......sadly, i cannot find where i read about black bile.....iv gone through all of my books containing things on period medicine(that isn't a lot mind you) and have'nt come up with it.......nor have i found anything online about mercury as treatment making you have black foam/spittle.......i am sadness........

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

* Has anyone seen my cousin?
* 
* 
* Admin
* 1,773 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted March 30, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398120) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398120)

ok, I'm gonna put on the medic hat fort a sec. This is a bit descriptive, so if you are faint of heart you may wish to not read this.

The bile you are describing, if you are vomiting it, is going to appear as coffee grounds emisis and suggests an upper gastro intestinal bleed. It smells of feces or rotting flesh depending on where it is in your system. It's also corrosive as all get out, so what ever teeth scurvy has not taken this would. The highlight, in the 18th century, without treatment of the underlying cause, you would suffer from dehydration and internal bleeding and have a short illness. Can I have your short coat?

[**madPete**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/10933-madpete/)

* Archangel Antagonist
* 
* 
* Member
* 604 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Arizona
* Interests:Golden Age of Piracy, Early English Archers, Steampunk

Did I mention Rum!?!

[Posted March 30, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398126) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398126)

 On 3/30/2011 at 10:31 AM, Capt. Sterling said:

 On 3/30/2011 at 10:18 AM, Cascabel said:

Hmmmmmm.....

Kinda makes me wonder if that's how the Mercury crew got it's name !!!

"Oh.... you're spitting up nasty looking black stuff..... You must be part of the MERCURY crew !!!" ;) 

And all this time I thought it had to do with the name of the ship....... ;)

>>>>> Cascabel

there goes my tea... all over the bleeding keyboard....

well played Cascabel

It's all fun and games til someone loses an eye (or a face... or a Bosun)

Seems odd that a pyrate hunter is the one needing the Mercury and not actually a member of the Mercury crew!



mP

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

* Has anyone seen my cousin?
* 
* 
* Admin
* 1,773 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted March 30, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398130) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398130)

he was fine till he tangled with that "pesky ssspppppaaaanyard!" at MTA

[**CaptainB**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11495-captainb/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 191 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:NE Oklahoma
* Interests:Rum, booty, wenches

[Posted March 31, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398133) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398133)

Black spittle hmm? You weren't by chance, chewin' on a plug o' Virginia Leaf were ya? I know from personal experience that the habit o' chewin' lend itself ta black spit. An' if ye were takin' a dose o' quicksilver, well then, them might just be workin' together on a mighty fine coincidence.

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

* Goat Specialist
* 
* 
* Admin
* 5,082 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Monroe, MI
* Interests:Scholarly piracy, designing and creating haunted house rooms and props, movies, abstract thinking, abstruse thinking, obstructive thinking, ideating, random thinking, movies, cartoons, movies, movies scores, cycling, world peace and small furry dogs, movies, writing, drawing, personal skills training, gremlins and, of course, lest I forget, movies.

[Posted March 31, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398135) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398135)

 On 3/30/2011 at 5:47 PM, Dutchman said:

ok, I'm gonna put on the medic hat fort a sec. This is a bit descriptive, so if you are faint of heart you may wish to not read this.

The bile you are describing, if you are vomiting it, is going to appear as coffee grounds emisis and suggests an upper gastro intestinal bleed. It smells of feces or rotting flesh depending on where it is in your system. It's also corrosive as all get out, so what ever teeth scurvy has not taken this would. The highlight, in the 18th century, without treatment of the underlying cause, you would suffer from dehydration and internal bleeding and have a short illness. Can I have your short coat?

Say, I want that orange coat while we're doing the Cross sailor's divvy.

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

* Goat Specialist
* 
* 
* Admin
* 5,082 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Monroe, MI
* Interests:Scholarly piracy, designing and creating haunted house rooms and props, movies, abstract thinking, abstruse thinking, obstructive thinking, ideating, random thinking, movies, cartoons, movies, movies scores, cycling, world peace and small furry dogs, movies, writing, drawing, personal skills training, gremlins and, of course, lest I forget, movies.

[Posted March 31, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398140) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398140)

And now we once again have recourse to Guy Williams' splendidly morbid book, The Age of Agony, in reference to this topic. (Those of you who haven't read this and want to effect an interesting period portrayal are really missing something IMO. It's a fascinating read for one and all.)

“Primary, secondary and tertiary stages [of syphilis] were quickly recognized in the progress of the disease. First infection was indicated by a hard sore, or ‘chancre’ on the site of contact. Dr. [John] King, like John Woodall, burned this away with the application of some caustic substance, but in fact this made no difference, for whether it was treated or not, the sore would heal of itself, leaving a small scar. Six to eight weeks later, the patient would develop a fever and a rash. This was when he was at his most infectious and consequently it was the stage treated most drastically. A standby was mercurial ointment, which was made up of equal parts of mercury and lard with a small addition of prepared suet. A walnut sized lump of this was rubbed into the inside of the thighs night and morning until so much mercury was absorbed through the skin that the inside of the mouth became sore and the patient drooled. This was known as ‘salivation’ and was a sign that the desired effect was being achieved." (Williams, p. 127)

“The methods by which venereal diseases were treated prior to the year 1700 ranged from the absurd to the madly dangerous.

Of course, sufferers from the pox were bled, purged, blistered, and given a variety of emetics, as they would have been if they had contracted any other disease. In addition, they might have been thrashed soundly – as a punishment for having conducted themselves in an unseemly way, and to discourage them from ever doing the same thing again- or they might have been subjected to some entirely useless old wives’ remedy –in a few places, a pox-ridden man would have had his penis wrapped in warm, steaming parts of a fowl that had just been torn asunder, while it was still alive.

More fortunate patients would have been treated with mercury, or with guiac.” (Williams, p. 131)

[**MarkG**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/10527-markg/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 587 posts
* Location:Ohio

[Posted March 31, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398166) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398166)

 On 3/30/2011 at 10:53 AM, Bos said:

also, the surgeon that mentioned this seemed very sure about something in it causing black foaming of the mouth...though this makes me wonder......if it might be combined with other side effects, Mission, do you know of any remedies that were combined with the mercury for the great pox? or was it just mercury?

I'm friends with both Jamestown surgeons. I will check with them.

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

* Goat Specialist
* 
* 
* Admin
* 5,082 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Monroe, MI
* Interests:Scholarly piracy, designing and creating haunted house rooms and props, movies, abstract thinking, abstruse thinking, obstructive thinking, ideating, random thinking, movies, cartoons, movies, movies scores, cycling, world peace and small furry dogs, movies, writing, drawing, personal skills training, gremlins and, of course, lest I forget, movies.

[Posted April 1, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398182) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398182)

If they've heard of it, please ask them to provide a reference. It would be an excellent thing for me to have and could be part of a useful book to read on medicine. (I plan to do a whole section on VD in my book since it was such a big problem.)

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

* Goat Specialist
* 
* 
* Admin
* 5,082 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Monroe, MI
* Interests:Scholarly piracy, designing and creating haunted house rooms and props, movies, abstract thinking, abstruse thinking, obstructive thinking, ideating, random thinking, movies, cartoons, movies, movies scores, cycling, world peace and small furry dogs, movies, writing, drawing, personal skills training, gremlins and, of course, lest I forget, movies.

[Posted April 1, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398206) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398206)

Now this is interesting. It is from the book *Selected Writings of William Clowes*. While it doesn't say anything specifically relating to the original point, it suggest something pretty wretched. (Clowes was a renowned surgeon and one-time army surgeon in the late 1500s.)

“…to attempt the said cure, according to the gentleman’s own request, which was with the unction [the anointing with the mercurial ointment. This treatment had to be carefully regulated and if persisted in for too long was exceedingly dangerous.] But first he prepared and afterwards purged his body, and opened a vein, and after, very discreetly, he administered the unction at several times, until he saw it had wrought sufficiently and to Master Story’s own good liking, and so meant to have ceased. But this monster in humanity, contrary to all Art and reason, compelled Master Story to administer the unction once again, saying his body was strong enough to endure it. Howbeit, within three days after, he began to sing a new song, for strange and unexpected accidents immediately followed. **A great and inordinate amount of flux of vicious and corrupt humors passed out of his mouth, with much acrimony, burning heat and sharpness, by reason of the putrefaction of his gums**, with an horrible stinking savour and a fever accompanying the same.” (Excerpts, Clowes, p. 65) (emphasis mine)

[**Bos'n Cross**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11032-bosn-cross/)

* Pyrate Captain
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* Member
* 536 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Portsmouth
* Interests:many things.......

[Posted April 1, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398211) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398211)

wow...i am so glad the medicine hath improved.....id hate to think what those "corrupt humors" might have been....eehh........ THANK YOU mark!...i hope someone can shed light on this, if you talk to fred, i believe he was near by when someone mentioned it.....they were having a rousing good time at my poxy expense.....

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

* Goat Specialist
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* Admin
* 5,082 posts
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[Posted April 2, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398228) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398228)

You haven't paid attention to my presentation, have you?

Ancient medical theory - from Hippocrates (and before) to about 1900 - believed that our body contained 4 humors. (Hippocrates is one of the first people we know of to have codified the basics of humoral theory.) These four humors consisted of phlegm, blood, black bile and yellow bile. If you became ill or had medical problems it was believed that the illness proceeded in part from these four humors being out of balance. This is the reason they bled people when they were sick. They were trying to remove the bad blood and balance the humors. (Well, among other things. There was a whole extensive theory woven around the idea of humors that goes beyond this discussion.) Additionally, when you were wounded, there was a need to balance the humors and draw them away from the wound. So they might bleed your big toe to draw humors away from a problem in your neck (This is something I was just yesterday reading Matthias Purmann did in one case.)

So there's the basics of humoral theory for you in a nutshell. It wasn't until the late 19th century that it fell out of favor, so much of the medical theory that governed recorded human history was based on this theory.

Now, to point. When Clowes says, "A great and inordinate amount of flux of vicious and corrupt humors passed out of his mouth, with much acrimony, burning heat and sharpness, by reason of the putrefaction of his gums..." he is stating that some sort of fluid or fluid-based stuff came from the poor guy's mouth. He blames it on humors coming from the guy's rotting gums. (Curiously, rotting gums is actually one of the symptoms of scurvy, among other things.)

We hope you have enjoyed this brief overview. For more information on humoral theory, visit your local library. Or be lazy and look it up on wiki.

[**sutlerjon**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/10534-sutlerjon/)

* Plunderer
* 
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* Member
* 491 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Orlando - ish, Fl

[Posted April 2, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398229) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398229)

So who gets to beat the colorful biles, phlegm, and blood outta Cross for engaging in the behavior that makes him (and us) sick?

Whoever does it, please give him a rap on the knuckles for me ....

So, let me see if I got this right, it is possible that some VD's came from shepherds "tending" their flock .... but to get rid of it you would wrap a freshly killed chicken around your ?!?

Seems like a boy named Portnoy was complainin' bout the liver a few years ago, maybe he shoulda had the chicken.

Talk about a "humorous" subject .... my mom always said it was wrong to laugh at others' medical misfortunes ....

At this point Capt. Sterling may wanna lose a bosun, before the Archangels are "corrupted" or "infected". Don't slip on the slobber covered deck ...... or ..... when Cross is around keep a few buckets of sand handy.

As I've stated before, trying to take my comments seriously may result in anyerisms or other brain illnesses. I still wish there were a font for sarcastic.

[**sutlerjon**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/10534-sutlerjon/)

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[Posted April 2, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398230) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398230)

Oops, there I went again, this is Twill, no place for "humor" ..... the discussion has been very enlightening .... even in CW era mercury was still being used to treat some things.

"Blue Mass" was, I believe, a mercury containing compound that was still being used to treat the "syphillis".

Please excuse my forgetting where I was and making jokes, like most everyone else, at Cross' expense ...

[**Bos'n Cross**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11032-bosn-cross/)

* Pyrate Captain
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* Member
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* Gender:Male
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[Posted April 2, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398243) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398243)

oh mission i know about the humors theory, i was just saying that i would hate to see what aaccttuuaallllyy came out of the patients mouth......i book that i was looking up "black bile" in, explains it nicely........thanks for posting it though, its great for anyone and you put it more simply!

[**Jib**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2545-jib/)

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[Posted April 4, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398277) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398277)

Mission any note of iodine being used to treat VD?

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

* Goat Specialist
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* 5,082 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Monroe, MI
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[Posted April 4, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=398279) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=398279)

You know, in a search of my (currently) 937 pages of period medical notes, I did not find a single instance of iodine or its Latin equivalent. (And I have entered an awful lot of period medical recipes.)

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

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[Posted May 22, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=400231) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=400231)

Ok, I've posted a mini-web page of it's own containing period info on the pox (which includes that photo of Cross.) You can read the whole mess [via this link](http://www.markck.com/pages/Piracy/Surgeon_Pgs/syphilis1.html).

[**MarkG**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/10527-markg/)

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* 
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[Posted May 24, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=400339) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=400339)

When I was in college I remember reading a book called [The Columbian Exchange](http://www.amazon.com/Columbian-Exchange-Biological-Cultural-Consequences/dp/B000IE7U42/ref%3Dsr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1306288895&sr=8-2). It spent a chapter tracing Syphilis through the centuries. One thing I remember from it was that the sores were visible for the first century or so after it appeared in Europe. There are lines in Shakespeare referring to someone with a bad acne being unable to get women to kiss him for fear of catching the pox.

[**John Maddox Roberts**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/334-john-maddox-roberts/)

* First Mate
* 
* 
* Member
* 272 posts

[Posted May 25, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=findComment&comment=400348) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/17883-of-the-pox-and-mercury/&do=reportComment&comment=400348)

I recall reading many years ago a history of the pox that quoted a description of 16th-century German soldiers (romping merrily over Europe during the Religious Wars)nearly all of whom had the pox and whose faces sported not only open lesions, but also warty growths and excrescenses memorably described as "..some turned upward and pointed like horns, others twisting downward like spigots." This was during the first great wave of syphilis that swept through Europe, when the disease killed people much more swiftly and featured more colorful and picturesque symptoms.