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A note on the humoral theory of health and disease

“Phlegmatic”: phlegm was seen as a humor; cold and moist, it produced sluggishness.

“Choleric”: irritability was the result of a humor, yellow bile, produced by the gall bladder.

“Melancholic”: depression, sadness, seen as deriving from a “black bile” produced by the kidneys or spleen.

“Sanguine”: a warm, hopeful, cheerful temperament resulted from blood being the dominant humor.

“Bilious” formerly referred to an ill-tempered person, seen to be the result of excess bile. It now refers to someone sickly in color or appearance.