

# Dr. David Glidden's "Epicurean Prolepsis"

Post by "Cassius" of March 3, 2023 at 9:01 PM

As an incentive to read it, and not as a spoiler, I think I can suggest that the following is going to strike a lot of people as one of the more memorable passages of the article:

Quote from David Glidden, page 213

We can and do recognize a man on a horse leading a dog, without first having among ourselves agreed upon conceptions of what it is to be a man or a horse or a dog. And dogs and horses can do this too. We humans can also recognize war when we see one or poverty or justice, because we are familiar with such symptoms among ourselves. What we care to think about such human conditions, Epicurus suggests, is altogether a different matter. But can we so rigorously distinguish how things look from what we think about them? The empiric physicians, and the methodists too for that matter, thought we could, and they built their practice of medicine around the difference. Indeed, the 'general symptoms' recognized by the methodists are strikingly similar to Epicurean prolepsis, in that both concern persistent conditions varying widely from place to place, without always indicating the same hidden causes. The empirics even thought we could perceive symptoms and their antecedent causes without having to speculate about the hidden mechanism: we could just see that a puncture wound in the heart caused the death of the patient.