

2nd OCTOBER 1855

*... under the circumstances Kierkegaard
had a good appetite*

Before his admission to the hospital Kierkegaard had for some time been suffering from an exhausting, painful cough with expectoration.

In the beginning the sputum was cream-like, then bloody with yellow lumps.

When he was admitted Kierkegaard still had an exhausting cough, but it was no longer painful.

About a fortnight before he was admitted to hospital Kierkegaard contracted a perakut glomerulonephritis, a sudden weakness in the legs.

In the period between then and his arrival at the hospital the weakness in his legs increased.

Kierkegaard contracted complications to the weakness in his legs. They manifested themselves as tactile abnormalities; like formication and numbness in the legs. These symptoms did not however cause any damage to Kierkegaard's sense of touch in his legs. He had intermittent stabbing pains from the small of the back and down between his legs.

Kierkegaard's upper extremities – his arms – were examined; nothing abnormal was found here.

In connection with the sudden reduction of strength in the legs there were no symptoms of brain damage.

There was no dizziness, HEADACHE, convulsions or changes in his state of consciousness*.



The characters in Mozart's opera Don Giovanni.

*) HEADACHE. In general Kierkegaard frequently suffered from often violent headaches.

He himself called them – as one can read in a letter to his friend the theologian Emil Boesen (1812-1881) – ‘rheumatism in my head’. As a matter of curiosity it may be mentioned that the reason why

Kierkegaard and Regine Olsen (1822-1904) once left The Royal Theatre after the first act of W.A. Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (1787) was that he had a headache.

There is by the way a myth about this episode to the effect that Kierkegaard had said to Regine Olsen after the overture that now it was time to go because the joy of anticipation is the best ¹¹.

Kierkegaard experienced absolutely no LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS as a result of the illness*.

*) LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS. When he was admitted to the hospital Kierkegaard had no lapses of consciousness.

The mental picture of Kierkegaard therefore indicated nothing abnormal; in other words he did not suffer from a brain disorder.

The immediate reason for Kierkegaard being admitted to the Royal Frederiks Hospital in Copenhagen was that the same day he had fallen down in the street.

And the reason for this fall was on the basis of the case-book exclusively his difficulty in controlling his legs.

*Kierkegaard's niece Henriette Lund (1829-1909). She was the daughter of Kierkegaard's elder sister Petrea Severine Lund (1801-1834) and the counselor Henrik Ferdinand Lund (1803-1875). She was 26 years old when Kierkegaard died. In 1880 she published the book: *Memories from Home*, in which Kierkegaard is mentioned.*

