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# A FEW PLAIN WORDS

ABOUT

## THE CHOLERA.

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“ Formidable as this malady is in its intense form and developed stage, there is no disease against which it is in our power to take such effectual precaution, both as collective communities and private individuals, by vigilant attention to it in its first or premonitory stage, and by the removal of those agencies, which are known to promote the spread of all epidemic disease. Though therefore the issues of events are not in our hands, there is ground for hope, and even confidence, in the sustained and resolute employment of the means of protection, which experience and science have now placed within our reach.”

*Circular of General Board of Health, Oct. 5, 1848.*

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THESE remarks were originally printed at the request of my Brother, Archdeacon of Suffolk, that his poorer parishioners might know the main facts now made out, as to guarding against and relieving the Cholera, and avail themselves of them.

In the hope of extending their usefulness, these few pages have been reprinted for general distribution.

W. P. ORMEROD.

*Oxford, Oct. 1848.*

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ABOUT

## THE CHOLERA.

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THERE are but few of us who have never been ill, and most of us have seen some one sick or dying; but these sicknesses have been from the common diseases of the country, and the means of guarding against and relieving them are known. Now, however, a disease, the Cholera, has come amongst us for the second time only, and it is good for us to look back to its former coming, to see how far we can in any way meet or lessen its dangers.

There are many things made out now about the Cholera, which were unknown when it came among us sixteen years since. These things it is right that every body should know; for by acting on them, we may render ourselves less liable to its attacks, may very often stop the disease in its first stage, and may without fear visit and nurse those who are sick of it.

Three great facts are now clearly made out about the Cholera, for our own and every body's comfort,—

1. *Cholera seldom spreads from one person to another.*
2. *Cholera may often be guarded against.*
3. *Cholera may very often be stopped in its first stage.*

1. *Cholera seldom spreads from one person to another.*

It breaks out in places far distant from each other, and often passes over towns close to other towns that are suffering severely. The medical men, nurses, and persons about the sick, do not often catch the disease. Whilst the sick are quite helpless, and need constant aid, there is no fear of any person suffering by nursing them. Indeed, one of the most striking facts in the account of the Cholera,

when it was here before, is, that those who were busied in laying out the bodies of the dead, were amongst those who did not catch the disease; and that medical men, in dissecting the bodies of persons dead of Cholera, often wounded their fingers, and thus were exposed to the disease in the fullest manner, without suffering in any way.

The Cholera seems not to spread from one to another, when the sick are not crowded together, but are supplied with plenty of pure air. When, however, they are crowded together, or are put in close rooms, then the Cholera may spread, like typhus and the other fevers of this country.

Chloride of Lime, Chlorine, and other things, are sometimes spoken of as lessening the chance of the disease spreading, and allowing persons to go amongst the sick with greater safety, than where such things are not used. It is not certain that they do so. The great and only well-proved means to stop Cholera and other diseases from spreading is plenty of fresh pure air, and the use of fluids and other things is simply to make bad air better. A great gain indeed;—but whilst we get this, we must not forget to be always driving out the close and bad air, and letting in better through open doors and windows, or even through a broken pane.

The best fluids to take away bad smells are Burnett's and Ellerman's Fluids, which may be poured into closets, drains, and night-chairs, and on floors, and all badly smelling places.

## 2. *Cholera may often be guarded against.*

Some places are unhealthy, and these are the spots which Cholera chiefly chooses out.

The common ailments of this country are colds, fevers, and bowel complaints. They are so common, that most persons suffer at times from one or other of them; but persons living in *dry*, warm, clean, and airy places, suffer much less than those who dwell in *wet*, cold, dirty, close spots. So true is this, that some parts of towns are always healthy, and others unhealthy, the unhealthy parts being chiefly those which are ill drained, in low situations, or near rivers. Now these

unhealthy parts of towns which suffer chiefly from common ailments, are often the very parts which suffer most from Cholera. When the Cholera was here before, the medical men still found themselves busied in the same districts where they used to see most sickness, the only difference being, that they had now to see cases of Cholera, instead of fevers and bowel complaints as before.

Now many persons cannot move their place of dwelling. To many there is very little choice of houses, and those who are the poorest cannot help living in the worst houses. Still there is often some choice; and the goodness of houses does not depend only on dryness and warmth, but also very much on the things near them; so that a bad house may sometimes be a healthy one, and a large good house may be a place in which nobody can safely live.

Thus, rotten vegetables and dirt heaps, with wet pigsties, the ground over cesspools, the openings of drains leading to cesspools or sewers, surface drains and puddles full of dirty water, or deep ditches not quite full of running water, are always giving out vapours, which cause fatal illness and bad health, and render persons liable to any disease which is about.

If we look at certain parts of most towns or villages, we shall soon find how common these things are. Where there is a little garden, there is often a wet dirty pigsty; in many courts there is a drain hole, giving out a filthy smell from a large cesspool; and often a main drain runs uncovered close to where many people live.

These are common in towns; and often in a clean country village illness is kept up by a stagnant pool in the middle of the village green, or by an open drain in a narrow lane amongst the poorest cottages.

### *3. Cholera may very often be stopped in its first stage.*

This is the great fact which every body should bear in mind and act upon, for the Cholera seldom comes on at once, but almost always follows some looseness of the bowels. So true is this, that every body having the bowels in the least degree more open or loose than usual

when the Cholera is about, even though it seems to be a slight matter, should at once take proper medicine, or go to a medical man. That which is common in summer weather at other times, and then goes off of itself, must now be stopped at once; for if let run on, it may be followed by loss of life.

This looseness is the first stage of Cholera; it is sometimes, but, remember, not always, accompanied with pain, and the looseness which is without pain is the most dangerous. This first stage can nearly always be cured by medicine, but the second stage, which sometimes comes so quickly afterwards that there seems no space between them, is much less under the power of medicine, and the sick get well rather by being kept alive, and the Cholera passing off, than by the power of medicine.

Again, remember the one great and certain fact, *Cholera can nearly always be stopped in the first stage*. As soon as you are the least uneasy, do not wait for pain, but act at once. If wrong, you can do no harm. If right, you may save your life.

When the Cholera is about, each person should keep medicine by him, or get it on the least sign of looseness of the bowels. These medicines should be for persons above 14:

Confection of Opium, 20 grains, in a large pill, every hour, for three times.

Or this, which is as good, and more easily made up,

Compound Chalk Powder with Opium, 10 grains, in a large pill, every half hour, for five times.

Each person should also have an ounce bottle of Sal Volatile, one teaspoonful of which should be taken in a little warm water every 20 minutes.

These medicines can be got at the Chemists, made up ready for use, with short directions, and put in so small a space, that they will readily go into the pocket.

Children between 10 and 14, should take half doses, and under 10, should take Compound Chalk Powder *without* Opium, in 5 grain doses, with 10 or 20 drops of Tincture of Catechu in water, every half hour, for four times.

If the least looseness of the bowels comes on, or the bowels are more than freely open, medical aid should be

got, if possible ; till then, the person should go to bed, wrap himself as warm as possible in flannel or blankets, put a hot bottle to the feet and pit of the stomach, and take Sal Volatile every twenty minutes, and one of the above pills rubbed down in a little water, or brandy and water, every hour or half hour.

If persons feel just a little ill, and are unable to leave off work without great loss, they should keep dry, and take the pills at their work. This will very often stop the looseness. But in this case they cannot be too careful, and it is better, even at some loss, to stop at home for a short time, than to run any risk.

Workpeople away from home for many hours, or busied in wet fields, or in unhealthy places or trades, should carry a box of the pills with them. If any pain, or the least looseness of the bowels comes on, they should take a pill at once, and call on their doctor as they come home, if he does not live much out of the way.

If the looseness stops with this medicine, the person should stay quiet at home for a few days, and take a pill morning and evening, and live most carefully. It is also right not to go to work again without seeing the doctor.

In this way each one could treat himself, till the medical man came, and lose no time.

These are the best things to do, and not to trust to salt, lime-water, asafoetida, mustard, brandy, quinine, cajeput oil, naphtha, croton oil, baths, and medicines mentioned at random in the newspapers, which seldom do any good, and very often do harm. In short, it is wrong not to use the very best things at once.

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## RULES.

1. When Cholera is about, bowel-complaints and many other diseases end in it, and any person with the least looseness of the bowels should at once take proper medicine, and send to a medical man.

2. Shun stagnant water, cesspools, pigsties, slaughter-houses, solid or liquid dirt of all kinds, dung heaps, and uncovered foul or badly trapped ditches or drains near houses,

also houses in damp or low places. Let no poultry, rabbits, cattle, or pigs, come into the house, nor be kept near it.

3. All rooms should be well aired in the middle of the day, and kept very dry; the curtains and partitions should be removed, and the rooms should not be crowded, especially if there are any sick; every thing should be dry and clean; the floors should be rubbed dry and not washed, especially if made of brick; the bedding and clothes should be placed daily before the fire in winter and spring, and in the sun in summer; fires should be kept often in bed rooms, or in the rooms next to them, in cold damp weather.

4. Avoid wet, cold, and night air, change wet clothes and shoes, keep the feet dry and warm, and wear flannel or woollen clothes round the stomach and loins. Do not leave your clothes on the ground when at work, but hang them up in a dry place. Do not lie or sleep on the ground.

5. Avoid purgative medicine, castor oil, Seidlitz powders, salts, colocynth, aloes, and the common pills, which many take every now and then, even when they are well.

6. Eat plain food, as meat well baked, and not new bread, with rice, oatmeal, or a few potatoes, at regular meals, and in moderate quantity; never drink much of any thing at one time, especially cold; a large meal is as dangerous as an unwholesome one. Do not fast or go without food for any time. Never eat or drink any thing which purges. Do not, unless you are poor and so have no choice of food, eat smoked or salted meats, salted fish, shell fish, pork, raw cooked preserved or even dried fruit, raw or uncooked vegetables, greens, cucumbers, salad, pastry, heavy puddings, pickles, or bread badly fermented; but bread made with acid and soda is wholesome. Do not drink bad water, punch, spirits, cider, perry, ginger beer, sour or stale beer, lemonade or acid drinks, nor beer or wine to excess.

Let those who visit the sick keep themselves dry and warm, change their shoes, if wet in any way, on coming home, take moderate solid meals, never go long without food, and take wine, or some weak brandy and water, if at all tired.