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REMARKS

ON THE

CHOLERA,

BY

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*The profits from the Sale of this pamphlet will be applied to the relief of
cases of distress arising out of the present visitation.*

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REMARKS, &c

A VENERABLE Christian has remarked at the present juncture, that the less fear there is abroad, the more reason there is for apprehension. Not that he meant the unreflecting terror which alike disqualifies for duty and predisposes to infection, but that reverential recognition of the hand of God rebuking us, together with that contrite humiliation beneath His rebuke, which is as salutary as it is befitting. It is for the purpose of awakening amongst us such sentiments where they do not exist, and of fostering them where they have been already excited, that the following remarks are submitted to the public. May He whose strength is made perfect in weakness, approve and accomplish the design.

The Cholera Morbus, as it is commonly, however correctly, designated, is supposed to have first appeared amid the sensuality and voluptuousness of Oriental society. By whatever peculiarities of soil or climate, as secondary causes, the disease may have been generated, its origin, no less than its progress, is a mystery. In the East, its ravages have been periodical and tremendous; yet, for many years, we heard of the scourge with comparative indifference, as terrible indeed, but very remotely affecting ourselves. It is probable, that should any man then have predicted the incursion of

the pestilence into our own country, he would have been regarded as a suitable inmate for an asylum. At no very distant period, however, breaking forth from its accustomed bounds, it began its march of devastation and death. Whether wafted on the winds, or, as is more probable, transmitted by contagion, it has now traversed an immense proportion of the world, and at length, in spite of every feeling of presumptuous security, in spite of every local or national peculiarity, in spite of every wise and vigilant precaution, it has taken up its awful sojourn amongst ourselves.

It is of paramount importance that this visitation should be viewed as the special messenger of GOD: for unless so regarded, whatever fear it may awaken, whatever sorrow it may inflict, there will not be that “fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom,” nor that “godly sorrow which worketh repentance, unto life never to be repented of.” Nothing can more effectually preclude our humiliation beneath the Hand of the Almighty, than allowing that hand to be concealed behind the machinery of second causes. It is not meant to insinuate, that there is anything miraculous in the judgment which overhangs us; but without being miraculous, it is preternatural; an extraordinary interposition of divine justice. The pestilence has been regarded even by heathen nations, and is emphatically announced in scripture, as the scourge of GOD. The Lord declares it, by the prophet Ezekiel, to be, in common with the sword and the famine,—“*His great plague.*” He is recorded as having repeatedly employed it as the executioner of his special vengeance, and on several occasions, angelic agency has

been engaged in wielding and inflicting the scourge. In the present instance, the arm of the Almighty is made quite bare. By the inscrutable nature of its origin; by its unaccountable limitation for so long a period to a single country, and its no less unaccountable eruption afterward from that country;—by its strangely devious career, passing by one kingdom, skirting another, ravaging a third; just selecting a few victims from some cities, and almost depopulating others, now glancing across a place, now returning with frightful virulence;—by the irresistibility of its progress, uninterrupted by mountains, unarrested by seas, unimpeded by deserts, and by hurricanes unchecked;—by its defiance of all peculiarities, whether physical or national, raging alike amid the snows of Russia and the torrid sands of India; seizing with equally mortal grasp the volatile Frenchman and the phlegmatic Turk;—by invariably fastening most fatally on the profligate and the drunken, yet sometimes in mockery of all human calculation, sparing neither age, nor sex nor condition, sweeping at the same moment, the courtier from his palace and the beggar from his hovel;—by the impenetrable obscurity in which its nature, its influence, its mode of communication and its cure are involved; insomuch that new theories on the subject, and new methods of treatment are daily broached and daily abandoned, insomuch that a distinguished physician after bending all the energies of his mind to the matter, after reading all that had been written respecting it, after the most laborious and varied investigation of its phenomena, arrived at the conclusion that he

was as ignorant of the subject as when he commenced his researches ;—by all these mysterious, yet most legible characters, the Cholera Morbus is unequivocally designated as “*the finger of GOD.*”

Indeed, He whose name is “Jealous,” has, in a diversity of instances, vindicated the visitation as His own. Many who had treated it with derision have fallen beneath its deadly shafts. One, from amongst a number of authentic facts, may be adduced. In the town of Leeds, a hale, athletic man, who earned his subsistence as a pugilist, was drinking one evening at a tavern ; when, to use his own profane language, he wished he might have “a tussel with the Cholera,” and having induced a fidler who was present to play him a tune, he proceeded to dance the disease, mimicking the spasmodic contortions of one writhing in its agonies. Scarcely had he sat down after this revolting exhibition, before he was wrung by the undissembled pangs of the distemper, and the morrow’s sun beheld the daring boaster a ghastly and putrifying corpse.

But passing by individual illustrations, which sceptical persons will either ridicule or deny, we may advert to one illustration, so notorious that none can gainsay it, so overpowering that it might be expected to compel universal conviction. No where was the Cholera treated with profaner levity, or defied with more presumptuous security, than in the vain-glorious metropolis of France. She openly scoffed at the fanaticism of England, in acknowledging the Divine hand to have any concern with the malady, and in appointing a day for public humiliation. She attributed the

disease exclusively to secondary causes, and some of her most distinguished men boasted that it would be stripped of its strength before it reached Paris, or would at all events, be utterly powerless against the science, the civilization, and the courage which would be there brought to bear against it; they went so far as to congratulate their fellow citizens on the probable, nay almost certain, immunity they were to enjoy from the impotent visitation. "Paris," said M. Villerme "exceeds all other cities in the extent of civilization; the inhabitants of the capital are the strongest in moral courage of any nation in the world, and unrivalled in physical energy. It is superintended and controlled by an excellent medical police; no nuisances exist." "Such" to borrow the powerful description of the *Record* newspaper,—“such was the proud boast frequently made during the advance of the pestilence, and publicly repeated by M. Villerme, *only five days* before its arrival in Paris. And what was the result? What became of the physicians who, in the pride and madness of self-confidence, sent a deputation to the English Ambassador, offering to go to England for the purpose of arresting the disease by instructing the ignorance of British practitioners? What became of all their “great swelling words of vanity” about the science the civilization and courage of the Parisians? What, in a word, was the issue of their atheistical refusal to imitate the other nations of Europe (Belgium only excepted) in humbling themselves before God? Let the courage with which they braved the pestilence be told in the flight of 250,000 of

the inhabitants, and the precipitate prorogation of the Chambers; and let the fruits of their science and civilization and physical energy, as brought to bear against the Cholera, be read in the death of the Prime Minister of the kingdom, and of the thousands—nay, the myriads—whose bodies filled the cemeteries, and finally, the trenches dug for the purpose in the vicinity of Paris. The cholera seized upon that devoted city as if it had been its especial and destined prey; as if the object of its long dark march from Jassore, across the desert, and in the teeth of opposing hurricanes, had been no other than this proud citadel of science and infidelity. In one single day all the empty boasts of the French philosophers vanished, like the dream from which the sleeper is aroused by bursting flames and crackling rafters. It was at length discovered that there was no enchantment which could prevail against the heaven commissioned angel of death. All classes of the inhabitants were indiscriminately smitten; the statesman and the mechanic, the peer and the pauper, the robust and the sickly, the stern soldier who had led on columns and stormed batteries, the timid beauty who had but a few days before glittered in the drawing-room of fashion, multitudes of every rank, age, and sex, fell beneath the stroke, and the saying of Scripture, concerning Egypt of old, might have been almost literally repeated of Paris, “There was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not an house in Egypt where there was not one dead.

“We have heard it from good authority and from different quarters, that the official returns presented

50,000 deaths within the walls of Paris, exclusive of the populous suburbs, where the deaths were estimated at 20,000 more! If, then, these accounts are to be relied upon—and we believe they are accurate—vain-glorious Paris has lost upwards of 70,000 of its inhabitants, or, in other words, about one-tenth of its whole population. The mortality became so great, that the utmost pains were taken to conceal it; the nights were spent in burying the victims of the plague, and such was their number that even the artillery horses were employed in filling the trenches with their uncoffined remains.”

There is an additional circumstance connected with this judgment on the French capital, which ought not to be overlooked. The Chamber of Deputies had actually, by a large majority, determined to entertain the question of abolishing the national obligation of the Christian Sabbath; and it was at the very juncture when the discussion of the subject should have come on, that the Deputies were scattered abroad and the Chamber precipitately dissolved.

In our own country, there has been a deplorable disposition to treat the Cholera with a levity no less senseless than profane; it has been jested upon in the tavern, caricatured in the print-shop, and burlesqued in the theatre. As rational were it for malefactors on the eve of execution, to make the gallows and the scaffold the themes of their merriment and derision. Has England any grounds for unreflecting security?—not in her medical skill or her physical peculiarities; for these in

themselves are but as bulrushes before the sweep of a deluge. Not in the dimensions of her guilt before God; for perhaps no nation under Heaven is more guilty. This charge may appear exaggerated, for probably, among no people is there so much exalted benevolence, so much domestic virtue, so much zeal for the diffusion of truth, or so much unsophisticated piety. But be it remembered, that responsibility is proportioned to privilege; that “to whom much is given, of the same much will be required”; that it is on this principle as equitable as it is immutable, that it will be more tolerable for Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for Capernaum, though there can be no question the atrocities of the former far exceeded those of the latter; and that on the same principle, the Jewish nation was devoted to unparalleled desolation, although at the very crisis of its fate, it was a virtuous nation in comparison with Heathen nations around it. Let us weigh our country in this balance, and we shall tremble for the issue. In the plenitude of her privileges she has been exalted unto Heaven—GOD forbid that she should be thrust down to Hell! In the extent of her religious toleration; in the diffusion of the Word of GOD throughout all her borders; in the education of her children, that they may search that sacred volume for themselves; in the multitude of her faithful ministers; in the profusion of her religious publications; in the comparative prosperity she has so uninterruptedly enjoyed; in her exemption from the tide of war which desolated all Europe beside—in these things she has stood alone. But has her fruitfulness been proportionate to her advantages? The inordinate

prodigality which lavishes more in horse-racing alone, than is expended in the support of all our charitable institutions;—the infamous intemperance which consumes ten times that amount, involving in abject brutality and wretchedness an immense proportion of our population, including both sexes and all ages;—the dreadfully increased and perpetually increasing catalogue of crimes brought before our tribunals of justice, comprehending some of unprecedented, not to say unimaginable atrocity;—the blasphemy and profaneness which infest our streets and peal in our taverns, pour forth from the profligate part of the press, and thence by a thousand channels vitiate the public mind;—the bitter spirit of disorganization which deeply pervades society, making the master too often an oppressor to his servants and the servant an enemy to his master;—the daring desecration of the sabbath practised by all classes, inasmuch that there are millions of baptized persons in this land who from year to year scarcely ever cross the threshold of a place of worship;—the unfaithfulness of some ministers of religion, the immorality of others;—the unhallowed divisions, and in many instances, the heterodox theories which distract even the more decided disciples of Christ;—the comparative apathy manifested towards the gospel, however faithfully preached, and the scanty attendance at the table of Christ, amounting to a mere fraction of our nominally Christian population;—these things, to add no more shade to the already gloomy picture, present a representation of our moral and religious character, as fearful as it is faithful. If then we “hear the rod,” in our present visitation, seems it not to sound in our ears the

awful appeal of the Almighty in ancient days, "Shall I not visit for these things saith the Lord, and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this."

If then, however brought about by the intervention of secondary causes, the scourge under which we groan *originated in a moral cause*, it is undeniable that we must look primarily and principally to *moral means for its withdrawal*. Not that for a moment the patriotic and exemplary exertions of our medical men ought to be disparaged, or any prudent precaution treated with contempt; all that I would contend for is, that in themselves these measures are wholly inadequate to the emergency. There are many reflecting and accomplished members of the medical body who freely acknowledge this truth; and not to advert to the scriptural instances in which the judgments of GOD were arrested on the repentance of those who were either threatened or visited by them; can it be denied that the Day of National Humiliation was followed by an immediate and remarkable abatement of the disease; an abatement recognized, perhaps too hastily, in the Form of Thanksgiving sent forth by Government; an abatement which would probably have proved the precursor of perfect *deliverance*, had the nation brought forth fruits meet for repentance. We have it on the testimony of an eye witness, that the cessation of the terrible Plague in London was preceded by an universal awakening of the people to repentance, insomuch that the Churches were crowded night and day, yea, that the very Church-yards were thronged with weeping supplicants; its cessation, too, was as singular as it was sudden; at

the very height of its violence, it at once stayed its ravages, stayed them from no discernable cause, so that the most sceptical were compelled to exclaim, "this is the Lord's doing."

On the other hand, it admits of ample proof, that in every instance any unusual eruption of profligacy in places visited by the Cholera, has directly been followed by an increase of virulence in the visitation. The case of Gaitshead will be in the memories of most,—and to come still nearer both in time and locality, have not the frightful excesses which crowned the ill-timed procession in our own towns been succeeded by a wide diffusion and bitter exasperation of the distemper? It may be argued, indeed, that these were the natural results of imprudence and intemperance; but who thus annexes the punishment to the crime, making the wickedness of the sinner to correct him?

There is then much reason to conclude, that either the disease will make fearful havoc amongst us, or else,—which GOD grant!—that the nation will forestall the impending calamity by seasonable repentance. Perhaps it can scarcely any longer be described as impending: it has long impended—but the rod which was only waved over us, is descending with a heavier stroke: the sword which was scarcely half unsheathed, is becoming barer and barer. Through the whole length and breadth of the land, the angel of death is stealing. Oh! that the country would awake; that the church of GOD would arouse herself! GOD has been very slow to anger, but we have been yet slower to repentance.

Let us then "hear the rod and who hath appointed it."

Our circumstances are dark, but they are not desperate. If of old, when Aaron made an atonement, standing between the dead and the living, the plague was stayed ;—much more if we engage the intercession of our great Intercessor, shall we be delivered. The serious part of the community are called upon to special prayer, private, social, public prayer. At least one unwonted meeting for this purpose exists in the town ;—may such meetings be multiplied a hundredfold ! To prayer, let vigorous effort be added ; effort in visiting the sick, relieving the distressed, admonishing the profligate, supporting societies for the promotion of temperance, and inculcating the solemn observance of the Sabbath. It is deeply to be desired that another day of general humiliation should be appointed ; and if appointed, may its effects be more permanent and extensive !

These hastily written pages may, perhaps, be glanced over by some who will deride them, as canting and fanatical ;—persons who laugh because they do not think, —and mock because they dare not be in earnest. Let them scoff at this unpretending performance if they will, but let them not scoff at the scourge of the Almighty,—lest, possibly, that fearful denunciation should be verified in their doom. “These things hast thou done, and I kept silence ; thou thoughtest that I was altogethér such an one as thyself : but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.”—It has been verified in the doom of many who scorned at the present judgment—they were reproved—and alas ! when the reproof could not profit—for to them the star of mercy was set to rise no more.

Should any who peruse this pamphlet be appalled at the views which it unfolds; let it lead them to the salutary conviction that they are at enmity with GOD. Why else does the disclosure of His arm confound them? To the christian the disclosure of that arm conveys tranquillity and confidence: he sorrows indeed for his own sins and the sins of the people, but he sorrows not as others who are without hope. Let those then who are terrified at the Hand of GOD, enter at once into reconciliation with him through the blood of Christ Jesus, and the Arm which is now their chief terror, will then become all their trust.

If these lines should be read by the intemperate or the unclean, in the name of God I would bid them pause—there is but a step between them and hell. Were I to tell them of what I have even witnessed myself of the dealings of this scourge with such characters as themselves—their ears would tingle with horror. As you regard your lives, as you value your souls, shun dram-drinking and drunkenness; fly from the ale-house and the dram-shop, as from the hot-beds of pestilence and the avenues of destruction. Your safety is in flight, in utter abstinence.—“touch not, taste not, handle not.”

Let the people of GOD have recourse to their principles. Let them remember, that if not a sparrow falleth to the ground but their heavenly father knoweth it, much more must the death of his saints be precious in his sight. Let them dwell in the secret place of the most high, “keeping themselves in the love of GOD, praying in the Holy Ghost,” so shall they dwell under the shadow of the Almighty: then they shall not be

afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day; a thousand shall fall beside them and ten thousand at their right hand, but it shall not come nigh them," or, if allowed to approach, it shall not visit them as the angel of vengeance, but as the herald of love. Whether "the silver chord be loosed" by the swift-footed pestilence or the slow-paced decline, it matters not, if each be equally the messenger of mercy and the harbinger of bliss.

We would not indulge despondency. We would rather hope that the nation may be roused to reformation, that this judgment may lead to a healthier, a holier state of society, that the curse may be converted into a blessing, that thus, however menacing the visitation—it may resemble in its consequences, the summer thunderstorm, which though terrible in its career, leaves behind it a purer landscape and a serener sky.

Salford, Sept. 18th, 1832.