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REMINISCENCES OF ASIATIC CHOLERA IN CANADA.

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The following details of the visitations of Asiatic cholera from its first appearance on this continent in 1832, up to its last arrival in 1866, have been hurriedly brought together, with the intention of presenting them to the Medical Association of Canada, during its session in September, at Kingston. Owing, however, to the too great length of the paper, despite my desire to compress the facts into more limited space, and to my present equivocal state of health, I have, with much reluctance, been constrained to deny myself the pleasure of taking part in the proceedings of the Association, and I cannot think of trespassing on the kindness of any professional friend to read the paper, as my representative, nor indeed am I free from the apprehension that it might exhaust the patience of the audience.

The parts relating to the cholera of 1832 and 1834, are drawn chiefly from the inaugural thesis presented by me to the Medical Faculty of McGill College, on the occasion of my graduation in the year 1835. I have no hesitation in pledging myself for the perfect accuracy of my notes, as they were written by me, from day to day, as the events occurred; I have also every reason to consider the subsequent details as quite truthful.

It is not the unanimous opinion of medical writers that the disease now known under the various names of Asiatic Cholera, Spasmodic Cholera, Malignant Cholera, and Cholera Asphyxia is a new disease. Hippocrates, Aritæus, Sydenham and Huxham, are said to have distinctly treated of this malady. We are told that in 1669 and 1676

it prevailed in London, and in 1730 and 1750 in Paris. In 1762 we are informed it raged extensively in Hindostan, and that in each successive season an epidemic, showing the principal characters of Asiatic Cholera, prevailed more or less epidemically throughout India. But we have no reliable records of its extensive prevalence before the year 1817. It is true, many have been inclined to believe that the terrible pestilences which the Indian historians have recorded as having made extensive devastations in that part of the world, at various periods, were no other than the disease in question; yet when we consider the vague and unscientific manner in which both historians in general, and some early medical writers were accustomed to describe diseases, we may feel inclined to question the identity of the disease now known as Asiatic Cholera with any of those recorded by writers of past times.

Asiatic Cholera presented itself in the year 1817, at Jessore, a large and populous town, about 80 miles north east of Calcutta, in that part of the province of Bengal, which is called the Sunderbunds or Lowlands, which constitute the extensive district lying between the numerous mouths of the river Ganges. It is stated to have appeared simultaneously at several other places in this part, and to have radiated into the surrounding districts. In July it reached Patna, on the Ganges, 300 miles north west of Calcutta. In the middle of August it appeared in Calcutta. In the month of November it carried off 5000 victims in the camp of the Indian army. During December it abated in every part of India; but in February 1818 it sprang up with renewed virulence, and assumed the dread character which it has ever since retained. Stretching towards the south it attained the southern extremity of Hindostan, and passed over to the adjacent island of Ceylon in December. In November of the following year, (1819) it was carried to Mauritius, and thence in January 1820 to the Isle of Bourbon. To the eastward we have it advancing with persistent pace, and devastating the populous countries in that direction, between the Altaian mountains on the north and New Holland on the south. It appeared in Arracan in 1818, in Java in 1819, Canton 1820, Pekin 1821, and in the island of Timor, which lies about 450 miles from the most north-western point of New Holland. To the west and northward we trace it