

THE CHOLERA.

[Some months since we endeavoured to call the attention of the Government to the probable advent of the Asiatic Cholera, which may be reasonably expected to shew itself among the inhabitants of this Continent during the ensuing summer; and we endeavoured to impress upon all parties the necessity of being prepared before hand for the terrible visitation. We particularly urged the necessity for the establishment of local dispensaries and proper medical officers along each section of the public works; and more recently we have endeavoured to show the advantage of the introduction of a law compelling the municipalities to open public dispensaries for the gratuitous attendance upon the poor, in their several districts. It is clearly desirable to be prepared before hand in this case; so that we sincerely hope that the Government will not let the matter go unheeded.

Besides which, we find an excellent paper in the *Lower Canada Medical Chronicle* from the pen of Dr. Marsden, which agrees so perfectly with our own views of the hygienic management and treatment that should take effect during a cholera period, that we cannot forbear inserting it among our selected matter. The suggestions are highly practical and excellent of their kind, and should be followed out in all cases where it is possible; they should have effect not only in the cities but in the rural districts, as far as may be found practicable.]

Practical Remarks and Suggestions on Asiatic Cholera. By WILLIAM MARSDEN M.D., Governor of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Lower Canada.

The possibility of this country being again visited, during the coming season by that democratic scourge of the human family—asiatic cholera, has induced me to throw together the following practical suggestions.

I shall, in the observations I am about to make, avoid any illusion to the debatable point, the contagiousness or non-contagiousness of cholera asphyxia, which is still a *vexata questio* among many of the most eminent members of the medical profession, both in this country and abroad, to the very serious detriment of public hygiene; but I will, in the recommendatious I may make, cast all the doubts into the human balance of public safety.

My suggestions will be of an individual or private character, as well as of a public and general nature. They are the results of my own observation and experience, during five distinct invasions, of active professional occupation, in the midst of sickness and death, and have impressed me with the conviction that no case is entirely hopeless. The vulgar maxim, that "prevention is better than cure," is hardly so applicable to any other form of disease "that flesh is heir to," as in cholera.

There are many persons, however, and among them medical men, who, from superficial observations, entertain the fallacious idea that cholera sometimes pounces upon its prey without any premonition of any sort, and hurries away its victim in a few short hours. I deny this position, and fearlessly call for proof to the contrary. I maintain that no individual in robust health has ever been suddenly attacked with the worst forms of cholera, and carried off without some premonitory symptom. We may all of us have seen persons walking abroad one day, apparently in perfect health, and hear of their having been consigned to the silent tomb on the next. I have, myself, frequently heard of such cases, but I never knew one. I have, on the contrary, invariably found, on diligent inquiry, that the self-deluded victim had not been quite as well as usual, or had indulged in some unaccustomed habit, and had been suffering under some species of functional derangement (most commonly "bowel complaint"), for some hours, and not unfrequently for some days, previous to the invasion of the fatal disease, and this, generally, under a false or assumed courage, the effects of fear, which they wished to hide from themselves, as well as from their friends. A more fatal delusion than this cannot possibly exist. I am firmly of Dr. Kirk's opinion, "that diarrhoea in this country always precedes cholera asphyxia; that this diarrhoea is always a curable complaint: and consequently, that this formidable disease,—the ways of which were wrapped in mystery, and inspired us with no feelings but gloom and despair,—may be calmly viewed by the eye of philosophy and common sense, as a malady, the secrets of