

Selections.

NOTES ON ASIATIC CHOLERA.

The following, constituting Circular No. 46, prepared by the surgeon-general of the navy, has been issued for the information of the naval service :

"In consideration of the possibility of the further advance of Asiatic cholera, now epidemic in certain portions of Europe, the following notes on treatment and prophylactic measures, extracted from various sources, are issued :

"Although quarantine regulations are more efficient now than formerly, yet the history of the entrance of this disease into the United States is such as to warn us against being lulled into a false sense of security ; thus in 1832, 1833, 1854, 1867, and 1873, the disease pursued the same course as at present, starting in Asia, gradually progressing into Europe, effecting an entrance into this country from intercourse with European ports. Only in 1864 were we able to restrict cholera by quarantine, although it had been imported into the harbor of New York.

"Dr. Rausch claims that, in the other epidemics, the reason quarantine regulations were inefficient was that while quarantining some ships others were allowed to escape this regulation ; and that they deposited on our shores cholera-infected persons and fomites, and that it was only when from this cause the disease commenced that our attention was directed to the cholera-infected ships, which had undergone or were undergoing quarantine.

"Before taking up in detail the different methods of treatment which have been in vogue in different epidemics, a few general suggestions as to the management of all cases are deemed advisable.

"Since the days of Hippocrates, the injunction to avoid vacillation or change of therapeutic measures in the treatment of individual cases has been enjoined. So short is the course of the disease (it

having been ascertained by the French Government that out of 4,907 deaths one-third of the number died in from six to twelve hours, and a second one-third in from twelve to twenty hours), that we only have time to institute and give fair trial to one plan of action in the majority of cases.

"Again, medicine can do little good in the later stages of the disease, on account of the great congestion of the alimentary canal, the sluggish capillary circulation, and the thickened viscid state of the blood, impeding absorption.

"Heroic medication, which many writers claim is pre-eminently suitable for cholera, is necessarily valueless in the advanced attack, because the drugs are either swept away with the discharges or else remain behind without exercising their action, in which case they are liable to become sources of great embarrassment in the stage of reaction, from their absorption upon the restoration of this function. One physician, to prove the correctness of vigorous medication, writes that to one of his cases he gave twenty grains of extract of belladonna without producing dangerous symptoms ; no mention, however, is made of the recovery of the case.

"*Stimulant and Opium Treatment.*—Give half an ounce of brandy or whisky (hot), with a few drops of tincture of capsicum, every five minutes, during the cold stage. In addition, give twenty drops of laudanum combined with an equal quantity of spirits of camphor every half-hour until reaction commences. Now greatly moderate the administration of stimulants. This method of treatment is condemned chiefly on account of the unmanageable reaction it produces.

"*Chloroform Treatment.*—Give thirty drops of chloroform every half-hour until reaction sets in.

"*Opium Treatment.*—There is great danger of giving too much of this drug ; thus, during one of the epidemics, the physicians of the cholera hospital at Boston claimed that many of their cases were admitted with symptoms of opium