

NATURAL HISTORY OF THE DISEASE.

THIS disease has been of various degrees of severity ; in a large proportion of cases very mild ; in some, severe, and in a few destroyed life suddenly, like the plague. The communications, which have been made to the committee, relate chiefly to the disease in its gravest forms. The history which they give must therefore be understood as relating mostly to the severe cases ; and they are not furnished with the means of making all the discriminations which could be wished. They are however informed that in the milder cases the symptoms differed only in degree, not in kind.

The invasion of the disease is generally sudden and violent. In its course all the functions of the body are more or less interrupted, and often some of them are entirely suspended. The subject of it is seized in the midst of his usual labour or occupation, and oftentimes is struck down suddenly, almost as by a stroke of lightning. The first symptoms are various, such as local pain or paralysis, delirium or coma, and rarely spasms or convulsions.

The disease often commences with shifting pains. The patients suddenly feel a pain in one joint or one limb, often in a finger or toe, in the side, stomach, back, neck, or head. Sometimes the sensation is like the stinging of a bee, frequently it is most excruciating pain, which at once arrests