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CHOLERA.*

A FEW PRACTICAL REMARKS ON ITS PREVENTION,
BY
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Having been extensively engaged in the treatment of cholera during its several visitations, it affords me much pleasure to offer the following remarks, which I trust will be found useful in the prevention of this disease. It therefore may not be out of place to state my views of the often-asked question: What is cholera? I believe the disease to be due to the entrance into the blood of a poison, animalcular in character, communicated generally through the alimentary canal by means of the water we drink. This water having been contaminated by this specific poison.

When the choleraic poison finds entrance into the system its germs multiply themselves indefinitely like all other animalcular disease, until nature in making an effort to throw off the disease, pours the serum of the blood into the alimentary canal, and, as a consequence, the blood becomes so thickened that it cannot circulate through the smaller blood-vessels. The circulation is therefore impeded, cramps ensue, followed by collapse and death.

Every casual observer must have noticed that cholera travels inland, along the different navigable

* Dr. Godfrey has kindly furnished us with the above extracts from his paper read before the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Montreal, January 26th, 1866.

rivers and canals; in its several visits to this country it has always followed this course. First going up the St. Lawrence and down the Mississippi, next adopting the opposite routes or by whichever channel the stream of emigration travelled. It has also been frequently remarked that the inhabitants of one side of a river have been decimated, while those on the opposite side have escaped. Along some of our canals it had been so fatal, that men could be obtained with difficulty to open the locks for navigable purposes.

During its visits to this city it was a remarkable fact that what might be called one of the healthiest localities, the east end, where the soil is high, well-drained and gravelly; also along the banks of the river for several miles² down, where the banks are high and the locality free from stagnant water the mortality was greatest; caused by the fact that the residents drank the water that was taken from the side of the river, below where the shipping was moored and where the city drainage entered. In 1854 the new water works were completed to the south side of Papineau Square. Below this line the mortality was greatest. In this year three rafts were moored on this side of the river below the toll gate, and two on the Longueuil side; while those on this side lost nine men from cholera, those on the opposite shore did not lose a man.

These circumstances, with many others, have convinced me that cholera is propagated through the water we drink, which has been previously contaminated by diseased dejections from a cholera