

## The Press and General Review

## EPIDEMICS.

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We have given insertion to the above as the opinions of an old member of the Royal College of Surgeons, whose treatment of cholera we know to have been eminently successful. It may be a drawback to the estimation in which they should be held, in some quarters, that Dr. Keisall has become a convert to the principles of homoeopathy; a debatable ground where we do not follow him. The doctrine of *smutty humors*, *corruption*, and the new theory of the superior efficacy of medicines infinitesimally diluted, in their action upon the intestinal tissues of the mucous membrane, doubtless contain some element of truth, and are fit subjects for discussion; but recognizing as characteristic of human nature the general tendency of strong minds to extremes, we accept the advice of intelligent men, whether homoeopaths or allopaths, when it approves itself to our judgment; combining our private faith in all remedial measures to those which we think we understand.

The assertion sometimes made, that the power of the globules of the homoeopaths often depends upon the imagination of the patient, whether true or not, is suggestive of an undoubted fact, with which it would be well, in seasons of epidemic, if the public, and especially the clergy, should be made fully acquainted—that the mind acts upon the organs of digestion, in impairing or strengthening their functions, *through the nervous system*.

It was formerly taught by physiologists, that the process of digestion depended chiefly upon the action as a solvent of an acidulated saliva, called the gastric juice, secreted by the glands of the stomach; but it is now generally believed that the solvent properties of the gastric juice are chiefly derived from the food itself, and that the first part of the process is a chemical action induced by the nervous system, through which some portions of the food pass through the stages of starch, sugar, alcohol, or perhaps lactic acid, and the whole is converted into the pulpy state which is termed *chyme*. It has been proved by experiment, that by a separation in the neck of an animal of the *par vagum*, or right pair of nerves, the functions of digestion are interrupted, and almost entirely destroyed; and it is remarkable, as showing the connexion of the nervous system with the electric fluid, and perhaps of a low state of atmospheric electricity with diarrhoea, that digestion may be renewed for a considerable time, by exposing the mutilated nerves to the galvanic action of a voltaic battery.

We may thus account, and with tolerable clearness, for the enfeebling and other fatal effects of fear, grief, and great mental anxiety. A shock is given to the nervous system, which interrupts the process of assimilation. The food taken ceases to nourish, and perhaps becomes converted into poisonous compounds. And, on the other hand, we may see why hope, joy, and great faith in a physician, act as a restorative to health. The wanted action of the nervous system is renewed, the functions of digestion are strengthened, and the waste of the solids and fluids of the system repaired.

We would have these facts brought before the attention of the clergy, because if incontrovertible, as we regard them, it follows that the efforts which were made by many of their body to procure the sanction of government for a national fast (which it is to the credit of the present ministry that it had the firmness to resist), and their successful efforts for local fasts in different parts of the country, were, like the processions of the flagellants at the time of the Black Death, the means of spreading alarm and fear, and therefore of aggravating the cause of the calamity sought to be averted. Very numerous have been the cases recorded of persons the most nervously anxious to secure themselves against the infection of cholera, falling among its first victims; and the reason is now apparent.

Dr. Johnson observes, that the influence of fear, anxiety, or surprise, will frequently induce attacks of asthma, which is another affection of the nervous system, producing a spasmodic contraction of the bronchial tubes;—and it is again to be remarked that the attacks of this disease, as in cholera, are the most frequent in the middle of the night, or at an early hour in the morning; showing an analogy in the cause of both. The cure where there is no organic mischief, is found in removal to purer air, and in cold water ablutions of the whole body, but especially of the spine, with active exercise afterwards. To this extent the hydropathic treatment is the best that can be adopted by all who would fortify the system, whether against asthma, or any of the epidemics which have been the subject of this paper; and its invigorating effects in bracing the nerves and improving the tone of the stomach, will not be doubted for an instant, by any one who has tried the experiment and habitually repeated it.

It would be a work of supererogation to enter into an exposition of the remedial measures recommended in the sanitary reports and by the Health of Towns' Commissioners, for increasing the salubrity of human habitations. The necessity of drainage,—of a continuous, instead of an intermittent, water supply,—of the abolition of the practice of intramural bur-

ials,—of the removal of city slaughter-houses,—and of the prevention of overcrowding, has now been universally discussed by the press, and is beginning to be generally understood. It is reasonable to believe that some legislative and administrative fruits may now be expected from the agitation of these subjects; and we will therefore point out only two or three practical applications of the principles they involve which should not be overlooked.

First, with respect to drainage. We have seen that the greatest mortality is invariably found in the *lowest lying districts*. It is with them, therefore, independently of all considerations of outfall, that the work should begin. The work may be difficult, as in London on the Surrey side of the river, where the roadway is frequently below the level of high water, but it is the first difficulty with which we should grapple.

Second, with respect to the overcrowding of inhabitants. It is again in low lying districts where this overcrowding is the most fatal. The lower the level of the inhabitants, the greater is the necessity for their thorough ventilation. We would, therefore, have the municipal authorities of towns form a fund, to be assisted where needful with government grants, to pull down at once the houses of all back courts and alleys situated on the banks of rivers, or about the same level. In a report by Dr. Lenoir, on the sanitary state of York, he has shown, that a dark and filthy court thus situated, where the cholera broke out in 1832, was the very spot where the plague first appeared in that city in 1551 and 1604. And it is satisfactory to find, that the destruction of similar nests of pestilence at Hamburg, by the fire of 1842, and the subsequent construction, under the superintendence of Mr. Lindley, of broad and well drained thoroughfares, has led to the nearly total exemption from cholera in 1849, of the same localities which suffered so severely in 1832. In connexion with this object, we trust it may be permitted us to hope, that the evaporating surface of the mud banks of the Thames may at last give place to a terraced embankment, worthy the metropolis of a great empire.

And lastly, with respect to *light*. From tenderness for the position of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Health of Towns' Commissioners refrained from reporting upon the baneful tendencies of a system of taxation which offers a direct encouragement, in the shape of a pecuniary saving, to the blocking out of light and air, and at the same time induces habits of personal uncleanness. The evidence collected, however, upon this subject was printed, and the responsibility of neglecting it, after the late painful visitation, will, we imagine, be too serious to be longer incurred by any government; and we anticipate, if not the abolition of the widow duty, at least its commutation into a house tax in the ensuing session. Let it be remembered, that without permission to open an unlimited number of windows, no system of ventilation can be rendered perfect. It is in the cellars, closets, and roofs now rendered dark by the tax gatherer that mephitic vapours are most collected, and to disperse them we require not merely the fresh air from without, stealthily introduced by ventilating apertures, but the *warmth of the sun* to rarify the gases there confined, and facilitate their escape.

Light is also a chemical agent, and the character of the gases evolved from various substances is dependant upon its action. In the respiration of plants less oxygen, and a greater quantity of carbonic acid gas, is given out at night than by day. In the germination of seed, carbonic acid gas is freely liberated; a process by which the starch of the seed is converted into sugar for the nourishment of young roots; but the seed must for this object be supplied with moisture, and *deprived of light*. It is, therefore, quite certain that in all dark and damp situations there is a constant vitiation of the air from the germination of the seed of mosses, or fungi. Deprived of light, however, plants, after they have appeared above the ground, will not thrive: they grow devoid of color, and without fibre, like the *clery*, which is made white and crisp for the table by earthing up the stem. *With light*, plants gain both color and fibre, and it is most interesting to learn that the process by which this is effected is one which at the same time purifies the air, and renders it fit for animal respiration. The carbonic acid gas, says Dr. Carpenter, "is decomposed by the green parts of the surface of plants, and the solid carbon fixed in their tissues; while the *oxygen* is set free."

Upon the action of light upon the nervous system, and its consequent influence upon human health, a treatise might be written. Every physician can testify to the restorative effects of a gleam of sunshine, and the corresponding depression of mind and body produced by living in a gloomy apartment. But enough has been said to induce reflection, and too much earnestness has now been awakened upon sanitary questions, to permit us to doubt the result.

NEW BRUNSWICK.—A proclamation in the N. B. Royal Gazette announces that the following ports in that province are constituted free ports, for the admission of foreign as well as British and Colonial shipping; Dorchester, Richibucto, Dalhousie, Bathurst, Caraquette, Shediac, St. Stephen, St. George, and Campo Bello.—*Journal of Commerce*.

## ANTI-STATE CHURCH ASSOCIATION.—ITS CONSTITUTION.

TO THE CHRISTIAN MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION.

GENTLEMEN,—In addressing you last week, we reserved one point of special moment, because of the space necessary to an adequate expression of our views concerning it. Were the Anti-State Church Organization in any fair measure adapted to accomplish the object proposed, and—due respect being had to circumstances—were its desirableness proved to our entire satisfaction, still we could be no parties to its continuance, without a vital change in its constitution. As the matter now stands, the entire British Nation is eligible to membership. Doctrinal views, and personal profession of religion, are matters of no concern whatever; nothing more is required than agreement on the single object of the Separation of Church and State. According to the fundamental principle, Lord Bellingbrooke might have been President, David Hume, Treasurer, Edward Gibbon, Secretary; and Thomas Paine, Travelling Agent; while the French Directory, of bloody fame, might have formed the Acting Committee.—There is nothing to have prevented this in the Constitution. Is it possible to contemplate such a fact without horror? The thing has but to be stated to settle the question; to men of right-constituted mind, we presume, argument is needless, it is an impertinence, almost an insult. They will instinctively exclaim, "O my soul, come not thou into their secret, and to their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united!"—such alliances cannot have the blessing which multiplies weakness strength, and leadeth to ultimate victory. Can such an Organization bear the scrutiny of sanctified reason? Can such a confederacy expect to be honored of Him who alone can prosper it? Ought not the nature of the end, in some measure to determine the nature of the means to be employed for its accomplishment? All Christian men will decide what is, or, at least, what ought to be, the end of all attempts to separate Church and State. Ought it to be anything less, or anything other than the glory of Christ? In this great controversy, is not the damage done to his kingdom, and the ignominy offered to his crown, the chief seat and the chief source of all argument?—And do not all collateral considerations also terminate in Him? But is it not clear, that this is a view in which mere men of the world do not and cannot sympathize? Why do they seek the separation of Church and State? Is it not on grounds low and secular, wholly appertaining to the present life? The true Christian, of course, also gives to such considerations their due weight; as an inhabitant of the world and a member of civil Society, they are far from unimportant to him; but his chief considerations rise infinitely higher, they are peculiar to himself, and such as men of the world can neither appreciate nor understand. If, then, the end sought, through the separation of Church and State, be in the highest degree spiritual, does not this determine what ought to be the great and distinguishing feature of the means? As the end is so pre-eminently spiritual, ought not the chief feature in the means to be also spiritual? Is it meet that it should be utterly divested of all spiritual recognitions beyond the simple fact, that religion has nothing to do with government? We believe few spiritual men, on due reflection, will deny this. What, then, shall be said of a system of means which wholly interdicts all social and public exercises of devotion, with a view of procuring Divine help in the enterprise? Who ever heard the voice of prayer in any meeting of the Anti State Church Association in this great metropolis? There the devout and the ungodly, both in the highest degree, meet and mingle; and, while it is expected that the wicked, from courtesy, shall not swear, it is provided by statute that the pious shall not pray. No! The inscription on the Organization seal is virtually—*THERE IS NO GOD!*

Surely this fact should make the soul of the true Christian, who duly reflects on it, shudder! The thought is dreadful! Who that believes the Gospel, can predict or expect ultimate success to the efforts of such an organization? Who that duly considers the matter can consent to form a part of it? For ourselves—and we hope we speak the experience of many others—from the first, we were far from easy whenever we reflected on the unchristian, if not impious, character of the Constitution; these feelings have gradually increased with time, and since the opening of the present year, they have become intolerable, as we saw its fearful tendencies developed in the matter of the *Electric Review*. We weekly suffered ourselves, as we doubt not did many others, to be carried away by the example of good men. We very culpably "followed the multitude to do evil." We now deeply regret our too long concurrence, and have arrived at an unalterable and most painful conviction, that the act was wrong in us, and in all Christian men, who were induced to take part in it. We shall ever view it as an evil hour for true piety that recorded the adoption of the principle. The very fact, indeed, that such a thing could ever have been proposed and realised by a large number of Christian ministers and gentlemen, was of itself proof, that there was, even then, six years ago, something in the Churches wrong,—that evil was in the bud,—a bud which has at length burst, and

obscured, and brought forth its first appropriate fruits in the notable transgression of the *Electric Review*. Twenty years ago, such an event could not have taken place throughout any part of the domains of Nonconformity. This matter clearly presents an instance of preposterousness such as has had few parallels. Can anything be more incongruous and absurd, than for a body so thoroughly mixed as that of the Anti-State Church Association, to be engaged in an enterprise for the destruction of its own very image? What else is the Anti State Church Association? What, we presume, is professedly deplored by the spiritual and enlightened in relation to the established Church, is the mingling of the religious with the profane,—the utterly confounding of the clean and the unclean—the blending of those who fear God with those who fear him not—of the Church and the world, and the consequent prostitution of Christian Ordinances. We see it first demolish the house of Christ, and then set aside his laws, substituting them by others of an entirely human origin, and to be enforced by merely human sanctions. Such is the peculiar work to be done, and an attempt has been made to achieve it by an Organization of a mixed multitude of the same description which it is sought to separate from the State. For such an object, a union of good and holy men, who hold the common faith, and profess the common salvation, would be congruous, rational, decent; but a union of the Church and the world to break up a union between the Church with the State, is such an anomaly as mankind has hitherto seen. To expect deliverance to be wrought in the land by such a confederacy were to go in the teeth of experience, and to set aside the first principles of human reason as well as of the Kingdom of God. That such a thing should prosper in such an attempt is utterly impossible; reason, experience, and inspiration unite to declare that it cannot find favor either with the true Church or with the Divine Head. Those who may, like ourselves, unwisely and unhappily, have fallen, or been led into it, will sooner or later, with surprise and sorrow, discover their mistake, and hasten to make reparation by an immediate withdrawal from all further participation in a project so leavened with error, so impious, and pestilent. They will reach a sound axiom, that as men whose strength is not in themselves, there ought to be, there can be, with safety and success, no associated labor for an object where there can be no associated prayer. A fig for the associated effort which systematically precludes the association supplication! The day will assuredly declare, that such Association is not of God. A prophet of the Lord would have denounced it, and an Apostle of Christ would have sighed over it! There is no hazard in predicting, that a Society, founded on such principles, will never command the general confidence of the Churches in the British Isles. Good men, both in and out of the ministry, may, for a season, continue under the delusion,—and even should they discover it, they may not, for a little, acquire the courage necessary to liberate the conscience, and burst the fetters which bind them to evil; but deliverance will ultimately come. Uprightness is never very long the dupe of serious error, and once discovered, they will, in the end, come to acknowledge its sway. They will, at length, attain to the measure of strength necessary to do the most difficult, and yet the most noble thing that man is enabled on earth to perform,—TO CONFESS A MISTAKE.

Tired with devout resolution, they will ultimately burst their bonds, and break away from an organisation which excludes the use of the highest means which God has appointed for the attainment of spiritual ends. They will retire, meekly and solemnly,—their watch-word will be,—NO PRAYER!—NO WORK!

This utter exclusion of the spiritual element from the constitution of the Organisation is seen in its immediate effects. It has ever appeared to us that its meetings, in this Metropolis, bore a peculiarly earthly complexion, which can be explained only by a reference to the spirit of those who mainly compose them. They have ever appeared to us to be deplorably wanting in the spirit of piety. We never saw an Anti-State Church Assembly in which the spirit of the mere natural man did not seem wholly to prevail over the spirit of the Christian man.—The aspect of such assemblies has ever seemed to us to be essentially that of the world, their ruling element appeared that of the earth, rather than that of heaven,—with which neither the Gospel of Christ nor the spirit of Christ had much if anything to do. The practical effect of this is generally very striking; the spirit of the audience very much determines the character, for the time being, of that of the speakers. We have often observed, that it lowers the tone even of devout men, and sinks men, naturally light and frivolous, far beneath even their own level. The platform and the auditory thus act reciprocally on each other.

We have often endeavored to conceive of the presence of a devout and intelligent Episcopalian attached to the State Church, and have speculated on the light in which he would probably look upon the exhibition, and we have ever thought he would have been conducted but to one conclusion—that he must have departed the subject of an overwhelming conviction, that his State Church company, on spiritual grounds, was infinitely to be preferred to that