

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 walling 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 of one. I have, on the contrary, invariably found, on diligent enquiry, 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 diarrhœa in this country always precedes cholera asphyxia; that this diarrhœa 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 which open to us, and the controul of which we have in our hands." Among the best prophylactic means in individual cases, I would suggest: regular and active bodily and mental employment; good air and exercise out of doors, daily (if possible); cleanliness, sobriety and temperance in all things; good and wholesome food, and of the same description that the person is in the habit of using; even the continuance of old habits, that may in themselves be evil, when the disease has once made its appearance amongst us; avoiding such things only as experience has taught to be hurtful in each individual case; warm and comfortable clothing and bedding, and regular rest; the rigid avoidance of all quackery and quack medicines; and, early application to some honest and discreet physician, in the event of indisposition.

Among the public or general means of action that I would recommend, the first is, the organization of a board of health, which shall be furnished with absolute powers and ample means to carry out any plan of hygiene that may, by the exigencies of circumstances be demanded. The board not to be too numerous, and to be composed of gentlemen of education, experience, and decision of character, without regard to their po-

*Practical observations on cholera asphyxia, by James B. Kirk, M.D. Greenock, 1832, page 5.