

# THE SANITARY JOURNAL.

VOL. VII.

MAY, 1885.

No. 7

## OVERLOOKED PRECAUTIONS AGAINST CHOLERA.

Many look eagerly for items of information on the prevention of the dread epidemic, which it is commonly believed amongst the best informed as to the past course of cholera, is likely to visit this continent this year. Much, too, has been written on preventive measures. *The Alienist and Neurologist* draws attention in a lengthy article to one source of danger which has been for the most part overlooked. Below are portions of this valuable article :—

Though by sight of science we have probably found the cholera bacillus (the bacillus of cholera Asiatica and of cholera nostras, perhaps) we cannot yet, entirely by power of science, keep this potent living infinitesimal from evil, yet we can resist and circumvent its power, not only by clean streets and dwelling places, sunlight into the dark places and disinfection and pure air where dirt and filth abound, but by clean and strong bodies and by well sustained, well rested, invigorated and tranquilized nervous systems, built up to the power of resistance to the very maximum of physiological strength, not stimulated spasmodically by sudden fright after the pestilence has come, but trained up in advance by adequate but temperate nourishment; by ample rest of brain for the fullest possible recuperation, each night, of the day's wasted power; by making cities profoundly quiet in time of the pestilence by interdicting the needless noises both day and night, which keep the cells of the brain and nervous system agitated and restless, when they might be restful and in condition of repair for more work; and by a trained abeyance of the passions, the abandonment of exhaustive vices which undermine the nervous system and fit it to succumb to light assaults of disease.

To this end, in anticipation of an invasion of cholera here next year, the prudent will

finish up, before the epidemic comes, present business enterprises which promise unusual mental strain, worry or other tax on their powers and permit a little of that reserve nerve force to accumulate, which, hitherto, like an improvident man with his bank account, they have been in the habit of expending as fast as it has accrued. Cholera is not in strictest sense a filth disease (!), at least in this country, though filth by contaminating the atmosphere and thus impoverishing the blood and impairing the nervous system, furnishes favorable conditions for its taking hold on the organism. On the contrary, putrefaction, bacteria, as Koch asserts, destroy the comma bacilli or arrest their multiplication. Alcoholic stimulation, at least to dissipation so-called, must be abandoned; the physiological tone of the vaso-motor system maintained and the perfect stability of the higher cerebral centres—the psycho-motor and psychological—must be permitted to become re-established up to the point of their highest resisting power. Habitual alcoholization is a paralyzant of the vaso-motor nervous system as well as of the cortex of the brain, beyond all doubt, notwithstanding it acts as a temporary excitant, and momentarily stimulates latent power into increased activity. The frequent habitual use of stimulants like alcohol exalts the heart's activity, exhausts the tonicity of the brain by causing it to expend its latent reserve power daily; and leaves its vessels dilated and its substance oppressed; the cerebro-spinal fluid is crowded out of the perivascular spaces and the brain is prepared then for apoplexia and coma. Tobacco, too, is a vaso-motor paralyzant and motor depressant and weakener of vital power in those in whom tolerance has not been well established, and had better be used with moderation or abstained from.

To the end of proper prophylaxis in regard to the nervous system, the hours of rest and