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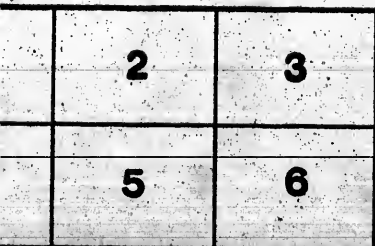
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## CHOLERA CONDUCTORS.

BY REV. JAMES B. DUNN.

PRIOR to the advent of the cholera in England, in the spring of 1832, a placard was daily carried through the streets of London, by order of the civil authorities, or by the provisions of the benevolent (I do not know which), having, in large capitals, the words: "ALL SPIRIT DRINKERS WILL BE THE FIRST VICTIMS OF THE CHOLERA." The result was that few persons had the cholera in that city.

In the cities of New York and Albany, the same year, thousands of posters bearing this caution were put up, with good effect: "QUIT DRAM-DRINKING IF YOU WOULD NOT HAVE THE CHOLERA." This arose from the fact that, however writers and theorists may differ about contagion and non-contagion, on this point they all agree, that Intemperance predisposes to cholera; that its march in every country has been written in characters so plain that he who runs may read. The *intemperate* are its first victims, and make up nine-tenths of its subjects; and everywhere the cholera has manifested such an affinity for the intemperate, that they have been—not inappropriately—denominated CHOLERA CONDUCTORS!

Now that this terrific disease has found a lodgment on our shores, and the municipal authorities and sanitary commissioners are industriously and faithfully cleansing our cities, and men are cautiously avoiding every article of food which may produce the fatal malady; now that multitudes of people are furnishing their houses and filling their pockets with medicines, and thus preparing themselves for the approach of the common enemy, whatever tends, in any degree, to throw light upon the causes of cholera and its preventatives is of the deepest interest. We have gathered together, with much labor and care, startling facts, that have never been controverted, and which evince, unmistakably, the correctness of the opinion as above stated.

Monsieur Huber said of 2,160 persons whom he saw die in twenty-one days in one town in Russia: "It is a most remarkable circumstance that persons given to drinking have been swept away like flies. In Tiflis, containing 20,000 inhabitants, every drunkard has fallen—all are dead—not one remains." Nearly all of the 30,000 persons who died of cholera in Paris during its last visit were in the habit of using strong drink, and nine-tenths of those who perished by the malady in Poland were of the same class. Throughout England, Ireland and Scotland, it was not known that a single member of a Temperance society died of this disease during its ravages in 1832, while it is computed that five-sixths of all

who perished were taken from the ranks of the intemperate; and in one or two villages in Scotland every drunkard had fallen. When it visited those countries in 1848-49, one of the most extensive and respectable liquor-dealers in Glasgow remarked that *cholera had cut off at least one-half of his best customers*. Similar testimony is borne by the Glasgow press of that period as that recorded during the cholera ravages in 1832, that the lists of mortality were always swelled after some carousal season. On the 25th of September in that year, for example, when the jubilee consequent on the passing of the Reform Bill was held in Glasgow, there were only throughout the whole city and suburbs fifteen new cases of cholera and ten deaths: but on the very following day, from the intemperance attendant upon that occasion, there were twenty-five new cases and twenty deaths; and in a day or two more they had increased to fifty-eight new cases and twenty-seven deaths. Dr. A. M. Adams, Professor of Medicine in Glasgow, and one whose name ranks high in the medical profession, in a letter dated November 29, 1849, makes the following striking statement: "I have found the use of alcoholic drinks to be the most powerful predisposing cause of malignant cholera with which I am acquainted. So strong is my opinion on this point, that, were I one of the authorities and had the power, I would placard every liquor store in town with large bills containing the words CHOLERA SOLD HERE."

In Montreal, of 1,000 persons who died of the disease, only two were Teetotallers. Dr. Bronson, of Albany, who repaired to Montreal on an errand of mercy, wrote:—

"Cholera has stood up here, as it has done everywhere, the advocate of Temperance. It has pleaded most eloquently, and with tremendous effect. The disease has searched out the haunt of the drunkard, and has seldom left it without bearing away its victim. Even moderate drinkers have been but little better off. Ardent spirits in any shape and in all quantities, have been highly detrimental.

"When twelve hundred persons had died a Montreal paper said: 'Not a drunkard who has been attacked has recovered of the disease, and almost all the victims have been, at least, moderate drinkers.'"

The statistics of death's doings in the United States by cholera were not less alarming. In the city of Washington, so impressed were the Board of Health with the fact that the sale and use of rum exposed the people, more than all things else to the disease, that they assumed the responsibility of declaring that grog shops were nuisances, and they closed them for three months. In the absence of a prohibitory law they found sufficient authority in other statutes, as explained by Attorney-General Wirt, to warrant them in the prompt suppression of the dangerous traffic.

When the cholera visited Albany in 1832, it carried off 866 above sixteen years of age, all but four of whom belonged to the drinking classes.

Messrs. Packer, Prentice & Co., large furriers in Albany at that time, state that: of 400 persons whom they employed, male and female, there were but two cases of cholera. No ardent spirits were permitted on the premises, and the employes were members of a Temperance society.

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The testimony of Mr. Delavan is of interest on this point. He says:—

"I was engaged at the time, with two gentlemen, in erecting a large block of buildings. The laborers were much alarmed, and were on the point of abandoning the work. They were advised to stay, and to give up the use of strong drink entirely. They agreed to do so, with only a single exception; he would not, and died. All the others escaped. There was prepared for them every morning a drink composed of iced water, vinegar and ginger, which they liked very much. I was at the same time engaged in digging down a clay bank in the south part of the city. I employed a large gang of laborers, who also became frightened, and were about leaving. The same proposal was made to them, to furnish a drink which would not intoxicate if they would give up the use of strong drink while the cholera lasted. They promised, and kept their promise—not one died. On the opposite side of the same clay bank there was another large gang of diggers. They continued the usual ration of whiskey, and I was informed by my contractor that one-third of that gang died of the cholera."

In New York city, in 1832, of 204 cases in the Park Hospital, only six were temperate, and all of these recovered, while 122 of the others died. Similar facts are recorded of all the other hospitals.

"Facts abundantly authorize the conclusion," said a distinguished physician, who had given special attention to the subject, "that, had it not been for the sale and use of spirits, there had not been cholera enough in the city of New York to have caused the cessation of business for a single day."

Another gentleman of that city says: "A quantity of spirit was taken from a certain store in the morning and distributed in a number of grog shops. In the evening the workmen assembled and received their accustomed quantity. The next morning, one, and another, and another, were carried by my door to the hospital, and in the afternoon were taken to the Potter's Field; and so, from day to day, disease and death followed round after ardent spirit, seizing upon those who drank it, and hurrying them to destruction, till so obvious and striking was the connection, that even some of the sellers—scared as were their consciences—said, 'This will never do; the way from the grog shop to hell is too short!' and abandoned the business. Others shut up their shops and fled." "In my neighbourhood," says another gentleman, "there was not a retailer left; they were actually afraid to encounter the dangers of their own business." It made the arrows of death fly so thickly around them that they dare not risk it. Had they been sure that those arrows would strike only their neighbors they might have been willing to stay and drive their business; but when there was danger that the shafts from their engines of death would strike themselves, they closed their doors and fled. How many lives had been spared, how many families saved from ruin, and how many evils averted from the community had they never returned, and their cholera manufactories remained closed for ever!

The truth deduced from this array of facts—which could be greatly enlarged—is apparent. Rum is the predisposing cause of nine-tenths of all cholera cases, and dram-drinkers may well be denominated CHOLERA CONDUCTORS. A word as to *cholera preventatives*.

I am aware that much has already been published by way of precau-



tion, and especially on the importance of a careful regard to regimen, diet, and cleanliness. But I find that, as a preventative of cholera, the moderate use of brandy and water, and of good sound wine is recommended; also, cordials, bitters, etc., all of which are strongly tinctured with alcohol. This is one of the most pernicious doctrines that could be advanced. The reason is obvious. Physiologists tell us that, in cases of death from cholera and from drunkenness the blood exhibits the same characteristics. In each instance there is a deficiency of oxygen, and, consequently, a superabundance of carbon, or charcoal. In hot weather there is a decrease of oxygen in the air, and, as a consequence, people who will eat and drink what is overcharged with carbon become bilious, afflict themselves with liver complaints, or perhaps with cholera.

Now it is a well-known fact that, while WATER, in its natural state, contains in it a large percentage of pure atmospheric air (the very agent that nature employs in oxygenating the blood and giving it vitality), ALCOHOL contains in it upwards of fifty per cent. of carbon,—the very thing that nature is incessantly endeavoring to throw out of the body. Dr. Parsons says: "A person who drinks water, sends into his blood-vessels the only liquid nature requires, and the purest and most purifying stream that can be obtained. But the individual who drinks alcoholic drinks, whether beer, cider, wine or spirits, makes use of a beverage that is overcharged with carbon, and is thus doing his utmost to thwart all the benevolent intentions of his bodily functions, and predisposes himself for any epidemic that may afflict the country." Total abstinence, then, from all intoxicants is the best preventative. On this point there is abundant testimony. By the yearly official returns, the number of deaths, taken as a whole, during the prevalence of the epidemic at Moscow, was absolutely less than at ordinary times. *This is attributed to the people refraining from drinking, and other habits of dissipation.*

The statistics of all Temperance societies bear out this point. In Albany, while, of the members of Temperance societies, only one in 2,500 died, of the rest of the population one in 60 died. In New York city, during 1832, of the 5,000 members of Temperance societies, only 2 died; of the Hibernian Temperance Society, numbering 123 members, not one died with the cholera. This proves that the laboring classes are not more subject to the cholera than the people of any other, provided they will abstain from intoxicating drinks.

The African Temperance Society numbered 192 members; not one of them died with cholera. This shows that colored people are not more liable to cholera than the whites, if they do not invite the disease by intemperance. The opinion of the Boston Board of Health, August 10, 1832, is, "*That all kinds of ardent spirits and other strong stimulants are not useful in preventing cholera, but that they dispose to its attack.*"

Every man's duty who would be safe is plain: "*Touch not, taste not, handle not the intoxicating cup.*"

