Mason (Aug)

THE

CHOLERA.

BRIEF HINTS FOR THE PREVENTION OF CHOLERA,

WITH A PLAIN ACCOUNT OF ITS SYMPTOMS,

THE PROPER PREVENTIVE MEASURES, — AND THE MANAGEMENT OF ITS EARLY STAGES.

BY AUGUSTUS MASON, M. D.,
Member of the Mass. Medical Society.

SANCTIONED BY THE MEDICAL FACULTY OF LOWELL.

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PREFACE.

"An Ounce of Prevention is worth a Pound of Cure," was one of those pithy maxims of Franklin, which convey in a few words the gist of invaluable foresight. Sometimes the cost and trouble of prevention for some fancied, or over-estimated ill, is really greater than the reality of that ill. It is not so with the disease in question. It has been the aim of the author, by giving a plain description of the Cholera, its proportional mortality, its symptoms, means of prevention, and early management, to remove much of the needless terror which prevails in a populous community, on the visitation of such an epidemic.

He has been under great obligations to various writers, both Foreign and American, and the description of the disease here presented is pronounced accurate, by those who personally observed the scourge in this country, in 1832.

He also returns thanks to the Medical Faculty of the city, who have given to it their high sanction and approbation.

Trusting that it may prove a word in season, to his fellow citizens, he most respectfully offers it for their approval and guidance. A. M.

Lowell, June 1, 1849.

PREVENTION OF CHOLERA.

It being probable that our city may be visited by the Cholera, in its passage from place to place, it is incumbent upon all good citizens, to find out, and make use of, the proper means for its prevention and control.

Particular attention is called to the following Facts and Rules, which have been condensed from the best authorities; and it is earnestly hoped that every individual in our community will see the propriety and importance of complying with, and enforcing them.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

The Cholera is an infectious disease, communicable from one person to another, through the effluvia or poisonous emanations from the bodies of the infected, or more widely spread by the impregnation of the atmosphere with its peculiar poison. This impregnation of the atmosphere is probably not general, but limited within certain distances of the points of infection.* The power of resisting this poison, as in other epidemic diseases, varies with different individuals and communities. In places most exposed to

* There is some difference of opinion among medical men, in regard to the infection of Cholera.

its malignant attacks, though the mortality has been large and terrifying, from the extreme suddenness of dissolution, it has never embraced but a small fraction of the population. The great majority have preserved an immunity from the disease, by their constitutional powers of resistance, by care and attention, by keeping aloof from the foci of infection, and by the concurrent advantages of more healthy localities, cleanliness, dryness and ventilation.

It is the design of this pamphlet to extend this immunity as far as possible, to our whole city.

SYMPTOMS OF THE DISEASE.

Lightest Form.—Cholera in its forming stage is easily cured, and may not advance to any great degree of severity. In the least dangerous form, there is a premonitory diarrhœa of a few hours, or a few days duration, with oppression of the chest, uneasiness over the region of the stomach, and coldness and shrinking of the countenance and surface of the body. If these symptoms are neglected, the more characteristic ones occur, viz. loss of pulse, difficult respiration, muscular spasms, shrunken and leaden appearance of the surface and extremities; sunken eyes, watery vomiting and purging, and great distress. This form attacks the young, robust, and least susceptible.

Common Form.—This form is ushered in with cerebral symptoms, giddiness, noises in the head, oppressed respiration, sense of weight over the stomach, loss of pulse, and depression of the vital energies, spasms commencing at the extremities, watery purging and vomiting, with the other symptoms detailed in the first form. After a time these symptoms give way, the spasms cease, warmth returns, convalescence is established, or a consecutive fever sets in, from which the patient either dies or recovers.

Fatal Form.—In the more sudden and fatal form the patient is seized as if struck by lightning, or by a severe blow at the pit of the stomach. The vital powers are immediately prostrated, immense discharges of watery fluid take place from the stomach and bowels. There are violent cramps and spasms, loss of pulse, intense shrinking and anxious appearance of the countenance, and the other symptoms just described.

This form attacks the aged, debilitated, and those most susceptible of infection. It is generally fatal in a few hours, and is seldom followed by reaction.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES.

1. Without waiting for the access of the disease, all the streets, yards, alleys and sewers, of the city, should be thoroughly cleansed and put in order. Every householder or tenant should attend to the cleansing of his vault, private sewer, and outhouses. His dwelling house should be well cleaned and whitewashed. The cellar should also be cleaned of all decaying vegetables, rotten wood, or any decomposing materials; and if close and damp should be dried and ventilated by the free admission of air. Kitchen slops should not be thrown into the streets or back yards, to propagate disease under the influence of the burning rays of the sun, but should be placed in some convenient vessel, and frequently removed by the city scavengers.

2. Damp houses and damp rooms are particularly to be avoided. Dampness must be removed by fires and free ventilation. Upper rooms will be found most healthy. Cellars should never be inhabited, and in times of the Cholera no person should be permitted by the city authorities to occupy a cellar as a place of residence or lodging.

3. Personal cleanliness should be carefully attended to. The whole surface of the body should be frequently washed with soap and water. A clean, healthy, excreting skin, contributes much to security from this disease. Protracted bathing is injudicious. The even temperature of the body should be preserved by warm clothing, especially by the use of flannels, worn over the whole body, or at any rate over the chest and bowels. Weak and delicate persons should not fail to wear flannel next the skin over the whole body. Damp clothing should be immediately removed. The hours of food and rest should be regular. Unnecessary exposure to the night air and to sudden changes of weather, is by all means to be shunned.

4. Too great attention cannot be paid to preserving the stomach and bowels in a healthy condition. It should be the particular care of all those having charge of boarding houses, or of providing for family tables, to obtain the simplest and most easily digested food.

Animal food in its solid form, as containing the most nutriment in the smallest compass, is to be preferred.

It is of prime necessity to have the food properly cooked. Roasted and Broiled articles, will be digested easiest. Boiled meats, especially Mutton, will be nutritious, and allowable. Fried meats, Sausages, and the like, Fritters fried in fat, fried Pies, fried Potatoes, and many similar articles of diet in frequent use in some families, are always difficult of digestion, and should be prohibited.

Of Vegetable Food, Rice, Tapioca, well cooked Potatoes, light and old Bread, are the most useful and proper. Green Vegetables, such as Cucumbers, Cabbage, Salads, and all such as are apt to relax the bowels ; crude, unripe, and acid fruits, raw or cooked, must not be indulged in. Ripe fruits, may be used, with proper caution against any

excess. Strawberries, blue berries, and such like, may be safely used, in moderation.

Salted and smoked Meats, fresh Pork, salted and shell Fish, are to be avoided. Pickles, rich Pastry, Preserves, and heating condiments, are positively forbidden. Spirituous Liquors of all kinds, Cider, Perry, and all acid drinks, or such as easily become sour, as Lemonade, Ginger Beer, and weaker kinds of Small Beer and diet drinks, are to be avoided. Intemperate persons, and moderate drinkers, are the most common victims of cholera.

At such times, substances generally harmless, are not to be safely taken.

Moderation, both in eating and drinking, is absolutely necessary.

5. Avoid Preventive Medicines. Those which are proper for the cure, will not prevent the attack. Many valuable lives have been lost by the use of preventive medicines. The bowels should be kept regular, but without medicine, if possible. Cold purgatives, as salts, seidlitz powders, rancid oil, and drastic purgatives, such as the common purgative pills, aloes, colocynth, senna, are dangerous.

Costiveness is not however to be allowed to those who have become habituated to the use of laxative medicines. The laxatives should be of the mildest character, such as fresh olive or castor oil, senna confection, manna, or rhubarb, taken in mint water.

Any extra looseness of the bowels should be carefully watched, and in case of its resisting the common domestic remedies, the advice of the Family Physician should be early taken, as in many cases slight attacks of diarrhœa have suddenly given place to a severe access of Cholera.

MANAGEMENT OF THE EARLY STAGES OF THE DISEASE, BEFORE THE PHYSICIAN ARRIVES.

Should, however, a person in spite of these precautions, or from neglecting them, be seized with the Cholera, no delay should be used in sending for the Physician.

He should be put in a warm bed, and warmth should be freely applied by means of bottles of hot water, hot flannels, or bags of hot sand, bran, or salt, applied along the spine and extremities.

A large poultice of mustard and vinegar should be applied over the stomach, and kept on for fifteen or twenty minutes.

Every half hour a teaspoonful of sal volatile, in hot water, should be given, or a draught of hot brandy and water, or other stimulants, with small doses of laudanum, paregoric, or camphor. Moderate doses are demanded, and the liquid taken should be small in quantity. No reliance should be placed on hearsay, or newspaper prescriptions.

The patient should receive all necessary attention, but his room should be strictly avoided by all unnecessary persons. No one should needlessly run the risk of infecting himself, or infecting others.

CONCLUSION.

These directions, if carefully followed, will prevent the introduction of cholera among us, or limit its extension, if it makes its appearance. If we have no Cholera they will be effectual in preventing fever, dysentery, or any other epidemic that might assail our city, and cannot fail under any circumstances of adding to the security of the public health.

APPROVED BY

JOHN C. DALTON, M. D.
JOHN O. GREEN, M. D.
ELISHA HUNTINGTON, M. D.
GILMAN KIMBALL, M. D.
JOHN W. GRAVES, M. D.
HARLIN PILLSBURY, M. D.
DANIEL MOWE, M. D.
DAVID WELLS, M. D.
BENJAMIN SKELTON, M. D.
A. H. BROWN, M. D.
J. D. PILLSBURY, M. D.
J. T. G. LEACH, M. D.
PATRICK P. CAMPBELL, M.D.
HIRAM PARKER, M. D.
NATHAN ALLEN, M. D.
J. P. JEWETT, M. D.
L. B. MORSE, M. D.
OTIS PERHAM, M. D.
HANOVER DICKEY, M. D.
JOSIAH CURTIS, M. D.
J. SPALDING, M. D.
J. W. PERSON, M. D.
W. KIDDER, M. D.
B. D. BARTLETT, M. D.
CHAS. A. SAVORY, M. D.
H. WHITING, M. D.
E. K. SANBORN, M. D.