

## CHAPTER X.

## HOW TO ESCAPE THE CHOLERA.

AFTER the wide survey we have taken of the cholera, from its origin on the banks of the Ganges, under a tropical sun, in a country liable to the overflow of mighty rivers, and abounding with a luxuriant and ever-springing vegetation, and inhabited by a people whose habits of life, and religious and national prejudices, disposed them to receive it in its utmost severity;—to the appearance of the disease on the banks of the Tyne, in a temperate climate, where neither the heat of Summer nor the cold of Winter are ever excessive; where few and rare inundations take place, and the vegetation is not so abundant as at any time to spread the soil thickly with decaying materials; and where the people, living under a free government, educated in a religion which does not forbid the acquisition of knowledge, and all whose habits of life are more or less the dictates of reason and good sense;—after this extensive view of its progress, no words need be employed to show that it is a disease which may prevail under a vast variety of circumstances of climate and habits.

Mr. Kennedy, in his history of the contagious cholera, has very sensibly remarked, that our

experience of cholera has shown the error into which the first observers of the disease fell, of ascribing it to the most ordinary circumstances. If there happened to be a violent storm, or much heat, or an unusual degree of cold, when the cholera appeared, the storm or the heat or the cold were asserted to be the cause of the cholera; if a lake dried up, the cholera was supposed to arise from the mud and slime; if the east wind long prevailed, which is a wind that has a bad character in all climates, it was the east wind that brought the cholera. As it first was noticed in the thickly inhabited plains, it was supposed to be unable to ascend the hills. All these notions have been shown, by time and the progress of the malady, to be incorrect. It has crossed seas, mountains, and even deserts, but always, it would seem, with man—certainly always in the great thoroughfares of human traffic—a fact which may be and has been applied to prove its contagious property; although it is an imperfect proof, for the disease, even if carried along in the air only, could still only make its appearance where men were to be found. Among the mountains of the world, none are so lofty as those which may be seen in the map of India on the north and east of that country, called the Himalayah mountains; yet even there, the cholera has travelled up as far as man has carried his habitations. The town of Almorah, among those mountains, is 5337 feet above the level of the sea; but the cholera reached Almorah, and prevailed there as severely as in the plains of Hindostan.

Every day we hear the remark, that the winter will put a stop to the cholera—that the cold weather will soon make us hear no more of it. Those who make such remarks do not seem to remember that it prevailed all the last winter in Russia, a much colder country than ours. Still, it is to be acknowledged that as the cholera has advanced northwards, it has seemed to travel more slowly. Whether this depends upon mere climate, or upon the habits of the northern people less disposing them to receive the disease is not yet determined.

From all this, we only gather this piece of knowledge, that we have no reason in the world to expect that the cholera will *not* come among us, in whatever part of England, Ireland, or Scotland, we may happen to live or to be:—it is very well for us that it does travel more slowly here than in Bengal, for it gives us more time to prepare for it.

In making that preparation, nothing is so important as to keep in mind that wherever the disease has shown itself, it has been proved that some persons are more liable to its attacks, more *predisposed to it*, than others. It becomes a consideration which very much concerns us all—*what are the circumstances which do so predispose to it*. When once we know what they are, we may try to avoid them.

One predisposing circumstance has been observed in every climate—all irregularity of living, and especially all intemperance in drinking. It may easily be understood how the nervous system and also the heart and arteries become

weakened by any habit which has the effect of frequently exciting them. In the man who is drunk, particularly with wine or spirits, the action of the heart is much quickened, the pulse beats strongly, and the brain is so acted upon as to cause a false elevation of spirits: he is disposed to talk more and louder; to walk, or dance, or sing more; and to exert himself in everything, except what is industrious and useful, much more than when he is sober. All this is mere excitement. See the same man the next morning, and the excitement is gone. The action of his heart and pulse is languid; and his vivacity is all departed. He has no wish to talk, and still less wish to dance or to sing; and is, in short, as wretched as man can be. In the course of the day he recovers a little, and according to his age, constitution, and habits, requires a longer or shorter time for perfect recovery. Any person of common understanding must see that if this is often the case with him, the brain, so often stimulated, the heart, so often hurried and excited, must become disordered. It is from this repetition of excitement that we see in old drunkards the miserable depression of strength going on to palsy, or the violent action of the heart bringing on an apoplectic fit by causing a blood-vessel to burst within the brain. And if a man escapes these accidents, and goes on drinking and drinking, his liver becomes hard and diseased, or his stomach becomes inflamed, or his lungs become affected, or his general strength so lowered that he has no longer the power of resisting any cause of

illness;—and then, if he is exposed to the infection of fever, or of the cholera, he is sure to be attacked with it, and pretty sure to die.

There were in a particular part of India to which the cholera came, two companies of soldiers; one of three hundred, one of one hundred. The company of one hundred agreed to live temperately and to avoid the night air: and only one man caught the cholera. The company of three hundred made no such agreement, but went on as usual, and thirty of them died\*.

Let him who reads this page, then, remember, when he lifts the glass to his mouth, that if it raises his spirits for an hour or two, it shortens his life by many hours:—that a man who borrows life and spirits and strength from strong drink, is like a man who borrows money, and must pay it back with interest by and bye:—and if he has unhappily fallen into a habit of drinking much, let him resolve to drink much less; nay, if he is in the habit of drinking ever so little beyond the point of needful refreshment, let him be sure that he had better drink *less* than that, than drink *more*. Fewer women have died of cholera than men, fewer children than women, and fewer sober men than drunkards. If a man's natural spirits and strength are habitually exhausted by artificial stimulants, his stock of spirits and strength will be so taken up beforehand, that if the cholera makes a sudden demand upon this stock, even his life must go towards the payment.

\* Kennedy, p. 91, from the Indian Reports.

We may learn no less from observing how the cholera has treated people with relation to their habits of eating. On the one hand, a large majority of persons who have died of cholera have been very poor and wretched, and disposed to disease by the weakness which poor living has occasioned. This is no time to remind any of them, poor people, that their poverty has come of their idleness, or that their poor diet might be better if they were not extravagant and not ignorant. No doubt it is often so, and we must do all we can to mend such things. But England is a most kind and charitable country, and in every town throughout the whole island the rich, or those even a little raised above poverty, are giving their money and their time to help the poor. Some are supplying them with good and wholesome food; some are giving them blankets and flannel for waistcoats and petticoats; and some are busy making warm stockings for the little children. The Great Father of all human beings, who hates what is evil, and wishes the happiness of all his creatures—and who in permitting causes of evil and suffering, gives us faculties by which we can avoid and lessen them—will assist all these kind endeavours. and if the poor will *also* exert themselves, and not sit still and expect those who are better off to do everything;—if they will spend no money in what is not useful;—if they will be industrious and temperate;—even the cholera, which has swept away millions of people from the face of the globe, may pass over this island almost harmless, and all its

dreadful strength be scattered by the winds over the wide Atlantic sea and lost there, or driven to the icy regions of the North Pole where there are no men to be destroyed, and heard of no more. But all this, which, without the steady exertion of our common sense, would be little better than a foolish or romantic dream—must be accomplished by the employment of whatever knowledge we possess, and whatever care and caution we can employ.

There is no greater enemy of the cholera than cleanliness. If it were not for dirt and neglect, it is almost a question whether it would ever have found a substantial footing any where. It never goes first into cleanly houses; but creeps about the narrow streets, the confined and dirty allies, the damp cellars and the crowded garrets where poverty and wretchedness have taken up their abode before. There it finds a home, and becomes stronger and bolder; and after destroying its hundreds, it spreads forth into the air of a whole city, and triumphs over its thousands.

The care of the charitable persons who never forget the poor is extended not only to their diet, but to the cleanliness of their habitations. If the poor will only give them credit for good intentions, and not object to what they advise, they will be greatly the gainers.

But it is not the miserably poor who will read the Working-Man's Companion. It is addressed to those who do not depend on charity, but on their own honest industry. Among these, however, there are some who, although

temperate in drinking, are not always temperate in eating; and although not living in cellars or in garrets, are yet too careless about the dryness, the good air, and even the cleanliness of their houses. This is unworthy of them and of their wives at any time, but absolutely unsafe at the present time. A dirty house, or even a dirty room, sometimes becomes so unwholesome that *all* who live in it will die. When it is cleaned and whitewashed, and aired, all the danger is gone. In six days nine people died in one room in India, in barracks: the room was scoured and fumigated, and there were no more deaths in it.

Intemperance in eating may consist of excess, or of indulgence in hurtful food. If too much food is taken into the stomach, it is generally badly digested, and becomes a source of vexation there, and all along the windings of the intestines. It produces pain, distension, a sour or bad taste in the mouth, with some inclination to sickness; or disturbs the circulation in the head, causing a man to feel heavy and stupid, and at once to be sleepy and unable to sleep comfortably; or perhaps it disturbs the action of the heart and of the lungs, produces palpitation or violent beating of the heart, or difficult breathing. Now, if we just recollect what was said about the weakening effect of frequent disturbance of the brain and the heart, when speaking of drinking, we shall see plainly enough that the disturbance produced by over-eating leads to exactly the same ends, or at least to many of them; gradually weakening

the powers of digestion, and the action of the heart, and of the brain, and of the lungs, and lowering the strength of the body, and laying a man open to cholera or any other disorder that happens to be lurking in the air.

•Coarse sour food; spoiled vegetables; damaged wheat; badly baked, or newly baked bread; stale beer, rancid butter, unripe fruit, bad cider, are all unwholesome, and produce all the uneasinesses and evils of indigestion. Food that is too rich or too nutritious will produce the same kind of mischief, and even more, whether it happens to be digested or not: if not digested, just the same, and if digested, the additional mischief of plethora or fulness of blood, a state always attended with danger.

A man who is in health, and can live by his labour, should be careful, then, to buy good and wholesome animal food and fresh vegetables; to have them well cooked, neither raw nor overdone; if he has any broth made, it should neither be watery and washy, nor greasy and fat. Mutton and beef are the best kinds of meat, because they are most easily digested. Bacon, pork, and all kinds of "pig-meat" should be taken seldom, and sparingly. A man's food is, generally speaking, best digested when it is most agreeable to him, if he does not take too much of it. Salt, pepper, mustard, vinegar, and other articles used to season food, are all good in moderation. Moderation, in fact, is a word which contains all the wisdom of all the books that were ever written, or that ever will be written, on the subject of *diet*. There is no

wisdom in always eating of one kind of food, and refusing all the variety offered by nature in the different seasons. There is no wisdom in eating raw meat and vegetables, and refusing to do that which man alone can do, namely to *cook* our food. It is moderation that is everything; and if a man's food is made agreeable to him, and he sits down to it with an appetite honestly got by exercise and labour, and at *regular hours* (which is a great thing also), he is not very likely to eat more than will do him good.

It is not a common fault for a working man to live *too low*. But there are some who do, and they are the *drinkers*. A man who is tired and exhausted, and cold, drinks a glass of raw spirits, and because it produces some warmth, and rouses his languid heart and nerves—as the whip and spur stimulate the jaded horse—he fancies that it does him more good than food:—which is just as foolish as it would be to suppose that the whip and spur would keep the horse in as good condition as hay and corn. To live poorly is a bad thing, and to drink is a bad thing; but to live poorly and to drink too, is certain destruction.

But what is the working man to drink?—It is here, as it was with respect to eating, that general rules are foolish rules. Good beer, or ale, not so strong and heavy as to stupify, is perhaps the best ordinary drink; even better than water: but if a man drinks water, and feels well and strong, there is no necessity in the world for him to take to drinking beer. And with respect

to beer, as with respect to mutton and beef—let the wisdom of *moderation* not be forgotten.

The wives of working men are too fond of tea; they take it three or four times a day, and drink it to excess, not unfrequently with a *little* gin in it. This is a very hurtful custom. It makes them careless about good food. They get weak, and *nervous*, and troubled with stomach complaints. They have no appetite. They cannot nourish their infants properly, and so the *baby* has a little gin given to it also. They get into idle habits; spend several hours a day in a kind of half muddled state, gossiping with the old women of their neighbourhood; and neglect the husband's dinner, and do not keep his house clean, or wash the children's clothes or mend them. Thus one evil leads to many evils. No working man should let a drop of spirits come into his house except as a medicine.

So much for eating and drinking.—Whoever has looked over the history of cholera in the foregoing pages must know that there are other things which invite the cholera. One of the most common causes of disease is moisture or dampness, whether combined with great heat or great coldness of the air. In a former number of the *Working Man's Companion* \* it was mentioned, in the account of Dew, that travellers in the coldest parts of North America had described themselves as remaining in good health during the severest frosts, but as becoming ill and rheumatic or feverish when the thaw came;

\* Cottage Evenings.

and that the people called the Esquimaux, who build houses of ice and frozen snow, enjoy good health in them in the winter, but all become affected with bad colds when the warmth of the sun becomes sufficient to melt their houses in the spring.

It is the same with respect to heat. There is not in all the world a finer climate than that of Egypt, which is remarkable for its dryness, except *after* the annual overflow of the Nile, when the ground is only drying; and as it soon gets completely dry, the unhealthy season is of short duration\*. The excessive heat of India, if accompanied with a dry state of the air, agrees well with most people; their appetite and spirits are good; they are hot enough, to be sure, but not at all ill. It is when the rains come that they feel depressed, and that fevers and all sorts of evils come too. And if we look at home, into our fenny countries, we still find that the spring and the autumn, when the moisture is most abundant, are the seasons of ague and other fevers.

Medical men, who are in the habit of looking at places and at people with reference to the subjects of health and disease, have long known that a continued residence in a damp and marshy situation, although it may not actually produce a common fever or an ague, yet gradually undermines the health; makes the stomach weak, the functions of the skin languid, and lowers

\* Different statements have been made by travellers; but those who have seen most of Egypt give this account of its climate.

the general strength. Persons brought into this state have a sallow dejected look, and are very open to the attacks of disease. The intention of all these remarks on the effect of dampness and moisture is to impress on the working-man the necessity of guarding, at all times, but at this time above all times, against living in a damp house, or sitting longer in damp or wet clothes than he can possibly help. It would have been easy to say, "Avoid wet clothes and damp houses," but we wished the working-man to see the *reason* for it; and that reason is drawn from the experience of men, not only in the few countries mentioned, but in all kinds of climates; in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America.

The dampness of houses commonly arises from the ground not being properly drained. The tenant should represent this to the landlord, whose interest it would generally be to remedy the evil, particularly if the tenants always gave a preference to houses that were drained properly. It has been too much the custom to neglect this, even in the best cottages which have been built within the last ten years; and the writer has known fever linger about in such cottages, and go from one to another down long rows of them, for more than a year, when not a single case of fever was to be met with in any of the old-fashioned cottages in the neighbourhood. To keep the house dry, it is necessary that it should not be washed too often in cold weather, unless there is a good fire in the house. If the bed-rooms are well swept every morning, and the floors brushed with a hard

broom, they will not require to be wetted very often in winter; and in the warm days of summer, if the windows are set open, the wetness will soon dry up. From mere idleness, dirty water, which has been used in cooking or otherwise, is too often carelessly thrown out close to the house-door, and a sort of puddle, very offensive to the sight and smell, is thus created, which makes the whole house disagreeable.

Another great fault in many of the new cottages is that of having only one door; or not even a window at the back of the house: it is difficult to keep such houses dry and properly ventilated. Some cottages are built back to back, and are always very unhealthy. In large towns it may not always be easy to command sufficient space for every convenience; but even in country villages, and still more in country towns, the number of narrow, damp, neglected alleys is surprising. A narrow entrance leads to a row of twenty cottages: all the ground about them is wet and disagreeable; the inside of the walls is stained with damp; perhaps there is a small ill-managed garden, which sends up every smell but a good smell; or, more frequently, there is a half-paved, half-mud court, with pig-sties, privies, and manure heaps almost as high as the cottages, and sending bad odours into every door and window; so that the people in the houses, shivering from the cold walls, and half poisoned with the bad smells, take all possible pains to shut out every breath of air, seldom open door

or window, and stop up all holes and crevices with dirty old clothes.

It is in such places that the cholera has invariably been the most destructive; and if it comes from the eastern coast across England, it is in such places that we shall behold its worst ravages: it is for the interest, therefore, of all classes, that the evils here pointed out should be attended to, and carefully and thoroughly remedied.

Perfect cleanliness of the person may be preserved without wearing damp clothes. Clean linen should always be put on quite dry. If a workman is exposed to rain, and gets wet through, let him *keep moving* until he has an opportunity of taking off his wet clothes. If he has no dry clothes to put on, it is better to go to bed than to sit in those that are wet. If he is both wet and cold, he should take off his damp clothes, rub his skin briskly with a coarse towel, sit by the fire or go to bed and wrap himself in the blankets, first putting his feet into warm water, and drinking some warm tea, gruel, a comfortable posset, or a glass of good brandy. It is at such times that the *use* of spirits may be permitted, although not their abuse.

In the short view of the structure and functions of the human body given in the Introduction, it was stated that the true *skin* was full of blood-vessels and nerves, and performed several important offices; and also that there was a great sympathy between the skin

and some of the internal organs, as the lungs and the intestines, so that one was seldom affected without the other. Few diseases afford us a stronger instance of this affection of the intestines and of the skin at the same time than the disease which has been the subject of so considerable a portion of the present volume. Together with the state of irritation and spasm of the intestines, we have seen that the surface of the body was pale or blue, and covered with cold perspiration, and that the skin had the coldness of death. Every one may have experienced that the exposure of the body for a long time to the heat of the sun produces some disturbance of the stomach; nausea perhaps, and aversion to food. Exposure to cold air, or even plunging in cold water, when the coldness is not long applied to the body, revives and invigorates all but those who are very feeble. It depresses the feeble; lowers the circulation, cools the skin too much, and produces shivering: the blood seems to desert the surface and to crowd the vessels of some internal organ, and the person complains of headach, languor, and general oppression. The same effect is produced by a very long exposure to cold in even the strongest persons; for although a short exposure is followed by a glow, or greater action of the vessels of the skin, a continuance of the cold depresses the circulation so much that no glow follows—no reaction; particularly if the individual is not taking active exercise at the time of being exposed to the cold. After such long exposure follow various irregularities of the cir-



culation : sometimes inflammation of the lungs or of some other organ ; and sometimes a fever ; sometimes simple colic, sometimes diarrhoea, and sometimes dysentery.

These are the reasons we have for saying, Do not sit still in damp clothes, and do not live in damp places. The long continuance of dampness applied to the body not only lowers the strength, and disposes the body to several diseases ; but in a particular manner disposes to disordered actions and cramp of the stomach and bowels ; and *cholera* being a disease in which there is very violent disordered action and cramp of the stomach and bowels, it is not necessary to say a word more to prove that the caution against damp rooms and damp clothes of any kind is one that nobody ought at this particular time to neglect.

It is one thing to give advice, and another thing to be able to act upon it. A working-man may be perfectly convinced of the disadvantage of being exposed to damp and cold air, or of wearing clothes that are not dry, or of living in moist situations ; but his occupations and many other circumstances may tie him to a particular spot, and make it necessary for him to run some of the risks of which he knows the danger. In that case all he can do is, by keeping himself in good health, by careful diet and regular habits, to lessen the likelihood of his being made ill ; and also to wear warm and sufficient clothing, particularly woollen clothing, which does not allow the warmth of the body to escape so rapidly as linen. All those

who are of necessity exposed much to cold and moisture, all who live in cold damp houses or situations, and all who have irritable bowels, soon disturbed by changes of weather, should wear flannel next the skin. A long flannel waistcoat with sleeves, and even flannel drawers, will be found the best means of preserving their health, and of guarding them against spasmodic attacks in the stomach and bowels, and even against the cholera. If the expense of a flannel waistcoat is any obstacle, (it cannot cost more than a few shillings ; from two shillings to four at the utmost,) or if a waistcoat of flannel should be found uncomfortable, a flannel band should be worn round the bowels, at least eight inches broad ; and the women should wear wide, full, warm, and old-fashioned flannel petticoats. They say that the Dutch, whose broad figures amuse us so much in pictures, are seldom or never troubled with coughs and colds\*. Their houses are cold, and their love of cleanliness is so great that they are perpetually washing and scouring their rooms : the climate of Holland, too, is damp and chill : but the Dutch women wear thick warm stockings, and at least half a dozen good substantial petticoats : whilst the men wear clothing equally thick, including almost as many waistcoats as we have seen the grave-digger take off one after the other in the play of Hamlet. Although it might be some time before we English people should like to see our wives and daughters as shapeless as the Dutch, both we and they might still borrow part of the dress of

\* Beddoes.

that industrious people with benefit. There can be no doubt that many young women die of consumption in England from their unconquerable unwillingness to wear sufficient clothing; and the general custom of women as regards the clothing of their feet is quite unsuited to our moist and variable climate, in which the feet can not always be kept quite dry even in a summer's evening walk in the meadows. Those who know how often damp feet bring on disorder of the bowels, will know, therefore, that keeping the feet dry and warm is another good and sensible precaution against the cholera.

As the winter is coming on, care ought to be taken to have all the bed-room windows mended. The effects of cold upon the body are much more dangerous during sleep than when we are awake. More clothing is required by night than by day. Dry rooms, clean sheets, and good warm blankets, will do more than any medicine to keep off attacks of cholera.

Warm clothing, then, and personal cleanliness; good food and suitable drink; clean and white-washed houses, kept dry and of a moderate warmth; neat and dry court-yards, free from all the offensive nuisances which have been mentioned; gardens well cultivated, and not smelling of decayed vegetables; these are the chief things to be attended to by way of keeping off the cholera altogether. By avoiding dirt, cold, bad air, bad food, intemperance, you avoid so many things which weaken the body and dispose it to disease:—and it may be added, although you cannot help sometimes working to

fatigue, you will do wisely to avoid *unnecessary* fatigue.

But supposing that the cholera is actually in the town in which you live, or even in the very street in which your house is, what then are you to do:—the cholera is far enough from you at present, perhaps; but why should it not reach your town as well as Sunderland, or as well as Newcastle or as Shields?—and if it should, how are you to act? This question, like all the rest that concern you, must be answered by a consideration of some of the laws and other circumstances of the disease.

The first consideration that would press itself on your thoughts at such a time would be, whether with all your care you and your family might not yet take the disease from some of your sick neighbours. You have been told how medical men differ on this subject. It has been mentioned to you that in a great number of instances the disease has *seemed* to be carried from one place to another by individuals or by their clothes or goods; and that yet so many persons escape who have had more or less communication with the sick that many doubt the possible communication of the malady from one person to another. Examples have been given of places and persons apparently secured from the disease by being carefully separated from others; and of other places from which no care or caution has appeared able to keep out the cholera. In the history given of cholera you must have remarked it has *first* appeared in sea-ports, seeming to be brought from

other sea-ports: how much reason there is for thinking that it went by sea from Baku to Astrachan; and came by sea from Hamburgh to Sunderland.

In the midst of so much seeming contradiction, you have been reminded that some of the difficulties of the subject may be got over, and some of the contradictions reconciled, by considering the cholera as a disease resembling in its origin some of our fevers which are attended with eruptions—for instance, the small-pox, which, let it be remembered, is a disease new to the world since the time of the ancients, no less than the cholera; a disease too which came to us as the cholera has come, from the hot regions of the East. Regarding cholera as a disease originating in a certain state of the air, and when acquired by one individual capable of being communicated to a second; but still continuing to arise in other persons from the original source, and only communicable to persons predisposed by particular causes to receive it; it has appeared as if some clue might be gained to a labyrinth of facts and arguments, and some clearness might begin to prevail where there seemed to be so much confusion before.

Leaving, however, the settlement of this question to medical men, many of whom are willing to devote their time, and some of whom are ready to peril their lives in the investigation; it is, in the mean time, the part of every person of sound mind to *act as if the contagion of cholera was positively proved.*

We must once more remind the reader that it is only a *wise* fear which we wish to excite in his mind, and not that extravagant terror which prevailed in the Indian army, where, the common people being unprepared by what has been recommended in this chapter in order to *avoid* the disease, fled in distraction, and left the sick to die, and the dead to be devoured by the fowls of the air.

Although the small-pox has been mentioned by way of making our view of the causes of cholera intelligible, it should be stated that the contagion of cholera appears to be far less powerful than that of small-pox, and more like that of our common typhus fever. If a person who has not had the small-pox, and who has unfortunately not been vaccinated, comes into the same house with one who is lying ill of small-pox, he is almost sure to take the disease: but there is no such fear in a typhus fever; which is only communicated to those who are a long time with the sick, and sit close to them, or inhale their breath; and not always even then. Yet we have known whole families ill of typhus fever, and left to die, because no nurse would go near them. Such fear is quite unnecessary. There seems to be a poisonous air about a fever patient, and also about a patient ill of spasmodic cholera. This air is the *most* poisoned the *nearer* it is to the *sick person*. Within a few inches it is very powerful;—a few inches farther off it is more mixed with common air, and therefore weaker; and at the distance of a

few feet it is so much mixed with the common air as not to have the power of creating disease in those who breathe it.

From these facts we learn, that nurses and neighbours need not withhold their assistance from the sick,—and also that in attending upon the sick they ought to observe certain cautions.

Those who attend the sick are above all things interested in having the sick-room kept clean. Idle nurses, who allow the sick person to remain with linen unchanged for several days, or with dirty sheets; or who take no pains to expose the blankets to the fresh air; or who allow offensive matters to remain about the bed; or who neglect to open the doors and windows; are fond of securing themselves, as they foolishly imagine, from all danger, by smelling salts or vinegar, or by camphor, or by keeping lozenges of some kind or other in the mouth; all of which things are useless, whilst at the same time they render the air about a patient very disagreeable, and still conceal such bad smells as ought to be attended to and removed.

Nothing is more abominable than to see a nurse, careless of the continual attentions required by a person suffering all the torment of a fever, thinking only of her own eating and drinking, and doing both to excess;—sometimes, indeed, excited by spirits or wine, of which there is always too unrestrained a use in a sick house, and then disturbing and fidgetting the

patient about a hundred things which ought to have been done at another time\*.

The first thing, then, for those to do who are much about the sick, is to see that the room is clean—that there is no collection of clothes or rubbish under the bed—that the bed-linen and the patient's dress are not neglected—*and that there is no bad smell in the room.* In the case of cholera, whatever is discharged from the stomach or bowels should be immediately taken away.

The nurses and attendants are obliged to be a great part of their time with the sick:—this is attended with less danger to them than might be supposed, provided they keep the room and patient clean; live pretty well, without intemperance; are cheerful and active; and, except when actually attending to the sick person, place themselves near the window or door, so as not to be exposed to a continued stream of air *from* the patient. It is also quite certain that the nurses and attendants become accustomed to the atmosphere of a sick room, and are not so liable as others to become affected with infectious disorders.

\* There is no occasion on which drinking freely seems less in character with the circumstances of the time than at a *funeral*; yet on no occasion is it more common. It often arises from a fear of infection: a foolish notion being entertained that it *keeps out* infection, the attendants at a funeral often partake of wine, or even of spirits, until their red faces and stupified expression cannot be observed without disgust. Others are persuaded to drink because “sorrow is dry;” which is still more shocking. Altogether it is a most offensive and disgraceful custom.

Those who are not in actual attendance on the sick, but who go to see them as friends and neighbours, should not make *long* visits to them; nor sit too near them; nor inhale their breath;—if there is any kind of bad smell in the room, they should not go in until it has disappeared;—they may shake hands with the patients, but should not kiss their lips. If a window is open, they should sit between it and the patient's bed; if not, between the door and the bed, that the air may be carried from them towards the patient, rather than *from* the patient towards *them*.

No clothes that have been used by the patient should be put into drawers with the clothes of other persons: all the dirty linen, sheets, &c., when taken out of the room, should be put at once into water out of the house, and then hung up in a free current of air.

The best thing that can be done by way of *fumigation* is to use the *chloride of lime*, and its use is very simple and easy. It may be procured at any druggist's shop, and is not very dear; a pound of it, which may be had for sixpence, is sufficient for a gallon of water, in which it should be dissolved. Some of this water should be sprinkled over the bed-room twice a day or oftener; not in great quantity at a time, because it is too stimulating to the lungs of a sick person. The stairs and passages may be sprinkled also.

Some of this solution, or water containing the chloride of lime, should be poured upon the matters discharged by the vomiting or purging

of the patient. Dirty linen might also have some of the solution poured over it.

The vessel, or jar, or jug, in which the chloride of lime in water is kept should have a cover.

In case of death, all the bed-clothes and linen worn by the patient should be purified in the same way, then put in water, and dried in the open air: the bedstead and bed-room, and all the articles of furniture should be scoured, and the room thoroughly ventilated, and if possible white-washed before being slept in again. The drying of the room will be best promoted by keeping a fire in it, and having the windows and door open.

It must, however, never be forgotten that *neither the chloride of lime, nor any kind of fumigation whatever*, will destroy infection, or make it safe to go near persons sick of cholera, or of any description of fever, without *fresh air*, and *constant cleanliness*. But if *all* these things are observed, the fear of the cholera or fevers spreading would become very small indeed.

Besides these precautions, which the safety of individuals makes it most desirable that they should adopt willingly and without opposition; the public safety might possibly require some additional ones; such as the prevention of any communication between persons in infected houses and other persons, &c.

On these we shall not make many observations. If the cholera should become more general in England, the public authorities of different towns, assisted by the physicians, will do

all that is required; and if too much is said about such measures before they become necessary, it leads to needless alarm, and may even cause the concealment of the disease until too late for the safety of the patients or their neighbours.

These precautions, which *may* become necessary, should not be placed in such a light as to create a panic for which there are no reasonable grounds. They are only mentioned *now* to show, that in case of the worst that can happen people will not be left to perish for want of care.

In closely built towns, where cholera may be expected to be very fatal, it will possibly be proposed that the sick should always be removed to hospitals prepared for cholera patients. This measure is often a very welcome one; for the person removed gets better attended to than he could be at home. But if the friends object to its being done, it ought not to be done; for by proper care at home those in the house may either be preserved from the disease, or their neighbours protected against it. The friends *must* in this case submit to be kept within certain limits, and to be debarred from going into other persons' houses until all fear of infection has passed away, which it cannot be in a shorter period than a few weeks.

The houses in which persons were ill of cholera would, perhaps, in such circumstances, be supplied with all things necessary by persons appointed to leave them at their doors: and they would be carefully attended by medical men especially appointed to that duty.

Stations would be fixed where persons in whose families the cholera appeared might apply for medical aid, provisions, medicines, wine or cordials, and the chloride of lime for fumigations. Proper attendants and nurses would be provided; and active assistants, who would instantly supply blankets or whatever else might be required.

The same persons would probably, also, take measures for the burial of the dead, and for the perfect purification of houses; as well as for the protection of all kinds of property.

Very particular care would be necessary with respect to lodging-houses for the reception of vagrants, beggars, and the poorest and most unfortunate class of travellers. Every person arriving at such house ought to be seen at once by a medical man, and if out of health removed to an hospital, or kept separate from other persons. Such houses, and indeed every house, ought to be visited *frequently* by persons who should be authorised to enforce the observance of cleanliness. All classes should be made to understand that the choice was *cleanliness, or death*.

A few other regulations might be found necessary, but those which have been mentioned would answer every important end, even if the cholera was raging amongst us as it is to be trusted it never will rage.

Let no one give way to foolish fears; but rather feel quite sure that ordinary care will make the disease almost harmless; and that, if it should become more severe and general,

every thing will be done that man's prudence and forethought can devise to preserve the lives of those attacked, and of all about them. Fear alone will sometimes produce irregular actions in the stomach and bowels; and it always lessens man's power of resisting disease as well as danger.

After all, it would be unworthy of an enlightened and brave people to take fright at the cholera, and most disgraceful to run away by hundreds, or to turn robbers and desperadoes in the presence of such an enemy. Many men go into battle again and again, well knowing the danger. Many incur danger by sea and land for pleasure's sake. Surely then, if the cholera does come, it ought to find us not only well prepared to keep it out, but, having done all we can, if we must fall, prepared to fall as becomes men and Christians.

The danger of cholera, even in its worst humour, will not be long continued. We should, however, know exactly what we are to expect. For a week or two, when it comes near us, there will only be cases here and there, and many will ridicule the fears of the timid. Then great numbers will be attacked and die, some in the midst of apparent health and strength; and then many, including those who laughed at fear, will fly like people bereft of their senses, carrying the cholera with them perhaps into a hundred villages. Those who *remain, and take every precaution which has been recommended*, will very likely escape, and in another week or two there will be no new cases, and no more dan-

ger, *except from the return of the runaways*, who will come from places to which some of them took the cholera, and where it has not yet run its course.

This view of the danger will convince every thinking man of the duty of consenting at once to do all that may be required of him *without running away*, or, if he has run away, *before he is allowed to come back*.

Those who run away should go to single houses, or to tents pitched in the fields; and if those who stay will avoid intercourse with the sick, and submit to, and encourage all the useful measures which the public safety demands, the number of deaths will soon become very small indeed.

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