Squibb (E. R.)

# ADVICE UPON

# EPIDEMIC CHOLERA.

BY

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# ADVICE UPON EPIDEMIC CHOLERA.*

In view of a probable invasion of Epidemic Cholera, it is considered useful to try to attract early attention to the following circumstances, and to offer the advice which naturally results from their due consideration, to the end that the knowledge and experience gained in the medical profession through previous epidemics of the disease may be more generally known.

In previous epidemics many lives were lost, and much sickness occurred;—first, through want of early attention;—next, through the use of quack nostrums and specifics, which are generally hurtful, and are made and advertised to make money by; and lastly, through the want of simple information among the people as to the recognition of, and some uniform system of management for, the painless curable stages of the disease.

Cholera usually begins by a simple diarrhea, which is too apt to escape notice, particularly in thoughtless persons and in children. If it can be seen by physicians in this early stage, a large proportion of the cases can be cured; and the earlier it is seen by physicians, the better it is for the patients, and the easier for the physicians.

In time of Cholera every movement of the bowels after the customary daily one, must be considered as a tendency towards the disease; and a second unnatural movement establishes a diarrhea, and should never be disregarded.

Parents, therefore, should watch their children closely at such times;—and all persons should pay strict attention to themselves, for this, the most curable stage of the whole disease, is often of short duration, and in it the disease is easily stopped in a large majority of cases.

The danger is in proportion to the frequency and copiousness of

* This paper, in substance, was presented to the Section on Hygiene at the late meeting of the American Medical Association in the form of a preamble and resolutions, with a view to its adoption and publication by that body, and with a hope that it might obtain the authoritative sanction of that body, and thus become generally useful. It was, however, at once opposed by Drs. Chas. A. Lee, of Peekskill, N. Y., and N. S. Davis, of Chicago, Ill., and was withdrawn to prevent controversy.

the discharges from the bowels; and vomiting and cramps, though often easily checked by the early attention of a physician, are always to be regarded as warnings of great danger.

The early diarrhea is generally easily checked by very simple means. Often simple lying still in bed will check it. And all who have it should go to bed,—not so much because they are sick, as to insure them against getting sick. When quietly at rest in bed many very simple remedies will arrest a diarrhea which would otherwise go on in spite of everything. When not in bed, the more quiet the better under all circumstances:—but to run about in the hot sun, or get excited, or irritated, or frightened, is very bad.

A diarrhea, no matter how slight, cannot be considered cured until the discharges have entirely resumed their natural appearance and infrequency for two days, and even then it will recur from slighter causes than at first, and be more obstinate after each relapse.

No matter how mild or slight the diarrhea may be, the physician should be informed of it if he be at hand, or can be easily reached. But if he be not at hand, time should not be lost in waiting for him; and with prompt and proper attention he may then not be needed at all. A simple mild diarrhea is easily arrested by rest, diet, and a small dose of laudanum, with or without spirits of camphor taken after every discharge from the bowels; and such doses can always be had in a very few minutes from every apothecary's shop. But the experience of many epidemics has shown that a judicious combination of three or four medicines, all of which have been long used in various proportions, and about which there is no secrecy or complication,—is better adapted to the generality of such cases than any one or two of them; while such a combination is adapted to later stages and more severe cases of the disease, to which laudanum and camphor alone would not so well apply.

Such a judicious combination, compiled from the recorded knowledge on the subject, it is believed will be found in the following mixture, which all good apothecaries can make and keep ready for use. And the public generally is strongly advised to adopt and rely upon this as being better and more safe than the advertised specifics and nostrums of the day; and as being all that the present state of knowledge will afford, and all that common sense and reason can expect from any remedy not adjusted to each special case, as remedies always should be if possible.

Apothecaries are also strongly advised to adopt this formula, name, and label,—to prepare the mixture carefully from good materials, and to sell it with the label and directions here given;—and to sell no other preparations for these uses except upon the written prescription of a physician. The label and directions here given in full detail, are adapted to a four-ounce vial, and the apothecary only has to have them copied by his own label-printer, with his business card appended at the bottom. If the apothecary has no label-printer near, or for any other reasons prefers to buy the labels ready prepared, he can procure them by mail or by express, from Messrs. FERD. MAYER & Co., Lithographers, No. 96 Fulton Street, New York.

**COMPOUND TINCTURE OF OPIUM**

OR

**DIARRHEA MIXTURE.**

This Mixture is composed of Tincture of Opium, Spirit of Camphor, and Tincture of Capsicum, each one fluid ounce, Purified Chloroform, three fluidrachms, and a sufficient quantity of Stronger Alcohol to make the whole measure five fluidounces.

Each fluidrachm, or teaspoonful, contains about 100 drops, consisting of 12 minims of each of the first three ingredients and 4½ minims, or 18 drops of Chloroform.

DOSE: For persons over 18 years of age, a teaspoonful,
" " 14 to 18 " " a small teaspoonful,
" " 10 to 14 " " half a teaspoonful,
For persons 6 to 10 years of age, thirty drops,
" 2 to 6 " ten to thirty drops,
For infants one to ten drops, according to age.

IN TIME OF EPIDEMIC CHOLERA OR DIARRHEA

when any person has two movements of the bowels more than natural within the 24 hours, the second one should be followed by a dose of this Mixture, the dose to be repeated after every movement that follows. If the movements increase in frequency or in copiousness after the second dose of the medicine has been taken, a physician should be sent for at once, and a double dose be taken after each movement until he arrives. Immediately after taking the first dose, the person should go to bed, and remain there for 12 hours after the diarrhea has entirely ceased.

Appended to this paper, but by no means secondary to it in importance, is the excellent address to the public, published by the Metropolitan Board of Health, of New York. It is reprinted here, to increase, if possible, its dissemination.

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METROPOLITAN BOARD OF HEALTH—ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC.

The Board of Health publish this simple statement, and beg the public to give to it their earnest attention.

Cholera is generally a preventable disease, and in its early stages can be arrested if the habits be good. Study therefore temperance in eating and drinking. Do not believe that alcoholic stimulants are useful in guarding you against an attack.

Let the food be nutritious, and keep the digestive organs in a healthful condition. Use no stale or uncooked vegetables. Let your meat be fresh and your vegetables be well cooked, and all fruits be fresh and ripe.

Cleanliness of the body is of the first consideration. Keep the skin in a healthy state by bathing the whole body, with a free use of soap. Cold bathing is best used in the morning—never just before going to bed. Dry frictions or the warm bath may be more safely used just before going to bed.

Cleanliness in your homes is of equal importance. Let your apartments be dry—never damp. Suffer no decayed vegetables or stagnant water to remain in your cellars or yards. Any disagreeable smell from privies, cesspools or sinks, is a proof of their unhealthfulness. Remove them by necessary repairs, lime, chloride of lime, or whitewashing. Ventilate well your houses and apartments. Expose your bedding to the air and sun. Avoid excessive fatigue. Keep regular hours in eating and sleeping. Wear flannel next to the skin. A good plan is, if the bowels are at all disordered, to wear a broad band of flannel (a flannel belly-band) around the body, reaching from the hips to the ribs. Maintain the natural temperature of the body by sufficient clothing; especially keep the feet warm. Never when heated sit on the grass or stone seats, or sleep under an open window. If exposed to wet, change your boots and clothes as soon as possible.

Take no purgative medicines, except by direction of a physician.

Cholera is almost invariably preceded by a painless diarrhea, and this is in all cases to be promptly treated.

When diarrhea is present, go to bed and maintain a position on the back, use abundance of blankets, and send for a physician.

A physician can always be obtained by applying at the nearest police station.

Stay in bed until you are well. Do not consider yourself well untill you have had a natural movement from the bowels. Abstain from all drinks. Apply mustard plasters to the bowels.

In the absence of a physician the adult can take ten drops of laudanum and ten drops of spirits of camphor. A child of ten years may take five drops of laudanum and five of camphor. A child of five years may take three drops of laudanum and three of spirits of camphor; and these drops may be repeated every twenty minutes so long as diarrhea or pain or vomiting continues. This will save time, *but in all cases send for a physician.*

*Do not get up to pass the evacuations*, but use the bed-pan or other conveniences.

*Never chill the surface of the body by getting out of bed.*

Remove immediately all the evacuations from your rooms; scald all the utensils used, or disinfect them with chloride of lime; scald also your soiled clothing.