

where the poison exists in unusual intensity, or the constitutional predisposition is unusually great, the first stage may appear to be suppressed, as occasionally happens in violent attacks of other diseases; but in cholera this event is so rare, as to be practically of no account; and in all countries, and under all varieties of conditions in which this disease has been epidemic, the experience as to this point uniformly agrees with what is observed at the present moment at Hamburg.

"In most cases," writes the British Consul, respecting the epidemic which has just broken out in that city, "the disease has first manifested itself in a slight relaxation of the bowels, which, if promptly attend to, the patient generally recovers; but if the symptoms are neglected, spasmodic attacks ensue, and death follows mostly in from four to six hours."

This looseness of the bowels may be accompanied with some degree of pain, which however is generally slight; but in many cases pain is wholly absent; and for some hours and even days this bowel complaint may be so slight as to appear trifling; so that, without a previous knowledge of the importance of the warning, it might easily escape notice altogether.

It must be repeated, however, that whenever Asiatic cholera is epidemic, the slightest degree of looseness of the bowels ought to be regarded and treated as the commencement of the disease, which at this stage is capable of being arrested by simple means, but, if neglected only for a few hours, may suddenly assume a fatal form.

It will be indispensable, therefore, on the first outbreak of cholera, that the local authorities should immediately make arrangements for daily house to house inspections of the poorer localities in their respective districts; this being the only practical means by which, in the most dangerous situations and among the most susceptible subjects, the existence of the premonitory symptom can be ascertained in time to administer the proper remedies, so as to arrest the progress of the disorder.

Heads of families, masters of schools and workhouses, proprietors of large establishments and works, such as factories, mines, warehouses, wharfs, and docks, should either be their own inspectors, or employ some trustworthy agent to examine daily every person in their employment, and to give at once the proper remedy, if the premonitory symptom should be present.

Each member of the Visiting Committee should be provided with proper remedies, prepared in appropriate doses for administration on the spot, in every instance in which the premonitory symptom is found to exist; and should report every person so treated as requiring the instant attention of the medical officer.

Dispensaries for bowel complaints should be established at convenient stations, at which the neighbouring inhabitants may apply for the proper remedies and advice the moment they are attacked by the premonitory symptom.

Experience having shewn that the establishment of cholera hospitals was not successful, the best provision practicable must be made for affording assistance to the individuals who may need it at their own houses; and one of the best modes of effecting this object will probably be the selection of proper persons who may be instructed as nurses in the special services required on this occasion, and paid for devoting their whole time to attendance on the sick at their own habitations, under the direction of the medical officers.

It will also be necessary to engage a sufficient number of medical officers at suitable remuneration, some to devote their whole time by day and night to the service of the dispensaries, and others to attend the sick at their own dwellings.

As, however, cases may occur of extreme destitution in neighbourhoods and houses wholly unfit for the curative treatment of the sick, provision should be made for the reception of such cases, either in the common hospitals, in the union houses, or in separate apartments specially prepared for the purpose, and properly warmed and ventilated.

Medical authorities are agreed that the remedies proper for the premonitory symptom are the same as those found efficacious in common diarrhoea; that the most simple remedies will suffice, if given on the first manifestation of this symptom; and that the following, which are within the reach and management of every one, may be regarded as among the most useful, namely, twenty grains of opiate confection, mixed with two table spoonsful of peppermint water, or with a little weak brandy and water, and repeated every three or four hours, or oftener, if the attack is severe, until the looseness of the bowels is stopped; or an ounce of the compound chalk mixture, with ten or fifteen grains of the aromatic confection, and from five to ten drops of laudanum, repeated in the same manner. From half a drachm to a drachm of tincture of catechu may be added to this last, if the attack is severe.

Half these quantities should be given to young persons under fifteen, and still smaller doses to infants.

It is recommended to repeat these remedies night and morning, for some days after the looseness of the bowels has been stopped. But, in all cases, it is desirable, whenever practicable, that even in this earliest stage of the disorder recourse should be had to medical advice on the spot.

Next in importance to the immediate employment of such remedies, is attention to proper diet and clothing. Whenever Asiatic cholera is epidemic, there is invariably found among great numbers of the inhabitants an extraordinary tendency to irritation of the bowels; and this fact suggests, that every article of food which is known to favour a relaxed state of the bowels should, as far as possible, be avoided—such as every variety of green vegetables, whether cooked or not, as cabbage, cucumber, and salad. It will be important also to abstain from fruit of all kinds, though ripe and even cooked, and whether dried or pre-