An inaugural dissertation, on cholera morbus: submitted to the examination of the Rev. John Ewing, S.T.P. provost; the trustees and medical professors of the University of Pennsylvania, for the degree of Doctor of Medicine: on the twelfth day of May, A.D. 1791 / by David Hosack, A.B. of New-York.

#### **Contributors**

Hosack, David, 1769-1835. Bayley, Richard, 1745-1801 Campbell, Samuel, 1765-1836 University of Pennsylvania. National Library of Medicine (U.S.)

#### **Publication/Creation**

New-York : Printed by Samuel Campbell. No. 44, Hanover-Square, MDCCXCI [1791]

#### **Persistent URL**

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# DISSERTATION,

ON

# Cholera Morbus

SUBMITTED TO THE EXAMINATION

OFTHE

REV. JOHN EWING, S. T. P. PROVOST;

THE

TRUSTEES AND MEDICAL PROFESSORS

OFTHE

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA;

FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MEDICINE: ON THE TWELFTH DAY OF MAY, A. D. 1791.

BY DAVID HOSACK, A.B.

ESTIMATIO CAUSÆ SÆPE MORBUM SOLVIT.

221930 CELEUS.

NEW-YORK:
PRINTED BY SAMUEL CAMPBELL.
No. 44, HANOVER-SQUARE.

M.DCC.XCI.

# RICHARD BAYLEY,

#### THIS DISSERTATION,

Is most humbly addressed,

With every Sentiment,

Of Esteem and Respect,

By his much obliged,

Friend and Pupil.

# RECHARD OFFIEE

Sundry M HANGER AS

MOITATHHERIU SONT

to mention yldnight flow al.

With every Centiments

Of Edecem and Respect,

By his much obliged,

Jing L. bas bushel

## Nicholas Romayne, M. D.

PROFESSOR of the THEORY and PRACTICE of MEDICINE,

N E W - Y O R K.

SIR,

I T is with the greatest pleasure that I now embrace an opportunity of acknowledging the obligations I am under, not only to your friendship, but also to the instructions I have received from your valuable Lectures.

THE indefatigable zeal, with which you have filled the Medical Chair, be affured, Sir, has been no less honorable to yourself, than beneficial to your Pupils.

BE pleased to accept this public acknowledgement, and believe me to be,

SIR,

Your Sincere Friend,

And very humble Servant.

was now which with and the row have allest the Adreical Chair, be tellered, fac, ben facet, and release said to bus charity

# WILLIAM SHIPPEN, ADAM KUHN, AND JAMES HUTCHINSON,

MEDICAL PROFESSORS of the University of Pennsylvania.

To you, Gentlemen, I also feel myself peculiarly obligated.—As a small testimony of my gratitude and respect, I have taken the liberty to address you upon this occasion.

It was not with the intention to compliment your abilities, either as Men of Science—Professors of the Healing Art,—or as Citizens;—in either of these characters, your same is too extended to admit any addition which my pen could attempt —With this small testimony then of my esteem and gratitude,

I Remain, GENTLEMEN,

Your ever devoted,

And most humble Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

OT Manical Trescious of the University Conteman, I alfo feet my fift per borry to address you upon side occasion.

#### ANINAUGURAL

### DISSERTATION

ON

# Cholera Morbus.

Womb, that it is an animal within an animal, may not be improperly applied to the Stomach. This organ, in a natural and healthy state, like a faithful well-armed Centinel, is always on the watch, who, when attacked, either repels the enemy, or perhaps deprives him of his arms, without which he is now incapable of defence.

We cannot give a more striking instance of this wonderful instance of the stomach, than by ob-

ferving of some poisons, that when taken in, they are immediately rejected, while others are subdued; divested of their malignant properties, and even rendered articles of nourishment-but to continue our simile, the Centinel may be at times betrayed, and whom he thinks a friend, may prove an enemy; -thus, with the stomach, poisons may infidiously steal in under the fair appearance of wholesome food, and thereby induce the long train of diseases, with which this organ is so frequently affected; -of the diseases they induced the Cholera Morbus, which I have chosen as the subject of the following Differtation, is not among the least frequent, and I had almost faid, the least fatal.

This disease consists of a frequent bilious vomiting and purging, accompanied with anxiety and oppression:—Spasinodic affections of the bowels and abdominel muscles, which are often extended to the legs and other parts of the system.

It for the most part attacks in Paroxysms, which however are repeated very irregularly like other diseases, it has its Premonitors; which are acid eructations and griping pains, particularly in the region of the stomach, occasioning for the most part, a sense of distention similar to that from flatulency as in Dyspepsia; --- to these, add Nausea, followed with vomiting, and the symptoms above mentioned ; -- the difease thus continuing, the abdomen becomes hard and extremely painful to the touch, accompanied with great heat and anxiety, which are again followed with cold clammy fweats; the pulse now becomes small, frequent, and very irregular, often times intermitting and scarcely perceptible, --- the countenance pale, with every other appearance of approaching death, as a coldness of the extremities -- fubfultus tendinum, &c .-- This, I believe, is a true description of the disease if violent and left to nature, when it for the most part terminates fatally, and that as is generally observed

upon the third or fourth day, but if mild, it may continue a day or two, and perhaps cease of itfelf; this happy termination, however, we are not to look for, without the affiftance of Medicine. The febrile symptoms, it is remarked, seldom appear in the first stage, when the disease, however has continued fometime, the pulse and respiration become both more frequent and very irregular. There is also a difference to be obferved in the matter discharged; --- in the beginning it is generally observed to be remarkably acrid, and more or less of a green eruginous color; --- but towards the close of the disease, it changes from the green to a more yellow, which last approaches the natural color of the bile.

This disease is most common as an endemick in the months of July and August, appearing however earlier, or continuing later, as the weather is more or less warm; cases sometimes occur, however even in the cold of winter, which sact, in my opinion, is not perfectly consonant with with the theory hitherto admitted upon the subject of Cholera; --- it has, however, never yet been taken notice of by writers. I will, therefore add, from the information of Doctor Kuhn, that it is not an uncommon occurrence.—I am also acquainted with a lady who assures me, she has been frequently attacked in the months of December and January, when the ground was covered with snow, --- a fact, by no means surprising, agreeable to the pathology I shall advance in the following pages, more especially when I observe, that this lady's diet consists chiefly in vegetables.

The Proximate cause of Cholera, is evidently an increased secretion of bile, which either from an increased acrimony, or which is most probable, merely from the quantity being increased, irritates the stomach and intestines, and thus induces those violent symptoms above enumerated.—Dr. Cullen has divided this disease into two species\*, the one which he denominates spontanious, arising

<sup>\*</sup> See his Synopsis.

in a warm feason without any manifest cause—the other accidental, or which is produced from acrid matters taken into the system.

The object of this Differtation will be, to trace the first of these species to its causes, and if possible thereby to refute the theory which has been, and is still so generally received, and which I will add has given rife to a very vague and uncertain mode of treatment. When we observe, that this disease occurs only in Southern or warmest seasons of temperate, climates, and that its danger and frequency are in proportion to the temperature of the air, we need not be surprised at the fo common opinion which Physicians have adopted, in afcribing it to beat as its existing cause; but on the other hand, when we also obferve, that during the prevalence of this disease, (viz. in the months of July and August) our diet abounds in the use of vegetables, but more especially the acid and acescent fries, we may at least ask the question, can they not produce it? for upon

supon the principles of heat alone, many circumstances, both in the nature and cure appear inexplicable. "In the case of a genuine Cholera,
says Doctor Cullen, the cure of it has been long
established by experience."\* But from the bills
of mortality in this country, as well as from those
of Europe we learn, that among the diseases of
children, Cholera, in point of fatality, stands at
the head of the list;—how far this sact accords
with the above observation of Doctor Cullen, I
leave the Reader to determine,—to me they appear somewhat incompatible.

Perhaps it may be urged, and with propriety, that in some instances we are called at so late a period of the disease, that we are just in time to see our Patient expire.—Nay, so great and sudden is the debility it induces, that some cases have been known to terminate satally in the short space of sixteen hours; but called at whatever period of the disease,—the first indication, agree-

<sup>\*</sup> See his first Lines of the Practice of Physic.

ably to the present practice with the greater part of Physicians, is invariably to evacuate the offending matter which is already pouring out quaqua versum, and almost without intermission; -to anfwer this indication, an emetic is prescribed, --fucceeded by a purgative, and (could we be fo candid as to acknowledge the truth) not unfrequently with death. Would Physicians in this, as well as many other diseases, more strictly observe that best of motto's, " Respice finem" perhaps Cholera, by a different treatment, instead of occupying its present place in the bills of mortality, would be confidered like an Ephemera or fever, that lasts but for a day. From the above treatment of this disease, --- its fatality, and even if cured, its obstinacy in yielding to the usual remedies, we are naturally led to enquire, whether it may not proceed from some other cause than that of heat, by which we may prescribe a more fafe and certain remedy, than either a vomit or a purge. For this purpose, and for reasons before

before hinted, it will not be improper to enquire into the effects of vegetables, more particularly the fummer fruits, which in these climates and feasons make so great a part of our diet; nay, I will add, so important a part, if, while eating, we for a moment reflect, that the palate is not always a faithful guide, but frequently as in the present instance, discovers our error when it is too late.-The principal effect which I shall notice, from the too liberal use of the vegetable acids, is the debility they induce, but more efpecially in the first passages: This effect we particularly observe in Chlorosis, Dyspepsia, Hypochondriafis, and Hysteria, all which diseases, it is well known, are aggravated by the use of them; to these add the Atonic Gout, which has even been induced by a fingle draught of four punch; nay, to extend the idea, need we be suprifed when Galen tells us, that they have produced an intermittent fever? especially when we consider the consent or sympathy between the stomach and the different parts of the fystem; - granting then, that a diet of this nature, has occasioned a loss of tone in this important organ, and of course, rendered

dered it incapable of performing its proper functions; it may readily be conceived in what manner this increased secretion of bile is produced, especially when we add, that this secretion is for the most part, proportioned to the acid present,

mand the Stomach and Duodenum.\*

Since then, the bile is fecreted in a greater quantity in this debilitated irritable state, of the ftomach

\* That the vegitable acids increase the secretion of bile, from their stimulating effects upon the excretories of the liver, (between which, and the alimentary canal, there is a very peculiar and intimate connection) is now, I believe, pretty generally admitted, (See Ramfay's Thef. Inaug. Edinb. 1757 .- See also Moore's Inaug. Differt. Edinb. de Bile, 1780.) granting this, a question very naturally arises, What would be the effects from a liberal use of the vegitable acids in that species of Jaundice, which arises from biliary continue in the gall myductibledder ? and which, by the bye, is the most common species of that disease. (See Morgagni-Monro, and Cullen .- The following fact, taken notice of by Butchers, (in my opinion) answers this question in the most satisfactory manner, viz. that in the fummer months, examining the gall bladders of cattle, they feldom or never meet with gall stones, while, in the winter months, they seldom or never find a gall bladder without them, owing unquestionably to the difference of their food; -which, in the one case, undergoes an acetous fermentation, occasioning, as before observed, in increased secretion of bile, which either by actually different thefe concretions, or which is most probable, by diffending the gall bladder and biliary ducts removes them.

counting for the effects produced, independent of the more actid state of the bile so much talked of in this disease, and which actidity I conceive, may be owing to the acid it meets with in the stomach that gives to the idea. This increased acrimony of the bile, some urge as the cause of the violent vomitings and purgings in this disease; but from the experiments of Arnauld and Monro, upon the emetic qualities of the bile in its natural state, I observe that an encrease in quantity alone is fully adequate to the effects produced.

From these circumstances, I am of opinion, that accidity in the stomach, whether generated by the heat of the climate, want of exercise, or which, I consider as the more frequent source, (from the excessive use of acids and acescent from the diseases termed bilious, so common in hot climates, not that I would consider heat as totally inefficient: On the contrary, I am willing to give it credit as a predisposing cause by inducing debility, but as the immediate or exciting cause, its

influence I am disposed to doubt. Doctor Chalmers, in his diseases of South-Carolina, upon the subject of Cholera Morbus, makes the following observation. " In those who abound with acidity, the action of the stomach, and probably of the whole mentary canal, must certainly be more or less impaired: The secretary organs also being generally relaxed," therefore, he adds, " people of fuch habits are most liable to this disease." The following facts and confiderations, however will, I hope, better establish this point. Doctor Kuhn informs his Pupils, that when in the West-Indies, in order to guard himself, as he then thought, against the diseases incident to that climate, made use of a sherbet of Tamerinds as his constant drink. In the course of one week after he had begun the use of it, he was attacked with a bilious Diarrhœa; he at the same time observed his skin and complexion to become remarkably fallow and bilious. As he had not changed his habit of living in any respect, but in the use of the Tamerind drink, he immediately suspected this to be the cause of his disease, and therefore immediately defifted from any farther use of it,-

the

the consequence of which was, his indisposition immediately went off without the use of any remedy, and the sallow hue in the skin gradually disappeared.

Another proof of an acid being present in the stomach, is that in all persons affected with Cholera; the first vomitings are extremely acid, and to use their own expressions, sour as verjuice; to this circumstance, add the sour smell and greenish color\*, which so invariably distinguished the stools of a person labouring under Cholera, and Bilious Diarrhæa, which diseases I conceive only differ in the vomiting which attends the one and not the other; nay, I will venture to observe, that in every instance we may be able to trace the cause to the action of such an acid.

Dr. Kuhn, (whose very extensive practice affords the most ample field for observation) also informs his pupils, "that in every case of Cholera, which has fallen under his notice, he has always been able to trace the cause to acidity, to which he adds it is frequently brought on by eating cherries,

pine-

<sup>\*</sup> For the effects of acids, in changing the color of the bile to a green.—See M'Clurg.

pine-apples,-drinking four butter-milk,-four punch, lemonade, and a variety of other substances, which are either of an acescent quality, or subject to the acetious fermentation, " but Phyficians, contented with the idea of heat, think themselves at no loss in accounting for the difease from this cause: Nay, so far are they from the idea of its being produced by acidity, that it is not an unfrequent practice, even with the most eminent of the profession, (without in the least regarding the appetite of the Patient) to prescribe the liberal use of acids in the form of punch, lemonade, -apple-water, and a variety of other formulis of a similar nature, with the intention they observe of counteracting the effects of the bile, but as frequently I will add, are they difappointed. Thus, to and the language of a Logician, "One error induces another." From this

Is it not possible that this practice in Cholera has arisen from its use in the Dysentery?—In the cure of which last discase, I will venture to add that vegitable acids, especially in the form of fruits, will prove specific, not only as anticeptic, but particularly as increasing the secretion of bile, the want of which shaid I can readily conceive, may be an exciting cause of this discase:—If this idea be admitted, I presume it will not be so difficult to determine.—"What connection the Dysentery has with the state of the bile," as Doctor Cullen supposed. See his first Lines, Vol. III.

this treatment then of Cholera, need we be furprised that this disease proves so frequently fatal, or perhaps, (to speak with more propriety) have we not cause for surprise that it is not still more fatal?-Lastly, another argument in favor of the theory I have been endeavoring to establish, and which also proves the inefficiency of heat, may be adduced from the women in the West-Indies, fo frequently escaping the bilious diseases of that climate, while the men are seldom free from them :- It is also remarked, that the women are remarkably temperate, and scarcely ever taste any other drink but water; the consequence of which is, they live to enjoy a good old age, free from those diseases of intemperance, with which the other fex are \* fo invariably afflicted; among which those of a bilious nature, as Cholera's,-Bilious Diarrhœa's, &c. are the most common. I am also informed by a Physician from the island of Jamaica, that the Negroes are also much less afflicted with those diseases than the Whites, notwithstanding they are more exposed to the heat of the fun, constantly working under its scorch-

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<sup>\*</sup> For this fact I am also indebted to Doctor Kuhn.

that they are in a great measure restrained from the use of the more acid and acescent spirits;—a circumstance which, in my opinion, explains the sact in the most satisfactory manner, more especially when we consider, that they are kept in almost constant exercise, and, of consequence, better able to resist the diseases, which their diet, as it is, (I would venture to add) would otherwise necessarily produce.

Doctor Rush, in his very valuable volume of Medical Enquiries upon the subject of the Cholera Infantum, objects to the idea of its ever being produced by the use of summer fruits, for this reason, that "the disease is but little known in country places, where children eat much more fruit than in cities." This sact I admit, but with the utmost deference to the opinion of Doctor Rush, I conceive it does not in the least invalidate the theory I have been endeavouring to enforce, for I can very readily suppose, that a child in the country, (naturally more healthy) enjoying its pure cool air, can assimilate a much greater quantity of fruit, than the weak and puny infant, confined

confined to the unwholesome effluvia of a city; --especially if we consider, that heat, by debilitating the Stomach, and thus generating an acid, favors the fecretion of bile, and that cool air corrects that secretion by a contrary effect. Here I beg leave to inforce a distinction between abfolute cold, and what may be called a cool and moderate temperature ; --- the former in common with extreme heat, also impairs the action of the alimentary canal, and favors the biliary fecretion, while the latter by its tonic effects, corrects that secretion, and as the Doctor himself observes in another page, 'Tis extremely agreeable to see the little sufferers revive, as soon as they escape from the city air, to inspire the pure air of the country;" the same thing is observed of the bilious remitting fever, which, in proportion as the cool weather advances, changes its type; -these circumstances plainly prove, that cool air, by restoring the tone of the Stomach and its functions thus counteracts the effects of the acid, and; in this manner, corrects the secretion of bile, but still are no arguments to prove, that heat is the exciting cause of the disease by a specific effect upon the biliary fecretion, -no more fo than that

that cold is the cause of scurvy, because it savors the morbid state of the system first induced by the excessive use of salted animal food\*, or in other words, the want of vegitables. In this way I conceive it may be accounted for, why children in the country escape the disease, while those in the city suffer so much from it.

Another circumstance however remains to be

mentioned, which also serves to explain this sact, and which assords another argument in savor of the presence of an acid—as in the scurvy, where an alkalescent state of the sluids prevails, nature leads to the use of the acid fruits and vegitables. Thus, on the contrary, where these last abound, hence that appetite for butter, and the richest gravies of roasted meats, which Doctor Rush observes, "they eat with an obvious relief to all their symptoms: From this circumstance, in the prevention of Cholera, the Doctor prescribes the use of salted meat, to which he, with great propriety adds, "it is, perhaps, in part, from the daily

<sup>\*</sup> See Cullen's first Lines.

<sup>+</sup> That such a state of the fluids exists in the Scurvy, and that this is a disease primarily of the fluids. See Trotter on Scurvy.

daily use of salted meat in diet that children of country people escape this disorder." Do not these circumstances evidently demonstrate, that heat alone is insufficient to produce this disease, and that its exciting cause is an acid in the stomach, whether generated from debility, or in consequence of the excessive use of summer fruits, which last I conceive is most probable, as these form so great a part of our diet in those seasons. Let us next enquire what essect this pathology of Cholera will have upon the cure of this disease.

#### METHOD OF CURE.

When we understand the cause of a disease, the method of curing it becomes simple and our vious; or to use the elegant language of Celsus, "Estimatio causæ sæpe morbum solvit." In the treatment of Cholera, as with the intermittent sever, every old woman thinks she has a specific and unfortunately in almost every author who has hitherto written upon this subject, (not the judicious Sydenham excepted) we find as many and opposite remedies as the diseases has symptoms; an unquestionable proof, that its true cause was unknown.

unknown. While the mistaken notions of Boerhaave and others prevailed, in afcribing difeafes to a lenter or morbific matter, (which are now fo justly banished from our books of medicine) we need not be furprifed at the variety of remedies and complicated prescriptions with which their works were filled; -fortunately for the happiness of mankind, those falacious theories which have so long eclipsed the science of Medicine, have almost disappeared; still, however, many diseases remain for the genius of some future Cullen to investigate; but from the industry with which Physicians are at present pursuing the subject, in America, as well as Europe, may we not (without the imputation of extravagance) remark, that the period is not far distant, when the opprobria medicorum will be terms inapplicable to any disease to which humanity is now exposed; -but to return from this digression, I flatter myself the Reader has already anticipated me in the cure of Cholera -Such is the importance of exactly afcertaining the cause of a disease before we attempt its cure. In the treatment of Cholera, two indications neceffarily present themselves.

First, To neutralize the acid prefent in the

stomach, and Secondly, to prevent the future generation of it, or to obviate its remote causes.

To answer the first indication, we cannot have recourse to a more effectual remedy than an alkaline falt, of which the falt of tartar in folution, combined with laudanum, and a few drops of the spirit of Lavender or Cinnamon water will probably be found the most agreeable; -if the difease is attended with spasmodic affections, and these are violent, perhaps the volatile sal ammoniac, will be still more effectual, as it is not only quicker in its operation, but also acts as a powerful antispasmodic, and stimulant to the nervous fystem; but as neither the vegetable nor volatile alkalimare agreeable when given alone; the addition of the Laudinum may have a very good effect, and that exclusive of its stimulent or fedative operation so much at present contested; the effect, I allude to is that of deminishing the sefecretion of bile.\*

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This fact, I believe, none will dispute.—Whoever doubts it, however may readily be satisfied, by examining the seces of a person before and after the use of opium,—In which last case they scarcely discover the least tinge of bile, appearing rather of a whitish color.—Is it not from this circumstance chiefly, that costiveness is the so common effect from the use of opium?

The Laudanum in this disease then acts not only as a paliative remedy, but also obviates the proximate cause of the disease which I before observed, consists in a too copious secretion of bile.

Having, by a proper administration of these remedies, mitigated the most violent symptoms, our next indication will be to restore the tone of the stomach, by which we may prevent the suture generation of an acid.

The means of answering this indication are to be found in the use of tonic medicines, and a stimulating nourishing diet, to which add exercise and cool air.

Of the great variety of Medicines under the class of Tonics, which may be prescribed with this intention; in Cholera I consider the vitriolic acid and Columba root as best calculated;—to some it might appear a paradox. that the Disease should be prevented by an acid, when it is an acid that produces it, but the dissiulty is easily solved, by considering the debilitating effects of the one, and the tonic effects of the other;—there is still, however, another advantage from the vitriolic acid in common with the mineral acids,

viz. that of decomposing the bile\*, and thereby rendering it inert; of its esticacy in this disease, I can speak with considence, as I have not only seen it given with success, but have also been informed of its good essects in a variety of instances.

Doctor Rush, in his Enquiry upon the Cholera Infantum observes, that "allum has been prescribed with great success by the Physicians of the Philadelphia Dispensary." The essicacy of this Medicine, however, I conceive, depends entirely upon the vitriolic acid it contains, of which, in sact, it is chiefly composed.

The Columba Root may be exhibited either in powder or infusion as circumstances may determine;——if, in the form of infusion, it will be rendered perhaps much more pleasant, by the addition of a few drops of the Elixir of Vitriol. The Columba also has its peculiar advantages in this disease, particularly that of correcting the acrimony of the bile. This effect, however as specific, Doctor Cullen in his Materia Medica, is disposed to doubt. He observes, "that in stopping vomiting it has frequently answered, but in ma-

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<sup>\*</sup> See M'Lurg on the bile.

<sup>§</sup> See Penival's Experimental Effays.

ny instances it has failed entirely, and even in cases where there seemed to be a redundancy of bile;" but as one of the most agreeable bitters, (and by no means desicient in strength) it undoubtedly may be exhibited with great advantage.

Upon the subject of diet, I will now submit my Patients to the treatment prescribed by Dr. Brown, consisting of rich soup,---roast beef,--- and even a glass of good old Madeira; the first of these articles in this disease we cannot use too freely, either as an article of nourishment, or as a muscilage, serving to cover the acrimony of the bile, for both of which purposes it is most happily calculated.

From this treatment of Cholera, which I presume will be no less agreeable to our Patients, and I will venture to add much more successful than the present practice of purging and vomiting, I flatter myself, this, as well as other bilious diseases, would become much less fatal than they hitherto have been.

Candidus imperti, si non bis utere mecum:

Hor. Epist:





Med. Hist. WZ 270 H825id 1791

