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CHOLERA :

Its Symptoms and Treatment.

BY

ALFRED ORLANDO JONES, M.D.



LONDON :

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The writer, feeling assured that many of the publications which appear in the daily journals on the treatment of Cholera are likely to mislead enquirers, felt constrained to give an outline of treatment, in the efficiency and safety of which he is perfectly confident, having proved it to be effectual where other remedies had failed, symptoms being present which indicated the rapid approach of a fatal termination.

CHOLERA : *

Its Symptoms and Treatment.

SYMPTOMS.

THE symptoms announcing the presence of the poison in the system are various. In some cases it commences with violent pain in the stomach or abdomen, and nausea, in others with almost painless diarrhœa, vomiting, and purging of fluid matter more or less discoloured with white flocculent epithelium ; the legs are drawn up with cramps, and the abdominal muscles drawn into knots ; the vital power is rapidly lowered, and faintness or collapse rapidly supervenes.

* Cholera. from *χάλας*, the bowels, and *ῥέω*, to flow. It is also spoken of as *Algide Cholera* ; the last term being derived from *algeo*, to be cold, to indicate the loss of heat, which is one of the symptoms of this fatal disease. The terms *malignant* and *Asiatic* are also applied to it.

The attack is commonly as sudden as severe.

It differs from common Summer Cholera in the remarkable absence of bile, the presence of rice-water evacuations, the early appearance of collapse, and, under ordinary treatment, the great mortality, a striking alteration in the appearance of the patient, a lividity of the countenance, the features pinched, the pulse small and feeble, the surface cold and often blue, the breath cold, the eyes sunken and cheeks fallen, the voice husky and faint—called the *vox choleraica*—the cessation of the passage of the urine, accompanied with great thirst.

Some things might lead us to suppose that there is a want of electricity in the system—for instance, its occurring so frequently in low, damp situations, damp being a powerful conductor of electricity from the body, and the fact that rubbing the limbs tends to relieve some of the symptoms of collapse, would lead to the same conclusion, it being well known that friction evolves electricity; also dry, hot applications to the extremities afford relief.

Cold drinks tend to throw the blood to the surface, and bring about the desired reac-

tion also, though in another way. It is important to notice Mr. Simon's report, that "the population drinking dirty water appears to have suffered three and a-half times as much mortality as the population drinking other water."

It is a remarkable fact that the symptoms of poisoning by opium, in *certain proportions*, resemble in a striking degree those of Cholera; for instance, vomiting and diarrhœa, spasms, collapse, pale countenance, livid hands and lips, constant retching, and towards fatal termination small, frequent, and irregular pulse,* and this medicine in small doses, especially in the form of trituration, is strikingly useful.

TREATMENT.

It may appear to some useless to speak of remedies so generally known; but from what is published in large and small works, the specific value of opium in relation to this disease seems to me to have been lost sight of, and on the other hand, that too much has been said in favour of camphor, which is

* See Dr. Guy's "Forensic Medicine."

indeed an invaluable medicine, although the symptoms it produces on the system in poisonous doses do not nearly so strikingly correspond with those of cholera; nevertheless, they each have their use; the opium relieves the pain and diarrhœa, and the camphor relieves the symptoms of collapse viz., the coldness, faintness, &c. Much mischief may occur from depending implicitly on either the one or the other; also other symptoms may arise which may necessitate the exhibition of other medicines, such as *arsenicum*, *cuprum*, *veratrum*, *mercurius corrosivus*, &c.

The treatment that I should recommend until the patient is able to send for a medical adviser, is as follows:—

Tincture of camphor, five drops; trituration of opium, five to ten grains, given alternately in half a wineglass of water every ten, fifteen, or thirty minutes, according to the severity of the symptoms. In the first stages the strongest tr. camphor given every ten minutes, and small doses of opium every fifteen minutes, are the best remedies; but no time should be lost in sending for a medical adviser.

the meantime. If there is thirst, drink cold rice water and arrowroot, or beef-tea. Let the patient maintain a recumbent posture; cover the body with blankets, and put a hot bottle to the feet, and throw tincture of camphor on the bed, and Condry's disinfecting fluid, or carbolic acid on the floor; let all nuisances about the dwelling be removed. If this cannot be done, let the patient, as soon as convalescent, be removed to a healthy and high situation, to avoid a second attack and expedite recovery of strength.

PREPARATION OF MEDICINES.

The preparation of the opium is as follows: Triturate, or rub up one grain of opium with forty grains of white sugar or carbonate of lime. The latter is preferable.*

The tincture of camphor to be made with equal parts of camphor and spirits of wine; the latter must be sixty over-proof.

* The preparation of opium that the writer has used is slightly different, but this one he thinks the most simple and most likely to be available for general use.

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