

ease in England is an epidemic which differs in some remarkable features from any that we have yet seen; but I think, after reading Sydenham, that such a one has prevailed before. In the course of my investigations I have not discovered one shadow of proof that the disease has been imported into this metropolis from any place in Europe or India; nor a probability that since its introduction into London, its dissemination has been from one individual to another. When I say that it is a new disease, I do not mean new within two or three weeks: I certainly saw precisely similar cases three or four months ago. The case of the journeyman tailor, as long back as that, presented every feature of the worst case; as also did Webb, the soldier in the Guards; though that case was denied from authority to be cholera, because it did not prove contagious. As I have said before, we need not expect that all the symptoms detailed will be present in each patient. The case, an excellent one, which is now dying at the cholera hospital, under Mr. Evans, is in point. This woman passed urine so abundantly while I was present, as to flood the floor beneath her; though the Board of Health says, that the absence of urine, or urinary discharge, is the pathognomic symptom of the cholera. If there be no urine, the Board says directly,—‘Ah! that is the cholera.’ One word as to the attendance on the cases. I must say that, wherever I have been, the medical men have been most indefatigable, using almost superhuman exertions in their endeavours, and that without any pay, or prospect of it. With regard to the closing of the hospitals against cholera or supposed cholera patients, the circumstance is most reprehensible. The first patients ought instantly to have been admitted at the public institutions already open, whereas they were turned from the doors like pestiferous vagabonds. For my own part, I would not have hesitated a moment to sleep in a bed with any one of them.” (*Hear, hear.*)

Mr. PROCTOR wished to know if Dr. Sigmond ever, in any malignant disease, knew patients die in the same space of time as now.

Mr. KING hoped the meeting would come to a unanimous decision on the subject to-night. Terms might have misled them, but all agreed that there was some peculiar disease raging in London. It had not, however, proved more destructive to life than other diseases would have been.* In Sunderland and Newcastle the average

* This statement certainly is incorrect. The average number of deaths in Gateshead is, or rather was, nearly 18 monthly, while in that parish the deaths from cholera alone, in 19 days, were $7\frac{1}{3}$ times that amount.—*Rep.*

mortality was not increased, and thus the essential characteristic of a pestilential disease was absent. It had indeed no-where in England proved so fatal as to deserve the name of a pestilential disease. It was not pestilential in Russia. Neither was it a malignant disease, or it ought to have been communicated from person to person, which there was no proof in this country that it had been. The name of “cholera,” in fact, ought to be abolished. It was merely a disease which a “depressing influence” had caused, the result being a violent irritation of the intestinal canal, caused by improper diet. (Further observations were prevented by the lateness of the hour, and Mr. King therefore concluded by announcing that he had prepared a petition to the Legislature, praying for an immediate parliamentary inquiry into the disease, which was subsequently signed by several persons.)

So large an attendance perhaps hardly ever before took place at the Society as on this evening. A great many cases were referred to, but the particulars were too desultory to be given with advantage, and our report therefore is confined entirely to the arguments and general conclusions.

DR. WILSON PHILIP AND THE WESTMINSTER MEDICAL SOCIETY.

Copy of a Letter from the Secretary of the Westminster Medical Society to Dr. Wilson Philip.

“SIR,—At a meeting of the Westminster Medical Society, held January 28, 1832, the following resolution was agreed to in consequence of an advertisement having appeared in *The Times*, &c. &c., stating that observations on the nature of malignant cholera, &c., were drawn up by Dr. W. Philip, at the request of the Westminster Medical Society.

“*Resolution.*—That the Secretary be requested to write to Dr. W. Philip, to state to him, that a misunderstanding having arisen as to his being requested to draw up a paper on cholera for the Society, an advertisement to that effect appearing in the public newspapers, he has to inform him that it was understood that permission was given him only to submit the same to the Society.

“EDWARD STODHART, Secretary.
“28, Jermyn Street, St. James’s,
“January 30, 1832.”

To this Dr. W. Philip made the following reply:—

“SIR,—I regret extremely that any misunderstanding on the subject of your letter should have arisen, and am wholly at a loss

to comprehend how this has taken place; because one of the presidents of the Society stated to me that he was desired, at a meeting of the Council of the Westminster Medical Society, to request me to state to the Society my opinion respecting the nature of malignant cholera; in consequence of which request alone, I drew up the observations presented to the Society. I viewed this request in no other light than as one which would have been made to any other person who had happened to have been engaged in the same course of experiments. On the same principle I have received a similar request from the professor of anatomy of Edinburgh, Dr. Monro. Being unacquainted with the laws of the Society, I was not sure how far I was entitled to publish the observations in question without asking permission of the Society, and therefore inquired of the president whether it was necessary to request this permission. He said it was not. I therefore abstained from troubling the Society with a request which I supposed, from the nature of the institution, to be unnecessary; and in publishing my paper, I naturally referred to the circumstances from which it originated, and without which I had no intention of publishing anything on the subject.

"The last part of your letter I am at a loss to understand:—'He has to inform him that it was understood that permission was given him only to submit the same to the Society.' Now I can assure you, Sir, that I never presumed to offer any of my opinions on the subject to the Westminster Medical Society, and therefore I do not see on what principle a permission to present them to the Society could have been voted. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"A. P. W. PHILIP.

"Cavendish Square, Jan. 31, 1832."

THE LANCET.

London, Saturday, February 25, 1832.

THE CHOLERA IN LONDON.

ANOTHER week has passed, and the dispute, the bitter and vehement dispute, still wages on the existence or non-existence of the malignant cholera in London. Never, we believe, in the whole chronology of epidemics, were erroneous opinions more violently, more dogmatically, pressed upon the public than during the week just closing as

we write—never was a portion of that public more successfully, more dangerously, deluded, and never, in our sincere belief, was there a more scandalous blot flung upon the dignity of British medical science.

The week, we repeat, has passed, and added the fullest confirmation to the conclusions promulgated in the last Number of this Journal. As it happened in the appalling plague of sixty-five, as it happened in the yellow fever of Gibraltar, and in full accordance with the slow and gradual progress of the cholera in the majority of the places it has hitherto ravaged, so here in London we have had, in the course of 17 days, 45 cases, and of that number the immense proportion of 28 deaths! We shall show, in this article, before we lay aside the pen, how strongly, yet strangely—we trust not ominously—these numbers, this progress, this degree of mortality, and the very period of the year in which it occurs,—coincide with the same features in the last horrid pestilence which utterly desolated this capital.

Yet despite the winter's experience, the events of Gateshead and Musselburgh, the sad history in short of every quarter of the world which the cholera has visited, we still hear the outcry that cholera is a "humbug," and its pretended existence in London a delusion *got up* for the destruction of our commercial relations. Such is the cry of the public press and the echo of the populace, and such we lament is the loud and boisterous assertion of some members of the medical profession, whose names were hitherto of respectable repute—and of others whom the occasion alone has called from their suitable obscurity.

Before we attempt to scrutinise the proceedings of these parties, the degree of weight to which their opinions are entitled, and the nature of the *arguments*—if any—which they advance, we deem it right to give our readers a clear and intelligible view of the mode in which alone the question can