

**AN ESSAY ON YELLOW FEVER,
COMPRISING THE HISTORY OF THAT
DISEASE, AS IT APPEARED IN THE
ISLAND OF ANTIGUA, IN 1835, 1839 AND
1842, WITH AN APPENDIX CONTINUING
THE HISTORY TO 1853**

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An essay on yellow fever, comprising the history of that disease, as it appeared in the island of Antigua, in 1835, 1839 and 1842, with an appendix continuing the history to 1853 by Thomas Nicholson

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THOMAS NICHOLSON

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OR
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COMPRISING

THE HISTORY OF THAT DISEASE,
AS IT APPEARED IN THE ISLAND OF ANTIGUA IN
THE YEARS 1835, 1839, AND 1842,

WITH

AN APPENDIX CONTINUING THE HISTORY TO 1853.

BY

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PREFACE.

THE first edition of the following Essay consisted only of a few copies, which were printed for private distribution. These have been long out of print, and the Author, in compliance with the advice of friends, has been induced to reprint the Essay. Some of the opinions which were at first modestly suggested, out of deference to authority, have been established by subsequent experience. Blood-letting, as an abortive treatment in the early stage of the ardent type of the disease, is not in such favour as it was in the early part of the present century.

The solution of such disputed questions can only be settled by a faithful record of cases.

Dr. Parkes has wisely said, "the most valuable addition any one could at present make, to our knowledge of tropical fevers, would be a simple

record of all the cases in an epidemic. These cases should be observed with the keen tact of a Chomel, and recorded with the fidelity of a Louis. We want no explanation or word of comment added to them; we want merely the cases."—*Brit. and For. Med.-Chir. Review*, October, 1850.

It was in the spirit of these remarks, that the Author was first induced to draw up a history of the epidemics which had come under his own notice, and although he is conscious now that his powers of observation were not then trained for the task, and that there are many omissions which he would gladly have an opportunity of supplying, yet he hopes the observations recorded may not be without value.

During his absence from Antigua, in 1859, another outbreak of yellow fever occurred, and, on this occasion his son, Dr. A. Nicholson, had an opportunity of verifying the fact of the presence of albumen in the urine in most cases.

14, BLANDFORD SQUARE, N.W.

AN ESSAY.

THE subject of the following Essay is that peculiar form of fever which, under the different names of Yellow Fever, Vomito Negro, Vomito Prieto, and Bulam Fever, has been known to the English and Spanish colonists on both sides of the Atlantic for nearly a century; occurring at distant and uncertain intervals, and producing great mortality, especially amongst Europeans who have resided but a short time in these parts. It has been described by nosologists under the terms of Typhus Icterodes, *Cullen*; Synochus Icterodes, *Young*; Epanetus Malignus Flavus, *Good*; and more recently by Dr. Copland, from its pathological characters, Hæmagastric Pestilence. The term *Hæmalytic Epidemic* of the Atlantic shores would, in my opinion, express more accurately the peculiar features of the disease; but I am unwilling to make any addi-

tions to its nomenclature, which, after all, is of little importance.

I had been thirteen years in Antigua before I had an opportunity of witnessing a single case of this disease, although severe and fatal cases of bilious remittent were met with in malarious localities every year, and in some seasons prevailed as an epidemic over the whole island—as, for instance, in the year 1823, a short account of which, by my friend Dr. Musgrave, will be found in the twenty-eighth volume of the “Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal” for 1827. Yet, although the mortality from this epidemic was very great, in no instance did black vomit occur; and, from the information I could collect on the subject, I have every reason to believe that *vomito prieto* was not known amongst civilians in that colony from 1816 till 1835. I exclude, of course, the cases of the *Pyramus*, and two other men-of-war, which arrived at English Harbour with yellow fever in 1821 and 1822.

Being taught in my early years, by the writings of Bancroft, Fergusson, and others, and by the oral instructions of the medical