

**OBSERVATIONS ON THE  
PATHOLOGY AND TREATMENT  
OF CHOLERA: THE RESULT OF  
FORTY YEARS' EXPERIENCE**

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Observations on the Pathology and Treatment of Cholera: The Result of Forty Years' Experience  
by John Murray

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**JOHN MURRAY**

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*THE RESULT OF FORTY YEARS' EXPERIENCE*

BY

JOHN MURRAY, M.D.

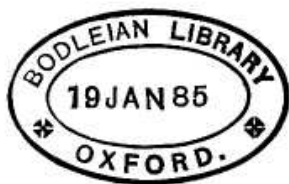
INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF HOSPITALS, LATE OF BENGAL

*SECOND EDITION*

LONDON  
SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE  
1884

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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THESE observations were published in 1874, when an approach of Cholera was imminent. As the disease did not reach England, they were not at that time of much benefit to the public. I trust they may be equally superfluous now; but the presence of the disease in France, and the excessive panic which reigns over the Continent, lead me to suppose that the practical information gained by my long experience may be useful to some, should the disease spread to this country. I have had no reason to modify the opinions here expressed in reference to the treatment of the different stages of the disease, and the importance of early treatment.

The spread of Cholera in Egypt in 1882, and now in France, shows the total inefficiency of the present quarantine regulations in checking the diffusion of the disease in commercial countries; whilst the individual misery and commercial loss they occasion call for some modification of them. Quarantine was instituted in former times under very different social circumstances as a protection from plague and small-pox, diseases which are chiefly communicable by personal contact.

Precautionary measures for protection from the fatal scourge of Cholera should be framed with a due consideration of the changes in the modes of intercourse between different countries, and founded on a more complete knowledge of the channels through which it may be commu-

#### PREFACE.

municated. Simple personal contact has been very rarely observed to spread the disease.

In reference to antidotes for the Cholera germ or microbe, and experiments on their microscopic cultivation or their destruction, the action of such antidotes on the living body must be taken into account; as most of the poisons that kill the lower vitalities would also destroy the life of the person suffering from the disease.

I do not consider the carminative pill, which has proved so beneficial in the earlier stages of Cholera, an antidote to the poison; but a stimulant to the depressed sympathetic system, encouraging the functions of the stomach in the secretion of the gastric juice, which has the acknowledged power of destroying ordinary putrefactive, or fermentative germs. This would account for this medicine being powerless in the advanced stage of collapse: when the sympathetic nerve is *paralysed*, and the stomach is insensible to all stimulants; and these are injurious, if administered in large quantities, should reaction supervene. In the prescription for these pills, which I have lately given to the daily press, the proportions of assafetida and pepper are reversed. A combination of red pepper or cayenne with the black is much commended by some; and I think it probable that the increased quantity of the stimulant ingredient may be an improvement in this cold climate.

JOHN MURRAY.

17 WESTBOURNE SQUARE,  
26th July, 1884.



THE  
PATHOLOGY AND TREATMENT  
OF  
CHOLERA.

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THE knowledge that has of late years been ac-  
quired of the course of the symptoms, has materi-  
ally aided in the rational treatment of cholera;  
though in this alarming disease it is probable  
that empirical remedies will still continue to be  
extensively employed when ordinary medicines  
appear to have lost all power. There are few  
diseases more rapid in their fatal course than  
cholera, or less influenced by medicine in the  
advanced stage of collapse; but it is more amen-  
able to treatment in the stages of malaise and  
diarrhœa than most other diseases that are more  
violent in their earlier course. One of the most  
characteristic peculiarities of this disease is the  
suddenness of the change to antagonistic or

The  
history.

reverse symptoms, indicating opposite remedies or modes of treatment; the general depression of malaise being followed by the increased action of diarrhœa, which is succeeded by the prostration of collapse, and subsequent excitement of reaction. In ague there are analogous sudden changes; we know that the hot will follow the cold fit, and that this will be succeeded by the sweating stage, and regulate the treatment accordingly. So in cholera, the treatment during the individual stages should be modified by the symptoms which are to be anticipated in subsequent stages. Those who do not recognise the presence of the disease till collapse has supervened, have some reason for saying that medicines are useless, if they mean powerless for a time; when the pulse is imperceptible, and the body merely a breathing corpse. But should reaction take place, at which nature makes an effort in nine out of ten cases, and sometimes succeeds, the remedies employed resume their ordinary action, and those indicated in collapse are not what are required in the subsequent stage of the disease. On the contrary, in the stage of collapse the remedies are usually stimulant or narcotic, while the danger now is from fever, or from head symptoms, the aggravated forms of which may

in many instances be attributed to the previous free exhibition of spirits, chloroform, or opium.

As the disease is caused by the presence of The cause. the cholera poison in the system, health cannot be restored till this is removed or destroyed. The first stage, which I have called *malaise*, is frequently unnoticed by the patient; it is rarely seen in hospital practice, and it is ignored by those who consider collapse an essential part of the disease; but it has been recognised by some of the most intelligent observers, from the time of the outbreak in India in 1817. It was overlooked when the disease appeared in Europe in 1830, and for many years after not only this but even diarrhœa was disputed as a stage of the disease. It was not till 1865, after the meeting of the Constantinople Congress, that diarrhœa was generally allowed to be a stage of cholera, and capable of communicating it in its most intense form.

In 1868 it was given as the general opinion The stages. of the profession in India that *malaise* indicated Malaise. the first action of the poison on the system. In all severe epidemics malaise from this cause is very prevalent, but it disappears in a large proportion of cases, without any active symptoms, under the influence of the natural secretions by