

**A THEORETICAL INQUIRY
INTO THE PHYSICAL CAUSE
OF EPIDEMIC DISEASES.
ACCOMPANIED WITH TABLES**

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A Theoretical Inquiry into the Physical Cause of Epidemic Diseases. Accompanied with Tables
by Alexander Hamilton Howe

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ALEXANDER HAMILTON HOWE

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ON
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BY
ALEXANDER HAMILTON HOWE, M.D.,
HONOURABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S SERVICE.

"Miramur si Democriti pecus edit Agellus
Cultaque, dum peregrè est animus eius corpore velox:
Cum tu, inter scabiem tantam et contagia luseri,
Nil parvum sapias, et adhuc sublimis cures:
Que mare emporcant cause; quid temperet annuum;
Stelle sponte snt, Jussuque vagentur et arrent:
Quid premat obscuram luna, quid proferat orbem;
Quid velti et possit rerum concordia discors."
HORACE, *Epist. I.*, xii. 12.

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B



TO

JAMES YOUNG SIMPSON, Esq. M.D., &c. &c.,

PROFESSOR OF MEDICINE AND MIDWIFERY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,

FROM WHOM I RECEIVED MY EARLIEST INSTRUCTIONS

IN GENERAL PATHOLOGY,

AS WELL AS MANY SUBSEQUENT FAVOURS,

AND WHO, BY THE DISCOVERY AND APPLICATION OF

CHLOROFORM TO MEDICAL, SURGICAL, AND OBSTETRICAL PURPOSES,

HAS DONE MORE THAN ANY OTHER SINGLE INDIVIDUAL TO

ASSUAGE THE FANGS OF SUFFERING HUMANITY,

This Book is dedicated,

WITH SENTIMENTS OF GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE

AND PROFOUND ADMIRATION,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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P R E F A C E .

I HAVE to entreat the kind indulgence of the reader for the imperfect state of the following treatise. Although I have been engaged upon it for many years, yet it has latterly been brought to a somewhat hurried conclusion.

My reason for this has been that it might meet the public wish while attention is being directed to the epidemic pestilence which is at present prevailing on the shores of the Mediterranean. I had no expectation that epidemic pestilence would again have visited the world before the year 1866 or 1867, which would have afforded me ample time to have arranged and revised my materials.

I have likewise to entreat the forbearance of the reader in regard to the extreme irregularity of the general chronological arrangement.

Should the laws which I have endeavoured to develop, be confirmed by the scientific world, it will be an exceedingly easy matter to remedy all these deficiencies.

I may mention that the irregularity in the chronological arrangement proceeds entirely from my having noted down the facts just as I met with them in reading; and it has this great advantage, that the facts have been, in almost all instances, derived from original research, and that I have not servilely copied the authorities upon the subject.

At the same time, I have, I hope, made myself thoroughly master of the works of previous inquirers. I need only refer to the very excellent works of Short, *On Air*; Noah Webster, *On Epidemic Diseases*; Bascome's *History of Epidemic Pestilences*; Ozanam, *Histoire Médicale, générale et particulière, des maladies épidémiques, contagieuses et épizootiques*; Dr. Friedrich Schnurrer, *Chronik der Seuchen*; Dr. Joseph Adams, *An Inquiry into the Laws of Epidemics*; Dr. Mead's *Discourse on the Plague*; and the Treatises on Epidemic Diseases, by Hippocrates and Sydenham.

I have likewise great pleasure in referring the reader to Sir William Wilde (*Census of Ireland*), who has quite exhausted the historical part of the subject, more particularly since the Christian era.

I have likewise to express my thanks to Professor Simpson, of Edinburgh, for many hints and suggestions—always most kindly afforded,—as well as for directing my attention to many very valuable authorities; and, in addition to all this, for the assistance I have derived from his labours on the same subject as that on which I have been engaged.

The same God that sends diseases, provides us also with remedies; it is considered, therefore, that investigations into epidemic diseases is quite a legitimate subject of inquiry.

I may just remark, that it is the mean longitude of the moon's ascending node that is always referred to, and that I have employed it as taken from the Tables of Tobias Mayer, by Mason, of 1787; the Tables in Fergusson's *Astronomy; Reduction of the Greenwich Lunar Observations*, by Professor Airy; Tables in the new edition of the