

**REPORT OF THE ROYAL
ACADEMY OF MEDICINE, TO
THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR,
UPON THE CHOLERA-MORBUS**

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Report of the Royal Academy of Medicine, to the Minister of the Interior, upon the cholera-morbus by Various

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VARIOUS

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REPORT
OF THE
ROYAL ACADEMY OF MEDICINE,
TO THE
MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR,
UPON THE
CHOLERA-MORBUS.

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FRENCH GOVERNMENT.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY
JOHN W. STERLING, M. D.
MEMBER OF THE COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, LONDON, & FELLOW OF
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TO
THOMAS COCK, M.D.
VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS
OF THE STATE OF NEW-YORK,
ONE OF THE PHYSICIANS OF THE NEW-YORK
HOSPITAL, &c.
THIS TRANSLATION IS INSCRIBED
BY HIS VERY MUCH OBLIGED AND OBEIENT SERVANT,
JOHN W. STERLING.

M375246



TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE following translation has been undertaken with the view of introducing into general circulation the opinions entertained by some of the most enlightened physicians of France, and of the numerous authors whose works they have carefully investigated, relatively to the history, nature and most approved treatment of the Spasmodic Cholera.

The great ravages already committed by this disease, and the rapidity with which it has extended to different and numerous kingdoms of the old world, have excited alarm and apprehension in the breast of almost every individual of this country. Indeed, reigning as an epidemic, we have great reason to apprehend its awful visitation, and in order that it may not come upon us unawares, it is incumbent, on physicians especially, to apply to every source whence they may ascertain the best means of preventing its invasion, restricting its limits, and subduing its deadly effects in those who may become the subjects of it.

Previous to the reception of the Report of the French Academy in our city, the excellent Discourse by Prof. J. M. Smith, on the Epidemic Cholera, had been for

some time before the public. In collating this discourse with the report of the Academy, we were struck with the similarity of their conclusions; yet it could be no longer a matter of surprise when it was fully ascertained that the method adopted by both parties, in order to arrive at these conclusions, had been exactly similar, viz., the deep and accurate investigation of every important accessible document relating to the subject of Cholera, allowing their deductions to flow, as it were, naturally, from the various sources whence they had originated.

Yet, notwithstanding their general resemblance, there are one or more points on which a difference of opinion exists: we are disposed to believe, however, that these discrepancies are more apparent than real, and that there would be no great difficulty in reconciling them. We allude to the contagious character of the Cholera; the authors of the subjoined Report, as will be seen on examining it, being of opinion that this disease has, under certain conditions, been communicated by personal contact.

That persons in constant and untiring attendance on the couch of an individual labouring under the Cholera, are more liable to be attacked in their turn than those who keep aloof from the presence of the disease, we can readily conceive, and the reason seems obvious: the sick person is located in an impure atmosphere, probably in the very centre of the epidemic influence, he is surrounded by friends, all

eager to attend to his every want, who render the atmosphere still more impure by the exhalations which proceed from their lungs and bodies, probably equally prejudicial to health with the emanations arising from the diseased body: the minds of these friends are greatly distressed, both in consequence of beholding the agonies of the sufferer and anticipating the desolation which will attend on his taking off; the fatigue also, the want of sufficient and regular alimentation; all these circumstances constitute some of the most powerful predisposing causes of the disease. Can we wonder then that persons exposed to the influence of these causes should be more susceptible of an attack than those who are not subject to their influence? And can we be surprized that persons, unacquainted with the laws which govern epidemics, seeing attacks frequently and rapidly treading upon such exposures, should derive them from direct contagion? Is it not more natural to attribute the causes of violent effects to visible and palpable objects rather than derive them from occult invisible agents which have never been demonstrated to exist otherwise than from analogy? It ought not then to be a matter of surprise, to medical men, even if every instance of invasion of this disease were attributed, by those who cannot comprehend epidemial influence, to individual contagion.

We were almost on the point of uttering the wish that the disease were contagious, rather preferring its invasion in that way than in an epidemic