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NEW SERIES.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLES, NEWS, AND LETTERS, have fallen into arrears from last week's number having been entirely devoted to the report of the anniversary meeting. Next week we hope to be able to publish the greater part of the matter which is now in type.

THE NEWSPAPER PRESS AND THE TREATMENT OF CHOLERA.

Among the many evils which are incidental to the presence of Cholera—and which, although somewhat cast into shade by the great fact of its prevalence and fatality, are nevertheless of sufficient importance to attract attention, and to demand removal—there is one of far greater magnitude than the rest. We allude to the mass of letters on the causes, nature, and treatment of the disease, which lately, as on former occasions, have appeared in the columns of our non-medical contemporaries. These letters have undoubtedly exerted a most pernicious influence upon the community, spreading an inordinate degree of terror, and greatly increasing the fatality of the epidemic by causing the early administration of inefficient or hurtful medicines. The *Times* newspaper has been the great channel through which the public mind has been poisoned on all matters connected with cholera; and, as we know that efforts have been vainly made, in more than one quarter, to obtain an abatement of the nuisance, we trust that our readers will lend their aid, each in the sphere of his own personal influence, to combat, as far as may be possible, the most injurious of the doctrines that have thus been promulgated.

In order to show how this object might be accomplished, let us take the letter of Dr. GEORGE JOHNSON, which appeared in the *Times* of the 9th instant. We select it for several reasons—partly, because it was ushered in by an editorial flourish of trumpets, and by an attack upon the ordinary methods of practice in cholera—partly, because Dr. Johnson's position gives importance to his errors, whether in a scientific or in an ethical point of view—partly, because he has repeated and maintained its most gross absurdities—and partly, because the too hasty application of his “great discovery” has converted a solemn farce into a painful tragedy.

From the Times of 9th September.

“TREATMENT OF CHOLERA BY CASTOR-OIL.

[“The following letter, on the new treatment of cholera by castor-oil in King's College Hospital, has been addressed by

Dr. George Johnson to the editor of the *Medical Times and Gazette*. We are glad to observe by the number of letters which we receive on this at present all-engrossing subject, that this rational system of treatment is attracting the attention which it deserves; but we are at the same time sorry to see the jealousy with which the profession at large seem to regard the threatened downfall of the old obstructive system of astringents, opiates, and stimulants. The profession, it appears to us, has no reason to be proud of a mode of treatment which confessedly loses one half of those whom it professes to cure; and, instead of indulging in vituperation against the treatment now proposed, it would do better to put castor-oil to the proof by applying it, not with a determination that it shall fail, but carefully and scientifically to a large number of those cases which the medical men now dismiss from the world by their blind adherence to chalk, opium, and brandy.—Editor of the *Times*.]

“SIR,—I shall feel obliged if you will permit me to make your journal the means of publishing the results of our recent experience at King's College Hospital, in the treatment of cholera by castor-oil. I have no desire to rush hastily into print, or to deal in therapeutical novelties; my own inclination would lead me to collect facts now, and to defer the publication of results to a time of more leisure and less anxiety; but I cannot reconcile myself to the adoption of this cautious mode of procedure, when I consider that cholera is daily sweeping off hundreds of victims, and therefore that any method of treatment which promises a more than ordinary amount of success ought as speedily as possible to be made known.

“All the cases of cholera which have come under my care in the hospital have been treated by castor-oil, administered in a mode which I shall presently explain. We have called no case ‘cholera’ which has not presented well-marked symptoms of collapse. Fifteen of these cases, most of them in the very extremity of collapse, have been under treatment, and the result has been twelve recoveries and three deaths. One of the fatal cases was a child, six years of age, who died half an hour after admission, in consequence, as I believe, of a large dose of brandy which had been previously administered by his mother. In a second fatal case, the oil had been given for some hours, and the patient was rallying, when the oil was discontinued in consequence of the intestinal discharges appearing to be tinged with blood. I was absent when this case occurred; and, although I impute no blame, yet I think that with the discontinuance of the oil, the patient's chance of recovery was taken away. In the third fatal case, a night nurse disregarded her instructions; and we have good reason for the belief that during several hours the patient had very little, if any, of the medicine. Admitting, however, that the fatal result in these three cases was inevitable, the proportion of recoveries yet remains four-fifths of the whole. The number of cases is small; but my hopes from this plan of treatment do not rest merely upon my own individual experience. I have carefully studied the results of the various modes of treating cholera which have been advocated and practised by different members of our profession, and I have arrived at the conclusion that those methods of treatment which have been attended with the largest amount of success have been essentially eliminative in their tendency. I allude especially to the saline treatment of Dr. Stevens; the treatment by small and repeated doses of