

latter kind are peculiarly apt to be hurtful, it must not therefore be supposed that the customary healthful habits need be changed. For instance, there is no reason to suppose that fruits and vegetables, of such kinds and in such states as would be wholesome in ordinary seasons, are unwholesome when Cholera is present; nor (subject to what will directly be said about premonitory diarrhœa) is there any reason to believe that persons in good health ought in Cholera times, with a notion of fortifying themselves against the disease, to take drugs or drams which they would not take in ordinary times. Any thing to be wisely done in this direction ought to be done under the advice of skilled medical practitioners, and except with such advice, people ought to be most chary both of drugging themselves, and of taking such pretended preservatives as are extensively offered for sale.

Premonitory Diarrhœa.

9. In places where Cholera is present or threatening, one particular bodily ailment requires exceptional vigilance—The ailment is Diarrhœa. For the most part in this country Cholera begins somewhat gradually; so that, for some hours, or even days before the symptoms become alarming, a so-called "premonitory diarrhœa" may be observed.—Where Cholera is tending to be epidemic, there always exists, side by side with it in the district, a large amount of epidemic Diarrhœa, representing in part the earlier stages, in other part the slighter degrees of the same insidious and infectious malady. This Diarrhœa (painless and apparently trivial though it be) may in any case suddenly convert itself into Cholera; and, apart from the very serious significance of the symptom as regards the patient himself, it must be remembered that every such diarrhœal patient may be a well-spring of infection to others. It also seems probable that accidental Diarrhœa, originally independent of the epidemic influence, is, of all known personal conditions, the one on which the Cholera infection can most easily fix itself. And thus on all accounts it is of the most essential importance that no looseness of bowels should be neglected in places where Cholera exists. A very important part of their Lordships' Medical Relief Regulations enjoins the making of local arrangements by which this object shall be secured for all the poorer inhabitants of infected districts; and other classes of the population are warned to be also vigilant for themselves. In any infected district, every looseness of bowels, or sickness of stomach, ought, as quickly as possible, to be brought under skilled medical treatment: and if the symptoms begin at all sharply, or if they (however mild) do not very promptly yield to treatment, the patient ought invariably to remain in bed.

Disinfection.

10. Too much importance cannot be attached to the duty of thoroughly disinfecting, without delay, with chloride of lime or otherwise, all discharges from the stomach and bowels of persons under the epidemic influence, as well as all bedding, clothing, towels, and the like, which such discharges may have imbued. And measures, as advised in section 4, for keeping all privies and like places in a thoroughly clean and uninfected state, become more and more important in proportion as the discharges in question are likely to have access to the places. [For detailed advice on Disinfection, see the Office Memorandum on that subject.]

Organization for Medical Relief in Infected Districts.

11. With reference to the medical care of the sick, and to all such other kinds of medical action and organization as the circumstances of infected districts may require, the Lords of the Council have every hope and belief, that the appointed Medical Relief Authorities of the country will be duly conscious of the very grave responsibility which is thrown upon them by the Diseases Prevention Act and the

creased labour of digestion; secondly, in taking food, solid or fluid, which is midway in some process of chemical transition—half-fermented beer and wine, water containing organic impurities, meat and game and venison no longer fresh and not completely cooked, fish and shellfish in any state but the most perfect freshness, fruit or vegetables long gathered or badly kept, and the like; thirdly, in the excessive or unseasonable use of refrigerant drinks or ice; fourthly, in partaking largely of those articles of diet which habitually, or by reason of imperfect cooking, pass unchanged through the intestinal canal; and fifthly, in the indiscreet use of purgative medicines, or in taking any article of diet which is likely to produce the same effect.

Regulations thereunder issued, and will be anxious to acquit themselves of the responsibility in a manner commensurate with its importance. But if unhappily any particular district should suffer a sudden and extensive epidemic, it may be that the Authority, though with every disposition to discharge its duty, will have difficulty in providing for all requirements of the case, and will be in danger of finding itself over-tasked. It is to be hoped that in any such crisis, if anywhere it should arise, voluntary local assistance will not be wanting to the Authority. Among the duties which would have to be discharged, some do not require skilled officers, but may with equal propriety be devolved on any discreet and intelligent persons; and it might be of great local service that such persons, in Committees or otherwise, should be ready to co-operate with the Authority. Especially the Authority would then be enabled to extend, beyond limits which would else be impossible, that system of HOUSE-TO-HOUSE VISITATION which in various ways may be the most important of local agencies for stopping the progress of an epidemic: not only as providing for the prompt medical treatment of the sick, but equally as spreading information and exercising influence against conditions which tend to multiply the disease. Apart from action which may be wanted to supplement any inaction of the Nuisance Authority, the room for voluntary work in aid of the Medical Relief Authority may, in the supposed circumstances, be very great:—the local arrangements for medical relief have to be told and explained; the proper use of disinfectants has to be taught and enforced; many other sorts of useful information have to be given; unreasonable alarm has to be quieted; the less educated and the destitute parts of the population have to be led and assisted to do what is needful for their safety. The larger the staff of competent visitors who can be employed in any infected district, the easier will be this task. And any educated person who would wish to take part in it, can easily qualify himself to render, in case of need, a really important service to his neighbourhood.

By direction of the Lords of the Council.

(Signed)

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PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE.

MEMORANDUM ON DISINFECTION.

N. B.—It is to cleanliness, ventilation and drainage, and the use of perfectly pure drinking water, that populations ought mainly to look for safety against nuisance and infection. Artificial disinfectants cannot properly supply the place of those essentials; for, except in a small and peculiar class of cases, they are of temporary or imperfect usefulness.—That no house-refuse—not only no excremental matter, but also no other kind of dirt or refuse, should remain on or about inhabited premises, is a first rule against infection. That the air within the house should never in any part of the house be stagnant, but should always be in course of renewal from without by uninterrupted and abundant supplies of fresh air, is a condition of equal importance. And that all water meant to be used for drinking or cooking, should be drawn from sources which cannot have been polluted by any kind of refuse-matter, is a third most important rule for the avoidance of infection.

If dwelling-places have within them any odour of drainage, particular examination should be made (1) whether the filth which house-drains are meant to carry away is retained in or near the premises in ill-made drains, or sewers, or cesspools, or perhaps is leaking from house-drains within the house; and (2) whether, inside the house, the inlets of drains and sinks are properly trapped; and (3) whether the drains and sewers are sufficiently ventilated outside the house. All water-closets within houses should have free openings for ventilation from and into the outer air. Of a cesspool, the only true disinfection is to abolish it. In country places, where proper drainage is