

HEALTH OF THE CITY.

Albany, N.Y. 1832

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In presenting to the Board of Health the following tables, showing the Bills of Mortality of this city from the 22d ult. when the Board directed the deaths to be recorded, up to this day, we deem it our duty to make some remarks relative to the Health of the City during the above period, and likewise in relation to our future prospects, and the measures we consider useful to accelerate the departure of the Pestilence from among us.

We stated in our last report to the Board, that immediately prior to the breaking out of the Epidemic, our city was unusually healthy. Until about the 20th of June, few diseases prevailed, and the mortality was less than common. From the 22d of June to the 3d of July, only 11 deaths occurred—of these, six were children. In a population of 26 thousand, an average of less than one death a day for near two weeks, indicates a degree of health almost without a parallel. From the 30th of June to the 3d of July, *not one single death was reported.* It was, however, but the calm that precedes the storm. All other diseases gave way to the silent but irresistible march of the Epidemic.

Although but few deaths took place from the 20th of June to the 3d of July, there was considerable sickness; and experienced Physicians foresaw the coming danger, in the unusual prevalence of Diarrhea, and common Cholera Morbus—hence it was that your Board was urged to make all ready—to be prepared with Hospitals, Physicians, Nurses, &c. : and to this timely warning, and the preparations made in consequence, we may, under Providence, attribute the limited ravages of this fell Pestilence.

On the third day of July, the Epidemic assumed its malignant and characteristic form. From that time until now, it has maintained its residence among us. For the first week, it gradually extended, and during the second it has been rather stationary—the number attacked varying a little from day to day, and but little.

It is now a fortnight since the first deaths took place. The whole number of cases reported within that period is 245, and the deaths 72—or a little over 1-4 of the whole. It must however be recollected, that during the same time hundreds had been attacked with *Cholerae*, or the slighter influences of the Epidemic. None of these cases have been reported, *because, by timely aid, the disease, in its more formidable shape, was prevented.* We can, we believe, say with truth, that few have entirely escaped the influence of the disease.

From a consideration of all the circumstances connected with this visitation of Providence, our citizens have great cause for thankfulness, that we have thus far suffered so little. *Compared with the visitation of Cholerae, we have suffered less than we had cause to anticipate.* The visitation for a fortnight; has passed all over the city, in all classes, and yet the deaths have not much exceeded 500. In some parts of the city, where the visitation not much exceeding ours, the deaths some days exceeded one hundred, *so long among them as it has been with us.* From the history of the disease in other places, we would fain indulge the hope, that it will soon have spent its venom, and that we shall ere long be free from it entirely. For the last two days, in consequence of the number of cases reported, and the high rate of mortality, we are inclined to believe that we are still in the character of the prevailing disease, indications of returning health.

We have as yet, had no cause to change our opinion respecting the nature of the prevailing disease—we consider it still essentially Epidemic. It continues to attack people in different parts of the city, and has not been traced from one person to another, as might have been done, were its progress dependent on contagion. It is true, in some houses, several persons have been attacked and died; but this only shows that similar causes produce similar effects in individuals placed in like circumstances—all were equally exposed to the local and general causes which engender this disease. The disease *may*, under certain circumstances, be contagious, but no very striking instance of the kind has yet come to our knowledge in this city.

We cannot reprehend in too strong language, the cold-hearted and inhuman conduct of many of our people, to the unfortunate victims of Cholera. They are too often abandoned to their fate—even friends being afraid to do to them the ordinary offices of charity. Were they laboring under the plague of the Levant, they would not be looked upon with more dread. All this is folly. The risk of taking the disease from the sick is little or nothing: much more is to be dreaded from the foul air in which the disease is engendered. The first care of friends should be, not to run away, but to take the sick into more healthy and more airy lodgings.

We would also protest against the indecent haste with which the scarcely cold remains of the dead are hurried to their last abode, without a neighbor to follow, or a friend to mourn. Such conduct is discredit-able to the character of a Christian people. We trust that we shall not again have to complain of similar indifference to the performance of the duties of charity and humanity.

To the members of the Medical Profession, and particularly its younger members, we willingly award due credit for their attention and diligence, under circumstances of no usual difficulty.

OCT 3 1962

JOHN TOWNSEND

