

OBJECTIONS TO RELIANCE ON
SALT EMETICS
IN ALL STAGES OF
MALIGNANT CHOLERA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I hope the great importance of the subject will be a sufficient excuse for my again addressing you. In the last number of *THE LANCET* I find various communications on the treatment of the worst forms of cholera with salt emetics; and if the blaze of cures performed with that remedy had been shaded a little with an account of some cases in which it must inevitably fail, I do not know that I should have troubled you with this communication.

Soon after the disease broke out in England, I met Dr. Pidduck in consultation, and from the high testimony he bore to the use of salt as an emetic, I determined to give the remedy a fair trial, the result of which has been, that in twelve consecutive cases in which salt emetics were freely administered, where the operation was *most complete*, and the remedies were repeated two, three, and four times, and even oftener, after the cases became hopeless, under my own immediate inspection, nine died in the cold stage, and three ran into a lingering consecutive fever and died. I could have accounted for the discrepancy between my cases and the eleven consecutive cases of recovery treated by Mr. Beaman, if that gentleman had not stated the treatment to be applicable to "cholera in its *worst* form," and implying that his cases were in that condition of the disease.

I sent you a short account of some cases too late for insertion in last week's *LANCET*; and I again repeat, that although I know of no better remedy than a salt emetic in the *worst form* of this disease, I have not the least faith in such remedy; for I have seen it fail, most decidedly fail: nor have I observed, as Mr. Beaman states, "that on the following day the patient generally passes a small fecal evacuation, containing bile." On the contrary, I have usually observed that no water is passed during the first 48 hours, sometimes much longer, and that while gruelly motions continued passing generally two, three, or four days.

In justice to the gentlemen who attend at the St. Giles's Cholera Hospital, and who are a little aspersed by Dr. Todd in *THE LANCET* of last week, I take leave to say, that if the cases admitted there are

such as I have usually seen in cholera hospitals and poor-houses,—aged, diseased, and labouring under the "worst form of the disease,"—much credit is due to those gentlemen in being able to save two patients out of fifteen. The pain of witnessing the death of so many infirm beings, without the power of affording relief, is surely quite sufficient without an accusation from a medical brother that in all probability lives were lost from an obstinate adherence to preconceived opinions, or a more culpable and guilty determination not to avail themselves of a simple and efficacious remedy to which their attention had long ago been directed. Let those who cure cholera when it has seized on an aged, worn-out, abused, constitution (as I will venture to say thirteen out of fifteen are, of the patients admitted into St. Giles's Cholera Hospital), who is seen for the first time in the blue, pulseless, frigid state, and who will be found to have laboured forty-eight hours under a violent attack of premonitory diarrhœa, with salt emetics, give publicity to the details of half-a-dozen cases in the pages of your journal. If medical men would oftener communicate the unsuccessful results of different remedies, many a rock, which others look to as a secure resting-place, would be avoided, and much valuable practical information would be recorded.

I am, sir, your faithful servant,

FRANCIS GODRICH.

Little Chelsea, Sept. 5th, 1834.

PRODUCTION OF CHOLERA
BY RICE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The following facts, which were this morning communicated to me by Mrs. Smythe, I beg leave to send for publication in *THE LANCET*.

Mrs. Smythe, a lady of high respectability, living in the Strand, communicated to me on September the 6th, 1834, the following facts:—In the summer of 1832, half an hour after partaking of rice soup, which was composed of rice, water, and turnip, she was seized with most violent pains of the stomach and bowels, attended by all the symptoms of cholera. Another lady, who was in the house at the same time, likewise partook of the soup, and she was also affected precisely in a similar manner. Both patients recovered in consequence of prompt medical assistance. The quantity of soup swallowed by Mrs. Smythe did not exceed half a pint.