

as if he were simply suspended in water; and it is possible even to dress wounds, apply poultices, or place vessels under any part of the body, without moving the body at all; for there are some inches of yielding water under the body, and the elastic mattress may at any part be pushed down, leaving a vacant space there, without the support being lessened for the other parts. It may be made so cheaply, that even in hospitals, where economy must prevail, it may at once be adopted for many of the bed-ridden. The bed has been introduced into St. Bartholomew's and St. George's Hospitals, and elsewhere. With it sloughing need never occur again, and by alleviating distress through the earlier stages of disease, it may prevent many cases from even reaching a degree of danger. It is peculiarly applicable to cases of fractured bones, and other surgical injuries; to palsies, diseases of the hip-joint, and spine; and universally where persons are obliged to pass much time in bed. Also in all cases of curvature of the spine, existing or threatened. If used without the mattress, it becomes a warm or a cold bath, not allowing the body however to be touched by the water; and in India it might be made a cool bed for persons sick or sound, during the heats which there prevent sleep and endanger health. There are numerous other modifications of it, which will readily occur to practitioners sufficiently versed in hydrostatics. Before reflection a person might suppose a resemblance between it and an air-bed or pillow, but the principles of the two are perfectly distinct. An air pillow supports by the tension of the surface which encloses the air, and really is a hard pillow; but in the hydrostatic bed, there is no tense surface at all: the patient is floating upon the water, on which a loose sheet is lying, merely to keep the mattress dry, and every point of his body is supported by the water immediately beneath it. The bed is better described by the appellation of *hydrostatic-bed* than of *water-bed*.

The author has given no exclusive right to any person to make this bed. He has hitherto employed the carpenter nearest to his own residence in Bedford Square, and the London manufacturers of the water-proof cloth; but any carpenter may learn to supply them, and he gives free permission to all.

At present the medical attendant generally leaves whatever regards the bed to the judgment of friends or nurses; but he who has been led to reflect how much the course of a malady may depend on the patient's being so supported that no pain shall arise from local pressure, and little muscular weariness, will deem the bed-management worthy of his own attention.

MALIGNANT CHOLERA.

TREATED WITH

COMPOUND INFUSION OF HORSERADISH.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Although pressed hard by time, I cannot allow another moment to slip without giving you the information I obtained in a conversation with Dr. Stevens of Ely, relative to his *latter* treatment of cholera. Knowing the pages of your journal are ever filled with matter of intrinsic value, I will speak, for the present, of his plan as concisely as possible, as I may hereafter have to request your indulgence in some further communication upon the subject of cholera; till then I shall defer all remarks.

Dr. Stevens states, that out of 32 cases of cholera in its most malignant forms, four only died; one of these last refused all medicine, and another was actually dead when the Doctor arrived at the poor fellow's home; twenty were in the stage of collapse, vomiting and dejecting characteristic matter; the whole body and tongue and breath were as cold as ice; extremities shrivelled, and in some as if dyed in indigo; some suffered from violent cramps, in others it was absent; eight, though in the state of asphyxia, could hardly be allowed to have advanced so near death. In all these cases, after an injection of brandy and opium, and a bolus of calomel and opium, he commences with two drachms of spiritus armoraciae compositus, repeating in half an hour or an hour, as his judgment might lead him. The effect of this medicine he expresses as most wonderful after a dose or two; the patient slumbers profoundly, he becomes bedewed in a profuse hot transpiration, wakes as from a long and comfortable sleep, the nervous energy is restored, and secretion has again commenced; in a short time urine in a large quantity is evacuated, the liver also has not been idle, for a dose of rhubarb will bring away a well-tinged bilious dejection; the patient is recovered as if by magic; his debility lasts but a short time; ʒj of carbonate of soda three times a day, restores him to a state of perfect health.

The Doctor remarks, that could the stomach retain the quantity, he should prefer the infusum armoraciae compositum, on account of the mustard seed it contains. I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

G. F. LE NEVE,
Surgeon.

Barrow, near Bury St. Edmunds,
Sept. 5th, 1832.