

PLAGUES AND PUBLIC HEALTH

The Questions of Cholera, Quarantine and Immigration Analyzed.

THEORIES CONTROVERTED BY EXPERIENCE

National Exclusion an Annoying and Unpleasant Expedient—Local Conditions Foster Epidemics, Air Currents Spread Them—Important Data.

The Sanitarium for February contains an important paper by Dr. C. W. Chandler, secretary of the Maryland Board of Health, on the kindred subjects of cholera, quarantine and immigration.

The origin and spread of the dread disease, the value of rigid quarantine, and the greater value of thorough local sanitation and individual care as preventives are considered in detail.

In the whole range of politics, there is no subject on which such vague notions have prevailed; none respecting which men's minds have been so completely and so generally misled.

For many years the subject of excluding cholera and other diseases from communities and countries by non-intercourse measures, more or less restrictive, has been a favorite topic of the sanitarian, and the statesman of the power of applying to its investigation the commonest rules of reasoning.

The incidence and spread of cholera have heretofore been governed almost invariably by the proportion of material found ready-made to its taste—that is to say, the number of people living in filthy, crowded houses, and breathing a polluted atmosphere.

It has been established by a multitude of evidence perfectly overwhelming that cholera will not spread by contagion from person to person, but only through infected food or drink, or an infective principle in the atmosphere dependent upon local conditions.

Under such circumstances there can be no parallel to the folly of attributing every outbreak of cholera to infected persons or infected merchandise, and of establishing quarantine restrictions in places where the "local disposition" necessary for its propagation is absent.

Prior to May 1, 1832, 30,000 immigrants had arrived in the St. Lawrence river from infected ports in Europe, and yet not a single case of cholera developed in Canada or the United States until the middle of June, 1832, when the first case occurred in Montreal, and from this center of infection it spread throughout the United States.

On December 2, 1848, a steamer infected with cholera landed in New York. Of the immigrants by this steamer, fifty died at the quarantine, which at that time was merely nominal, and yet not a case of the disease occurred outside the quarantine until the 11th day of May, 1849, nearly six months after the deaths at quarantine, when two deaths were reported in the city of New York.

In November, 1853, no less than twenty vessels, on which 1,441 persons had died of cholera, arrived at the port of New York, but the disease did not obtain a foothold in the country until January, 1854, at which time it broke out in the city of St. Louis.

and connected with the health department of the city, and is entirely familiar with the onset of the disease. After minute inquiry he was unable to ascertain that the first person attacked by the disease was a mechanic who lived and worked in a part of the city remote from the river front—had had any intercourse whatever with persons who had come from any other place, nor could direct personal intercourse be traced between any two persons of the first dozen cases which were developed rapidly and simultaneously in different parts of the city, without the sick having had any intercourse one with another.

During the month of December, 1852, and January, 1853, there arrived at New Orleans a total of nearly 2,000 immigrants from cholera-infected districts in Europe, but it was not until May or June, 1853, that the initial case of the disease occurred in that city.

It may be said that these are isolated facts; that in this argument individual cases, however striking, however calculated to impose on the imagination, ought to be reckoned as nothing, and that no events but such as are on a large scale can warrant any general conclusion.

Keeping within the definite limit of established facts, it is to be noted that quarantine has, with rare exceptions, if not invariably, proved an utter failure in excluding infectious diseases from any community or country, nor does it follow that the entrance of an infected ship at any port will necessarily spread the disease in that port.

The cholera appeared first in England in 1817, in the town of Sunderland, and was introduced by the most vigilant quarantine, amounting almost to nonintercourse with the world; it also sprang up suddenly in other towns, both in England and Scotland, when the most vigorous restrictive measures had been practiced.

In 1832 Breslau, the capital of Silesia, which was considered to have the most perfect system of quarantine, both on the frontiers and on the river Oder, was suddenly alarmed by cholera appearing in one of its suburbs. The first case was a female who had never quitted the city, nor been in communication with any person suspected of being infected.

The inhabitants of Hamburg, the same year, looking with anxiety toward Berlin and the country to the eastward, and existing all the means in their power, by sanitary cordons and quarantines, to prevent the disease from approaching from any quarter, found it suddenly appear in the city, rising as it were from the ground and attacking all sections of the city and all classes of the community simultaneously, without the sick having had intercourse with any other person.

In the eighteenth annual report of Dr. Cunningham, the imperial sanitary commissioner of India, bearing upon this subject, he says, page 127: "The experience of fairs and other gatherings in this country [India] has again and again testified to the truth of the conclusion that cholera is not carried by persons from one locality to another, so as to cause persons not themselves exposed to the necessary local influence [the 'local peculiarities' of von Pettenkofer] to become affected by the disease."

In reporting to the United States government the supposed cause and transmission of cholera in Europe during the epidemic of 1848, Consul Mason of Marseille says: "It is to be noted that this year [1853] has witnessed the total failure of the quarantine system. At the first signal of danger from Toulon and Marseilles, Italy established a rigorous quarantine, both by land and by sea, against France, and yet cholera has spread from Turin to Naples, Corsica into a quarantine against all arrivals from every mainland port of the Mediterranean, which for bar-

barous rigor recalled the middle ages, but even Corsica has not escaped."

In this connection it is worthy of note that England, Germany and Austria, that took no precaution against cholera during the outbreak in France, remained almost entirely free from infection, only a few cases having occurred among the refugees who had crossed the frontier into Austria, while Italy, with the most rigorous coast and frontier quarantine, was not able to keep off the disease.

The most trustworthy and scientific authorities of Europe, some of whom have been quoted above, do not concur in the opinion, so generally expressed by the medical men of this country, that the only, or even the best way to exclude cholera is that of hermetically sealing our ports against ships from all infected places.

It has been stated that the closest intercourse was maintained all through the epidemic in Hamburg last summer between that city and other European cities. The communication by sea and by land between Hamburg, Liverpool and London, or Berlin and Vienna, is said to have been constant.

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Colonel Mason, further states (report to State department, Washington, July 21, 1853) that which is an old, densely built, and badly drained and ventilated city, has been most severely stricken, and the public there has been so extreme that three-fourths of the entire population have fled.

Unquestionably the first law is that of self-preservation, but the need of a law stringent as that contemplated in the several bills before congress to protect the people of this country from an invasion of the cholera has yet to be satisfactorily determined.

There is a disposition on the part of many to make the condition of affairs in this country worse than it really is, in order to secure the doubtful advantage of a national quarantine. The most trustworthy and scientific authorities of Europe, some of whom have been quoted above, do not concur in the opinion, so generally expressed by the medical men of this country, that the only, or even the best way to exclude cholera is that of hermetically sealing our ports against ships from all infected places.

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SIZE OF THE UNITED STATES (EXCLUSIVE OF ALASKA), COMPARED WITH OTHER COUNTRIES.

Advertisement for Vaughan's Gardening Illustrated, a book of seed and plant information. It features an illustration of a person working in a garden. The text describes the book as a 'World's Fair Year' and lists various seeds and plants available for purchase.

Advertisement for 'The Wonderful Twelve-Row Puzzle' by Cluett. It offers a free gift of a 'Ready-made Shirt' to those who solve the puzzle. The puzzle is described as a 'twelve-row puzzle' and the prize is a 'ready-made shirt'.

Advertisement for Camole Juniper, a medicinal product. It features an illustration of a woman in a carriage. The text claims that Camole Juniper is a 'female compound' and is used to cure various ailments, particularly those related to women's health.

Advertisement for 'To the Sick' by Ripans Chemical Co. It features an illustration of a person in a bed. The text describes the product as a 'medicinal preparation' for the sick and lists various ailments it treats.

Advertisement for Van Houten's Cocoa, a food product. It features an illustration of a cocoa bean. The text describes the product as 'highly digestible and nutritious' and lists its benefits.

Advertisement for Omaha Loan and Trust Co. Savings Bank. It lists the bank's capital as \$100,000 and its liability to stockholders as \$200,000. It offers a 5% interest rate on deposits.

Advertisement for Art A. Hospe Jr. Music, featuring a Kimball Piano. The text describes the piano as a 'new model' and lists its features.

Advertisement for Dr. Downs, a medical professional. It features an illustration of a man in a suit. The text describes Dr. Downs as a 'specialist in various diseases' and lists his office address.

Advertisement for Geister's Bird Store, featuring canaries. It features an illustration of a bird. The text describes the store as a 'specialist in various bird species' and lists its products.

Advertisement for Money to Loan, a financial service. It features an illustration of a person in a suit. The text describes the service as providing 'loans to individuals' and lists the terms of the loans.

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