

might justly have been expected," reports Mr Grainger, "in the presence of a fatal epidemic, ravaging so many of the Metropolitan districts, that when an Order for further medical assistance and other preventive measures was sent to the Clerk of the Guardians, a special meeting would be immediately convened to take the matter into consideration. In various instances this obvious step was not adopted; the subject was delayed till the next ordinary meeting of the Board, and even then, in some cases, again delayed, without any decision being adopted. Thus, in St Olave's Union, I made, on August 10th, to the representative of the clerk, an official recommendation that certain measures, which I deemed of pressing importance, should be adopted, and that a special meeting of the Guardians should be called for that purpose; an Order of the General Board, requiring the same measures was sent to the clerk, on August 11th; yet, in spite of these urgent representations, no special meeting was called, and the Order was not taken into consideration till Thursday, August the 16th. Thus a most unnecessary and injurious delay of several days occurred. In the parish of St George the Martyr, Southwark, a more serious delay took place. In that parish the mortality from cholera had been absolutely greater than in any other of the Metropolis, excepting Lambeth, which has more than double the population, according to the Returns of 1841; the deaths from cholera, in the week ending August 4, being no less than 112. The existing medical staff was, in my opinion, insufficient as to number, and on August 10th, an Order was sent by the General Board of Health for the appointment of three additional medical assistants. The Vestry Clerk, on the receipt of this Order, called upon the Chairman of the Board of Guardians, the object being to ascertain if he should summon a special meeting. The Chairman stated he did not think such a step was necessary; and the consequence was, that the Order was not taken into consideration till the next ordinary meeting held on Wednesday, August 15, when instead of any decision being formed, the matter was deferred till the next weekly meeting, which was made special for that purpose. In this instance, between the receipt of the Order and the ultimate decision, twelve days were by the Guardians allowed to elapse, and at last they declined to comply with the prescribed measures. The Guardians of this parish were, in consequence of this refusal to obey the Order of the General Board of Health, summoned before a Magistrate, when they at last agreed to adopt the measures required.

"It was only yesterday, at a period when the disease has committed such ravages, that the Guardians of the Greenwich Union, specially summoned to receive an official communication respecting the provisions required for a house to house visitation, hospital accommodation, &c. resisted my urgent representations that they should at once adopt the necessary measures, the desirability of which was generally admitted; nor would they allow a special meeting to be called, the matter, as usual, being deferred till the next ordinary meeting, thus causing a loss of two days. Various other impediments, too numerous for present notice, have been placed in the way of efficient preventive measures in several districts of the Metropolis, and I should fail in the discharge of my duty if I were not to state, that I feel assured these obstacles have led to a considerable sacrifice of human life.

The Legislature has charged upon the Union and local authorities extensive duties for

the prevention of the spread of epidemic diseases amongst the general population. It had previously charged them with an analogous duty in England and Wales, in the prevention of the spread of small-pox by the promotion of general vaccination. The new duties imposed upon them by the Diseases Prevention Act, could only be carried out efficiently by just and comprehensive views of the means of preventing excessive disease and mortality, and the consequent expense. But a very large proportion of the Boards of Guardians have pursued a course of action founded on the presumption that the preventive measures directed by the General Board of Health were applicable not to the people generally, but only to a limited portion of the population,—the regular pauper population,—and that these measures were to be applied according to the ordinary practice, in which relief is only given when applied for. They could not comprehend the duty of *searching* for objects of relief. Hence they have almost universally resisted the seeking out of cases by visitation from house to house, and when the Union House has been attempted to be used as a House of Refuge for the labouring classes, they have endeavoured to subject the parties taken there to the same restrictions as ordinary paupers. The results of this mistaken and perverse course of action have been disastrous.

The most common argument against the immediate and energetic adoption of the preventive measures directed by the General Board of Health, is their expense. The epidemic is considered by the ignorant as an evil with which it is useless to grapple; and among the better informed a false economy, which has in some instances led to the most fatal results, has been the ground of resistance to measures which were instantly necessary to save life. But it should be known that parochial expenditure cannot be avoided during a season of public calamity like the present. Money must be spent either in saving life or in the maintenance of pauperism, widowhood, and orphanage. In this case, economy is on the side of humanity, and the most expensive of all things is to do nothing. The rate-payers should be informed that the want of compliance with the Orders of the General Board of Health on the part of the Boards of Guardians of the metropolis has already entailed enormous and lasting expenditure on the parishes, and that this expenditure is daily augmenting in a vastly greater ratio than the whole amount required to carry out the needful preventive measures. The parish of Lambeth, for example, was up to August the 27th, already burthened with 61 cholera widows and 226 cholera orphans, who must for years remain a costly burthen on the parish. From a small court in Bishopsgate Street, Peahen Court, the parish of St Ethelburga had already received up to August 29th, 1 widow and 12 cholera orphans, whose maintenance, until they are able to provide for themselves, will cost the parish, according to the estimate of a competent authority, not less than L.420; while a timely expenditure of L.30 in putting the court in a proper sanitary condition would probably have prevented the occurrence of a single case of cholera. The funerals of persons who have died of cholera in the metropolis alone, have already incurred an expenditure of not less than L.50,000.

The General Board of Health have had their attention forcibly drawn to the fatal consequences of defective water supplies, and of the use of vitiated water during the present epidemic. The ascertained fact that the use of vitiated water acts as a poison on the stomach and bowels, producing