

In the metropolis, as in every other place, it has been found that wherever a severe outbreak of cholera has occurred there have been present the most obvious removable localizing causes; some, indeed, connected with the state of permanent works, which required elaborate plans and much time to alter; but others dependent on surface accumulations of noxious matters, which the Boards of Guardians have had ample powers to remove, but which they have not exercised. In such instances cholera has taken them by surprise, without any preparation whatever having been made against its attack. The state of Bethnal Green on the recent outbreak of cholera in that district affords an example of the consequences of this neglect. "The 12th, 13th, and 14th of August," says one of the Registrars of Bethnal Green, "will long be remembered in this neighbourhood, the outbreak of this fatal disease being without any adequate preparation; surgeons were wanted in many places at once; the hurried passing and repassing of messengers, and the wailing of relatives, filled the streets with confusion and woe, and impressed on all a deep sense of an awful calamity."

Yet, nine months before this outbreak, the attention of the Guardians was called to regulations and directions embodying most important means of preparation; and eight months before, namely, from the 15th to the 18th of December, they saw in an adjoining parish, Whitechapel, the effect of an energetic adoption of some of those directions, when, in Hair-brain Court, Rosemary Lane, in Salter's Court, and in several adjoining courts, vigorous operations of cleansing and thorough lime-whiting the houses, yards, and privies, at once exterminated cholera from the spot in which it had suddenly broken out, and prevented its extension to neighbouring localities. Still more recently they have witnessed similar results in George Yard, in the same parish, and in several other streets and courts in adjoining districts; yet the Guardians allowed this calamity to fall on Bethnal Green, with no more effort to avert it than as if they had never heard of the pestilence before the day of its visitation.

Great loss of life has resulted from the neglect of the Guardians to carry into *immediate* effect the special orders issued by the General Board of Health. The Guardians generally have delayed the execution of these orders, on which they are bound to act ministerially, until their regular weekly days of meeting; and hence it has happened that a week, and in some instances a fortnight, has elapsed before the execution of an order sent to meet an immediate and pressing emergency; and this delay they have allowed to take place at a time like the present, when within the space of a few months upwards of 10,000 persons have perished in the metropolis, at the rate of from three to four hundred a day, from a disease, one of the distinguishing characters of which is the suddenness with which it attacks groups of individuals in affected localities, its fatal course among the sufferers being reckoned not by days but by hours.

Misapprehension as to the purport or incidents of particular orders has been alleged as causes of the delay, and sometimes even as justifying a further delay, until a succeeding ordinary weekly meeting. It has not been practicable to send an Inspector with every order to answer objections, and the Notifications have in general been found sufficient to explain the objects of the orders where there has been a desire to act on them.

The only motive for delay apparent, on enquiry, to the Inspectors has been the hope on the part of the Guardians that the epidemic would have passed before the orders were executed, and that therefore the expense might possibly be

saved. In some instances the epidemic, having destroyed its victims, has passed; but for reasons immediately to be assigned, in no instance has the dreaded expense been avoided.

The following are examples of the representations made to the General Board of Health of the extent of this delay and its consequences:—"It 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 desirableness 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