

these obstacles have led to a considerable sacrifice of human life."

The Legislature has charged upon the union and parochial 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 £420; while a timely expenditure of £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 £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 sickness, diarrhoea, and other symptoms resembling those of cholera, has recently received melancholy confirmation in numerous instances. Mr. Grainger reports, that "in a small court in the City of London, containing 15 houses, and a population of about 200 souls, there is only one stand cock for the supply of water. On some days even this wretched supply is not given. In the cellar of each of these houses is a privy, and some time since the owner laid down a barrel-drain, communicating on the one hand with the common sewer, and on the other with the privies; but as the latter were not trapped, and there was not in a single house any water supply, the most noxious effluvia escaped from the drain into the interior of the dwellings, which were consequently in a highly offensive condition; indeed, I never witnessed a more noxious state of things. The results as to the health of the unhappy inmates of this court have been most disastrous; there have been in a very short time no less than 13 cases of developed cholera, of which 7 were fatal, besides a large number of diarrhoeal cases; and it is by no means certain that other attacks will not follow."

"The total want of a supply of wholesome water in many densely populated parts of London, has, during the prevailing epidemic, produced the most fatal results. Various instances have come to my knowledge in which the most destructive attacks of cholera have been distinctly traceable to the use of foul water for domestic purposes; in some cases, the poor inhabitants have been compelled to use water from offensive ditches, into which sewage matter flowed; in other instances, the supply has been obtained from wells, into which drains have directly emptied themselves. Water thus impregnated with decaying matter is particularly calculated to cause disturbance of the alimentary canal; and at the present time would unquestionably act as a highly predisposing cause of cholera."

"The influence of the water supplied to the inhabitants of London," reports Dr. Gavin, "in producing diarrhoea, and developing cholera, is shown by the following facts:—

"22 persons inhabited 5 houses in a small square; 2 houses being on one side, and 3 on the opposite side of the square.

"In a few days 11 of these persons died of cholera:—of 1 adult inhabitant, at No. 1, 1 died; of 5 inhabitants, at No. 2, a child died; of 7 inhabitants, at No. 3, the mother and 3 children died; of 5 inhabitants, at No. 4, the mother and 2 children died; of 4 inhabitants, at No. 5, the mother and son; the deaths followed in rapid succession."

"Now the supply of water to these 5 houses is from a pump, originally sunk 18 feet, but on the formation of the sewer it was sunk to 24 feet, as if to ensure the reception of the water percolating from it. Near the centre of the small square of 50 feet, a cesspool was dug to receive the surface drainage of the houses, and to relieve the cesspools of the fluid matters; also, to receive the drainage from an adjoining stable. Within a few feet of the pump a hole had been dug to receive water to water the square, laid out as a garden. Into this hole decaying vegetable matter had been thrown, and was accumulated. Moreover, the sokage from a large heap of manure (since removed) passed into the well. The adjacent road is badly drained; and, doubtless, the drainage from it find its way to the well, which is the lowest level. It is impossible to stand close to this pump without perceiving a nauseous and offensive smell arising from it. There is no doubt that the state of the water, holding as it did organic