

the extension of an epidemic influence, which a careful study of the laws of epidemic disease might have pointed out, but from the cases of plague on board the "San Nichola;" and in June a suspicious fever prevailed in Gibraltar, which, in July, was recognised as the yellow fever. We have had repeated evidence of a similar diffusion of the choleraic and yellow fever influences; we have seen the one and the other arrive in spite of the most rigorous quarantine, and for a season commit equal ravages.

Nor were indications of some similar influence absent from Malta, before as well as during the epidemic. Dr. Hennen states (p. 527), "The winter immediately preceding the plague was mild, but during the whole period of the disease high winds prevailed; those which were most so were from the north-west, and it was a coincidence constantly observed, that on those days the winds blew strongest the number of attacks and deaths were always greatest. The rains in the Plague year fell *early*, and *were copious*; this, however, caused no alteration whatever in the progress of the disease. For four or five years preceding that in which the plague raged, sudden deaths were much more frequent than ordinary, and during the twelve months immediately preceding, and especially for the last month of the period, the increase was still more observable, insomuch as greatly to excite public observation and alarm. Canine madness during these years prevailed with a frequency and violence never before observed, and many individuals perished in a state of hydrophobia. Apoplexies and palsies were increased in a remarkable degree; and intestinal worms, *tæniæ*, *ascarides*, and *lumbrici*, were never so general or so numerous in the memory of man. *In this state of the public health* the contagion of plague was *introduced* (?) and spread among the people."

If Malta, with its rigorous quarantine has not been able to keep out small pox and measles, which are of frequent occurrence, how are we to expect that it should be able to exclude the plague, the spontaneous origin of which is much less questionable? If this island has been visited in seven different years by the plague, this is sufficient to prove that the disease can take root, spread, and maintain its ground in spite of the most strict and best organized quarantine.

The long absence of any extraordinary disease especially dreaded for its fatality, has with the bulk of mankind been held a proof of its foreign origin. To this day not a few medical men advocate and encourage this belief; and as relates to Malta there is scarcely a native doctor who is not firmly convinced of the imported and contagious nature of plague. It is not, therefore,

surprising that an ignorant people should have adopted an opinion forced upon them by the influence of rank and intelligence, and, even as it were, at the point of the bayonet; for it seems to have been little less dangerous than treason, for any one to evince a doubt on the subject. I believe, however, it was no seeming submission to authority, it was an unshakeable conviction from the Governor downwards; for I have met with few, whether English or Maltese, inclined to qualify the opinion they held in 1813: namely, that the plague is imported, only spreads by contact, and that there is absolute security in isolation.

It is amusing to listen to recitals of how the disease was communicated by a pair of new shoes, which had not hung for a fortnight before being worn, the shoemaker having died immediately; how a piece of beef or money had not been immersed long enough in vinegar and water; how a doctor had forgotten that he had touched a bubo with the end of his cane, and fell a victim; how an unfortunate painter in going to his work had trodden upon a piece of old rag in the street, thrown from an infected house, was alarmed by the exclamations of the horror-struck lookers on, and though leaving his shoes, was attacked, and infected his whole family; how even cats were accused as the medium of communication; for in no case do the Maltese fail in tracing plague to contact in some shape.

To give credit to the accounts detailed to me by men otherwise intelligent, would be to believe that everything in the neighbourhood of an infected person was charged with a subtle poison which neither distance, purification, nor time was effectual in destroying. The comment on all these wonders is, that notwithstanding the most paternal injunctions of the Government, and the most stringent restrictions on intercourse the world ever perhaps witnessed;* together with extreme caution, dictated by fear, on the part of the inhabitants; still the disease increased, attained its acme like common epidemic fever, and at the proper season declined and disappeared, except in Casal Curmi, which, surrounded by double walls and cordons of troops, continued to suffer from a disease, which would have been more successfully opposed by the free dispersion of the people.

We must believe that Sir Thomas Maitland, and his predecessor, General Oakes, acted from a sincere conviction that the disease could only spread by contact; and we cannot, therefore, but respect the decision and activity displayed in the measures used for its repression. To cut off all communication by barricading

* See Note A. at the end of this Report.

the approaches was obviously the true means of arresting a disease extending by contact. But within the devoted district, the plague was fearfully increased in frequency by this measure. The fear of contagion drove every one within the precincts of his own dwelling; and here, under every circumstance that could depress the mind, or disease the body, this unfortunate community, accustomed to live much in the open air, awaited a doom which was hurried on by the very means (seclusion) employed for their protection.*

At an early period of the epidemic (21st May) the healthy members of infected families, as well as the suspected and diseased, were transferred to Fort Manoel and the Lazaretto. The permanent accommodation here being soon found insufficient, small wooden houses, or *barrache*, as they are called, were erected in the ditches of the fort; and subsequently similar ones were placed in the ditches near the Porta de Bomba and other spots about the bastions at Floriana. The master carpenter, Carlo Mifsud, who superintended the erection of these huts, informs me that they were built against the wall, about twelve feet square, formed of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch boards, with sloping roof, and with small windows. They were placed about twelve feet apart, with bars between to prevent communication, but without furniture or convenience of any kind excepting what might be provided by the inmates.

"All these receptacles of human misery," says the Baron de Piro, "presented but desolation and death;" and, judging from their plan and material, altogether unsuited for the climate, it is probable that the change from the town was in many instances greatly for the worse, more particularly to those in the ditches, the accumulated heat and stagnant atmosphere in which must have been insupportable. It is certain that the number attacked in the latter was very great, including the whole of the beccamorti (except one) employed in Valetta and Floriana. Nor could those at Fort Manoel fare much better; for exposed to an unmitigated summer sun, and the reflected heat from high walls and

* In 1813 they seem to have followed very closely the measures adopted in the plague of 1676, by far the most fatal that has yet visited the island, no less than 8,569, or, according to common belief, 11,300, out of a population of 60,000 having perished. The disease commenced in December 1675, abated in February and March 1676, attained its height in June and July, and declined about the middle of August. By a census taken at the time in Valetta, 12,144 persons were found in 2,700 families. This dense population was required under the penalty of death strictly to segregate themselves in their own houses. Crowds of the infected were sent to the Lazaretto, and the suspected placed on board ships in the harbour, where nearly all died. It visited every part of the island, and, as in 1813, it seems to have been almost confined to the lower orders, the deaths of only ten gentlemen and seven clergymen being noticed.—"Historia della Sacra Religione Militare de S. Giovanni Gerosolimitano. Venezia, 1715," *Passim*.

equally arid ground, the suffering during the day could scarcely be compensated by the sea air at night. The great object of these arrangements appears to have been to limit contagion; all else was subservient to that, and the result was as mischievous as many similar attempts to arrest the progress of epidemic disease.

Nor was the necessary hospital accommodation provided: that at Fort Manoel consisted of two small casemated ground-floor barrack-rooms, in which 234 persons died in June; yet this seems to have been the best. The three hospitals in the ditches at Floriana were of similar construction to the barrache; and in these the mortality in July and August amounted to 791. The Lazaretto was the only place, Fort Manoel excepted, that held out any reasonable hope of succour in such a visitation; and it proved so, the attacks and deaths here, according to Mr. Garcin, being, even in the tents, inconsiderable compared with those in the barrache. The families in the permanent buildings, Mr. G. states, suffered very little.

Mr. Thornton, Auditor-General, has furnished me with details of the sums expended in a daily allowance (about 3d.) to every individual detained in Fort Manoel, and of the provisioning of the hospitals,* by which I am enabled to deduce that the greatest number of persons in barrache, tents, and the hospital in the ditch at Porta de Bomba (on the 24th, 25th, and 26th of July) was 250; at Fort Manoel, about the same period, 935; and in the middle of August, 1,059. Later in August the number in the latter, and the Lazaretto, including 56 in hospital there, amounted to 1,389; on the 31st to 1,490; on 10th September to 1,965; and on the 30th to 2,064. Taking the days of the greatest expenditure, namely, 17th and 22d July, in the hospital in Porta Reale ditch, and in that of Porta St. Anna, the number of sick about that period in the two largest hospitals would appear to have been 200; which, with those in Fort Manoel and the Lazaretto, would give about 300 under the disease; of whom from 30 to 50 died daily. Of the management of these hospitals and the chances of recovery we may form some idea from the following:—

"The result of about half an hour's visit to the Maltese pest hospital," says Dr. (afterwards Sir Brook) Faulkner,† "on the 2d of June, may convey some faint idea of the sufferings and privations to which those labouring under this horrible disease were subjected. These miserable creatures lay within a very short distance of each other, five or six on the floor of the same room; twenty-eight of them were attended by two convicts. They had

* See note C. at the end of this Report.

† Ed. Med. and Surg. Journ. vol. x.

"no change of linen, and were therefore obliged to lie either without shirts, or in their foul every-day clothes."

ATTACKS and DEATHS among the Populations of Valetta and Floriana from the 5th of May, when Plague was declared, to the end of October 1813.

| Places of Attacks and Deaths. | May. | | June. | | July. | | August. | | Sept. | | October. | | Total. | |
|--|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | Attacked. | Died. | Attacked. | Died. | Attacked. | Died. | Attacked. | Died. | Attacked. | Died. | Attacked. | Died. | Attacked. | Died. |
| In Houses in Valetta . . . | 72 | 41 | 344 | 160 | 463 | 326 | 207 | 105 | 35 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 1455 | 641 |
| In Houses in Floriana . . . | 2 | 2 | 122 | 83 | 281 | 194 | 58 | 27 | 20 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 492 | 313 |
| In Fort Manoel . . . | 16 | 35 | 23 | 234 | 16 | 26 | . | . | . | . | 1 | . | 56 | 295 |
| In Barrache at Fort Manoel . . . | . | 1 | 5 | 49 | 51 | 18 | 42 | . | 16 | . | 4 | . | 118 | 68 |
| In Barrache at Floriana . . . | . | . | 26 | 5 | 76 | 12 | 60 | 12 | 53 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 220 | 34 |
| Plague Hospital of Valetta (in the ditch) . . . | . | . | . | 28 | 6 | 262 | 8 | 149 | 3 | 39 | . | 1 | 17 | 481 |
| Plague Hospital at Floriana (in the ditch) . . . | . | . | 13 | 48 | 2 | 263 | 5 | 115 | 5 | 76 | 3 | 21 | 28 | 523 |
| In Lazaretto . . . | 2 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 5 | . | 22 | 13 | 24 | 20 | 26 | 68 | 86 |
| In Hospital of Observation (in the ditch) . . . | 6 | 13 | 50 | 20 | 13 | 2 | 13 | . | 6 | . | . | . | 88 | 35 |
| In Maltese Hospital in Valetta . . . | . | . | . | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1 | . | . | . | . | 5 | 5 |
| Total . . . | 98 | 95 | 587 | 635 | 916 | 1110 | 397 | 431 | 151 | 153 | 51 | 55 | 2568 | 2481* |

The impossibility of preventing the extension of the disease by the best organized system of quarantine, both in Malta and Corfu, showed that the calculation and foresight of the most vigilant were at fault; and that something more than segregation was required to stay its progress. Dr. Tully (p. 102), after describing the very complete arrangements for arresting the disease in the district of Leftimo, in Corfu, says, "Nevertheless the great object was yet unattained, as the extension of the contagion hitherto baffled all our efforts. The vigilance of the public authorities was excited in the strongest manner; and I immediately repaired to every place where disease broke out

* The difference in numbers between one Return and another in this Report arises from discrepancies in the Bulletins which it would be in vain attempting to adjust.

"anew; but all was ineffectual; for, at the very moment we had formed the best grounded hopes of success, some unfortunate event occurred to subvert the whole; and it not unfrequently happened, when we had reason to be certain that every danger was securely confined, it would suddenly start upon us, mocking all ordinary efforts; and not because it was invincible, but (as I have before said) because we could not thus early arrive at anything like perfection, more especially on the part of our subordinate agents; at this very period, when we supposed we had grasped the disease with Herculean force, it escaped with all the changes of a Proteus."

All who have visited the villages of Corfu, and seen the squalid, aguish aspect of the inhabitants, and their small dark, filthy cabins, will be able to appreciate the probable effects of the following means of arresting a febrile disease. "The character of the people we had to contend with," says Dr. Tully (p. 112), "left us still in the most anxious doubt; for although sentries were placed everywhere, both day and night, assisted by frequent patrols, we still apprehended that attempts at clandestine communication would be made; and learning, for the first time, from His Excellency, that a similar infatuation to incur disease existed in Casal Curmi, in Malta, where the inhabitants were not only walled in, but locked within their respective dwellings, I determined upon having recourse to the latter method; and in addition to the security granted by the presence of the guards, I caused each house to be locked every evening, *previous* to sunset, and the key of each door placed in a contiguous secure situation, where it remained until *after sunrise*, when the doors were opened for the purpose of general ventilation and for receiving the daily supplies; so jealous was I of this duty that it was invariably executed in the presence of an officer of health; and further, when the nature of the building led me to apprehend danger by means of the windows, I then caused them to be barred; nor was I satisfied with the execution of these orders, but the whole came almost daily under my own inspection; thus it might be said that the plague was hermetically sealed."

According to Sir Thomas Maitland, a zealous perseverance in these means, during four months, sufficed for the extermination of a malady of which Dr. Tully says, (p. 90)—

"Reflecting upon the nature of the disease, which presented itself for our examination, the poverty of the inhabitants amounting almost to absolute want, the natural unhealthiness of the whole district during the autumn; considering also that these people had but recently recovered from the effects of a remittent fever, which had been most severely felt in every part of the district; the village, although elevated, being nearly surrounded by marshes, inhabited by a peasantry wholly unconnected with commerce, removed from the sea-shore, and