

THE cholera scare of last autumn was a distinct benefit to this country, says the *Glasgow Herald*, inasmuch as it put the sanitary authorities all over the land, and especially in the ports, on the alert, and induced them to make preparations in view of a possible serious invasion by this formidable enemy during the current year. It was attended, however, by this drawback, that the public at large, seeing the danger baffled by the energy and foresight of the responsible officials, have passed from a mood of caution and alarm to one of perhaps excessive confidence and security, which has been strengthened by the circumstance that the predicted recrudescence of the epidemic on the Continent did not happen, as was generally expected, in the spring. But the intelligence which has come to hand from several quarters during the past week or two proves clearly enough that if the United Kingdom is to escape the scourge there must be rather an increase than a relaxation of the vigilance and precaution which were attended with such satisfactory results last autumn. Indications are abundant which, interpreted in accordance with the dearly-bought experience of past epidemics, justify the conclusion that before the year is out the Continent of Europe will have to endure a much more general and severe visitation of cholera than the last, when there was no doubt or uncertainty about the line of invasion of the epidemic. It came from Central Asia across Southern and Central Russia, made its way easily enough to Hamburg, and finding there peculiarly favourable conditions of development and dissemination, spread to Northern Germany and France. In the Mediterranean basin very little was heard of it.

\* \* \*

The present situation is widely different and very much more pregnant with the possibilities of danger. Cholera has never been extinct in Russia all through the winter; and with the return of the conditions of temperature most favourable to its spread, it has revived in the western and central provinces of the Czar's empire with a malignity that was only to be expected in a country where the vast mass of the population live in habitual defiance of the elementary laws of sanitation. The official statistics for last week give the number of fresh cases of cholera throughout European Russia at over 2,000, and the deaths at about 800; these figures should certainly be doubled, and probably trebled, to represent the true state of the case, and they show that the disease is spreading with portentous rapidity. The number of cases in the city of Moscow on Sunday last was larger

than on any one day during last year's epidemic. The check on commercial intercourse consequent on the tariff war between Russia and Germany will diminish the danger of a fresh outbreak at Hamburg; and it is certain that the authorities all over Germany are more vigilant and much better prepared to deal with the evil than they were last autumn. But several cases have already occurred in Berlin, and the utmost zeal of German officialdom cannot prevent the disease from spreading, if it once gets established, among the ignorant and poverty-stricken peasantry of Prussian Poland, and the working-class population, largely of the same nationality and the same insanitary habits, in the capital and other great towns. Then there have been choleraic outbreaks at various points on the western and southern coasts of France; a number of isolated cases are reported from Holland; and both in northern and southern Italy the disease has been showing itself for weeks past—in Naples with alarming severity. All these developments must be regarded as a recrudescence and extension of the epidemic of last year; there is no reason to think that they have been imported either from Russia or from Asia.

\* \* \*

But two other ugly aspects of the present situation remain to be noted. The disease has been uncommonly destructive of late in the "pilgrimage" district on the Red Sea coast of Arabia, and seems to have spread thence to Asia Minor and to the region of the Lower Danube; and it has also worked its way across the southwestern frontier of Russia into Galicia and Upper Hungary. Thus Austria-Hungary, which in 1892 escaped with a comparatively light visitation of the plague, is now threatened with invasion from two points at once; and though the Government of the Dual Monarchy is quite awake to the danger, and is doing its utmost to guard against the possible consequences, it is absolutely certain that no amount of official energy can counteract the effects of the defective systems of drainage and water-supply which prevail all over Hungary and very largely in the Austrian provinces. Our sanitary authorities will do well, therefore, to face the strong probability that during the next few months cholera will be more rife and more destructive on the Continent than it was last year. If they display as much watchfulness and care as they did then, however, there is no reason to fear that their efforts will not be attended with an equal degree of success.

---

**The "NURSING RECORD" has a Larger Sale than any other Journal devoted solely to Nursing Work.**

---

**The "NURSING RECORD" has a Larger Sale than any other Journal devoted solely to Nursing Work.**

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)