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Editorial.

THE CHOLERA.

Once again, the shadow of a great danger seems to be looming over Europe. The reports from Russia show that the Cholera is steadily invading district after district, and assuming a more malignant type. The latter fact is conclusively proved by the increasing fatality of the cases, so that, this week, the mortality for the whole of Russia is nearly 50 per cent. of the patients attacked. In the country districts, as is usual, the death rate is somewhat less, and in the large towns it is greater; which can be easily understood by those who know that nothing conduces so greatly as dirt and overcrowding, both to the spread of the disease and to its severity.

Many of our readers will have observed with deep regret that there is a great lack of skilled nursing even in St. Petersburg, because Cholera is one of those diseases in which the rapid and efficient execution of medical directions is of the first importance to the patient. The experience of previous epidemics would lead us to believe that Cholera may invade Poland, Austria and Germany, within the next few months; because it is difficult, if not impossible, to prevent infection crossing a land frontier, however careful the quarantine regulations may be. In this country, we not only have the incalculable advantage of sea-board protection, but during the last forty years such immense progress has been made in sanitary science, and in the organisation of seaport inspection, that there is good reason to hope this country will be saved from any serious outbreak of the disease. Indeed, it may be said that since 1866, when the last great epidemic of Cholera appeared in this country, and especially in London, scarcely a year has passed without

some improvements being made in preventive and protective measures. In 1894, when Cholera caused great ravages in Hamburg and other towns in Germany, the regulations enforced at the Port of London, which was most directly threatened, proved so admirable that the few cases which occurred amongst passengers from Hamburg were prevented from spreading.

The great principle now adopted is that any patient suffering from Cholera, or other infectious disease, landed at an English port, shall be immediately isolated and cared for under the strictest antiseptic precautions; whilst any other passengers who have been exposed to similar infection, and who may, therefore, develop disease are either carefully isolated until the danger has passed, or are so carefully kept under observation that, if they are struck down with illness, they also can be immediately separated from the rest of the community.

Beyond all this, the great principle of Cleanliness, which is the greatest preventive measure, is more strictly enforced by the Sanitary Authorities, when an epidemic is threatening to invade this country, than at ordinary times. And, as all medical men are aware, the mental calmness which a knowledge of such careful precautions and preventive measures spreads through the whole community, is in no small measure a protection against an outbreak of Cholera. The old Persian story is as true now as it was two thousand years ago. It tells how a certain man met the Angel of Death and asked what he was going to do in a certain city; and the Angel replied that he was ordered to kill 10,000 people by plague. After some time, the man met the Angel again and complained that 50,000 people instead of 10,000 had been slain by his visitation. The Angel replied—"No. I only killed my 10,000. Fear killed the rest."

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