

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1898.

## CAUSES OF THE SCOURGE.

WHAT LED TO THE CHOLERA PLAGUE IN THIS CITY IN '54.

Ravages it Made in Different Parts of the City—Boards of Health Were not so Particular Then—Extract from an old Paper Some Interesting Statistics.

By G. E. FENITY.

Filth and bad drainage were pregnant causes of the cholera. In 1854 when the disease broke out in Saint John, this City was in a most foul state, and had no proper water supply. No wonder the disease found congenial food here for the destruction of life. What I am about to relate may not be without interest to the general reader and it may serve as a caution to the citizens in case of another cholera visitation, which God forbid. It is now forty-four years since that terrible scourge, when 1500 of the people of this City and Portland were carried off in about eight weeks. As an epidemic, the disease first exhibited itself (at the beginning of July) in the neighborhood of the "Bethel Meeting House," foot of Morris street, where a woman and three of her children died within the space of forty-eight hours; and after carrying off many others, it established itself in St. Patrick's street, taking a bound, as it were, over half a mile of ground. In this locality of slaughter houses and other abominations, the scourge was terrible; and it held on while there was a victim left, it would seem, to satiate its appetite. Those who did not die fled, so that the entire street was all but deserted. It next took possession of York Point, and the neighborhood of the Mill Pond—likewise at the time filthy, disgusting places—where hundreds fell beneath the fetid breath of the destroyer. Portland was visited next, and in the main and bye-streets of this Parish, there were not a dozen houses out of four hundred that were not attacked. It then reached Indian Town, where the havoc was more manifest than perhaps in any other part, from the fact of the place being more compactly built. At one time, it was said, there were not a dozen persons, out of a population of 300, remaining, owing to the deaths and desertions. After destroying and dispersing all before it in Indian Town the epidemic made its way into Lower Cove, and extended its arms right and left, in nearly every street.

Although these localities were the strong battle grounds of the disease, it manifested itself in a sporadic form in all parts of the City and suburbs—the air seemed impregnated, with an unusual, sulphurous smell—nor was the fog any panacea; on the contrary, when the fog was the heaviest the disease seemed to increase. Upwards of 43 bodies were conveyed over the Abideau Bridge one day, when the fog was so dense that an object fifty yards ahead could not be discerned. The disease performed a circuit, confining itself chiefly to the low lands, while the higher ground—or centre of the City—being better situated for natural drainage, was lightly passed over. More than one half the deaths were put down to predisposing causes—such as physical debility, inattention to regimen, poverty, ignorance, fright, and so forth. But every one healthy and vigorous felt that the last day was at hand for him, except perhaps the hard drinker; during that year no licenses for selling liquor were granted by the Mayor, and there never was so much drunkenness shown in the streets, in the midst of this harvest of death. The roughs and drunkards lost their heads and fell easy victims to the cholera. No class of men were more zealous or worked harder to mitigate suffering and minister to the wants of their fellow beings than the Doctors and the Ministers. They were in the midst of the disease day and night; and although some of them were debilitated and worn out from exposure, it was set down as a remarkable thing, that not one suffered or died from the disease. Heroic instances might be cited of deeds performed; but where all did well, it may appear like invidiousness to particularize. One case might be mentioned of a reverend gentleman, who spent his days in the Protestant graveyards performing the burial service over the dead, as bodies would arrive one after another, rather than see them buried without such ministrations. On riding one morning to the church-yard, head of the Bay, he saw a number of persons crowding together over some object. On coming up he found a boy writhing in

agony, a victim of the cholera. He lifted him into his carriage, conveyed him to the Almshouse, and that boy grew up into manhood to relate the circumstance. That clergyman's name was Rev. Wm. Scovill, who died in England a few years since. The orphans were so numerous that it was almost impossible to find them shelter. The Roman Catholic Bishop (Connolly), likewise dead, improvised buildings, which afforded temporary quarters for a large number. Heads of families were cut down, leaving in some cases eight and ten helpless children, and starvation for want of care, was in some instance the result. The Almshouse was filled with children, the offspring of well-to-do and poor alike. In twelve days there were 48 cases of cholera in this Institution alone, and 26 deaths. The shipyards at Courtenay Bay and the Strait Shore were deserted. There were upwards of twenty large ships on the stocks at the time, and almost 2,000 men employed. But now every yard was as silent as the graveyard.

The progress of the disease from day to day will be better understood by the subjoined figures: The object was to keep the existence of the cholera as secret as possible—and no bulletins were issued for some days, until the necessity for doing so was forced upon the Board of Health, at that time not a very vigilant body. July 26th there were 10 deaths. For the 24 hours ending July 29th, 33—including St. John and Portland. Next 24 hours—30. Next—31. Next—27. Next—24. Ending August 1—27. Next, August 4—41, and for the week ending the latter date—221. Next 24 hours, August 11—40. Next—42. Next—37, and for each day afterwards—33—33—21—18—20—25—14—18—17—15—13. And August 21—the decline is very marked, viz., 7—then 10—and last bulletin—3, at the end of September. I have omitted some days in the statement, but that is not material. There were probably 5,000 cholera cases and 1,500 deaths during the terrible two months' visitation.

A person named Munford, who was sexton in the Germain street Methodist church, was engaged by the Board of Health to attend to the sick and dead. If there was a hero, that person was one in true acceptance of the word. He was at work everywhere, day and night. Death had no terrors for him. Rough wooden coffins were going about the streets by cart loads; and Munford often unassisted would place the dead in coffins and have them carried away for burial. Persons in a dying state deserted by friends in sheer terror, had in Munford a ministering angel, doing what he could to afford relief. The Victoria Cross, then not instituted, has never been bestowed upon a more worthy hero. He worked and lived through the whole plague, and came out more than conqueror. Every house was provided with cholera medicine, and disinfectants were used in almost every room. The vapours from chloride of lime went up like incense pouring out of the windows like smoke, and scenting the air in all the neighborhood. House to house visitations by physicians, was a means used to find out the sick when in the incipient stages of the disease and provide remedies. The plan was considered most valuable, and was no doubt the means of saving many lives, especially among the poor and destitute. Finally tar barrels and various combustible compounds were set on fire in the streets, so that the whole town was a glare of light at night time. This proceeding was considered to be highly efficacious. The air was full of smoke and tar fumes, which perhaps destroyed the miasmatic germs, and went far towards bringing the plague to an end.

I thus described on the 21st August, 1854 in the Morning News the desolation of the scene that everywhere presented itself, and it may not be out of place if I here repeat it:

"We passed through Portland on Friday afternoon. O what a change was there presented since our previous visit! It was a scene of desolation and church-yard stillness, the houses with their closed shutters and white blinded windows, serving as monuments to remind us that the angel of death had passed with destructive rapidity through the tenements of this broad avenue. Scarcely a human soul was to be seen in the street. A field-piece might have been placed in any situation and discharged, and the chance of hitting any person would have been very remote. It was Portland at 12 o'clock at night, and yet the sun was in the zenith. The gut-

ters were strewn with lime, in a yellowish state, showing the preparations that had been made for the terrible scourge. In these houses death had been busy for the past six weeks,—hundreds of human beings who inhabited them, in whose veins just now pulsed by life and happiness, are now in eternity. \* \* \* From the Portland (Rev. Mr. Harrison's) church out to the Valley church, through Paradise Row—a distance of about a mile and a half—where thousands of people and vehicles of all kinds are usually to be seen, it being one of the greatest business thoroughfares in the whole Province—we counted (at 4 o'clock in the afternoon) six human beings, and not a single vehicle. Out of about two hundred shops, there were not more than ten that were not closed. As a universal thing we may add, the white blinds were drawn at all the upper windows. It appeared to us as if those who had survived had deserted their houses and gone into the country—anywhere to get clear of the fatal destroyer. But a person must go through Portland to judge for himself. It was a most painful and soul-stirring visit, that of ours on Friday afternoon."

Public meetings were called, and steps taken to guard against future visitations. A committee was appointed for the relief of the destitute, composed of the following citizens: James A. Harding, Chairman; Rev. William Scovill, Rev. William Donald, Rev. George Armstrong, Rev. Wm. Ferrie, James Macfarlane, John Boyd, W. D. W. Hubbard, Chas. P. Betts, James McMillan, to whom contributions were to be sent. The destitution was terrible, especially among the poor; for during the eight weeks of the plague there was no business done, no employment, and consequently no money and but little food.

Our City in a sanitary point of view was then greatly neglected. We counted too much upon the fog as an epidemic preventive, and therefore took no precaution against an attack. The Mill Pond, (now the Union Railway depot) was a receptacle for the dumpage of all sorts of abominations. Erin street was a large ditch which received the flowage of all the high lands round about, and an unsavoury odor pervaded the atmosphere all the year round. All the Back Bay was occupied by slaughter houses in a reeking state of decay and putrefaction. We had no sewers worthy of the name. Stagnation in these respects was the rule. We had no regular water supply. The works were in the hands of a Company, and the pipes run only through certain streets, while the supply even from these was intermittent and uncertain. The Board of Health was not a live body as it is to-day. The necessity for undue exertion in 1854 may not have been considered essential.

Now all this is changed. The Mill Pond has been filled up, and fine railway structures occupy the site. Erin street, York Point, and all adjacent streets have undergone a transformation which represents altogether a totally opposite condition of things. Instead of stagnant sewers, the whole city is well drained. The slaughter houses, once so noxious in the back part of the city, have been relegated into the suburbs, and are conducted under proper rules and regulations. The city owns the water works which are well managed, and the supply is generally satisfactory. The Board of Health is alive and active. In short, the sanitation of St. John and Portland to-day is pure and healthful; and the great fire of 1877, by which a large amount of animal and vegetable life was destroyed, may have contributed somewhat to this better condition of things. I do not mean to say that everything is in perfect order, and there is no room for improvement still. No precautionary measures to ward off disease should be neglected, whether by Boards of Health or people.

### General Remarks.

Is it within our power in ordinary times to extend our lives beyond the general period? By the observance of certain rules we may. The besetting sins of our nature, selfishness and self-indulgence, when properly disciplined or rationally controlled, will not continue as stumbling-blocks in the pathway to old age. Sickly, delicate persons have been known to advance in years, and towards the decline of life become vigorous and hearty, even at 70 and 80. The thin, spare body may be healthy. The spare, pale man, though a weak man, may live on, because he lives out and out in every part equally. All his vital organs live and die together, not one

of them dying first and bringing the others down with it. So he lives, as it is commonly said, on a thread; but a thread which, being continuous and of equal strength, neither knotted or uneven, is durable and long-lived. And on the other hand, there are those who have boasted that they never had a day's sickness, or once required a physician's aid in all their lives; and yet while in the meridian of their days have been suddenly cut down. Then there are those who appear ruddy, sound, robust, the picture of health as it is called, who bid fair to reach the centenarian period. But there is an enemy within, lurking about the corners of the body, who must be watched and kept in check by the observance of regular habit. The hearts of such persons are too powerful or too feeble; for the rest of the organism; or the vascular system of their brain is feeble at some point; or the kidney, the brain, the liver or the lung is undergoing structural change, and under sudden strain is easily stricken with a fatal inactivity which carries all the other vital organs in its own train. The secret is—poor health demands and gets more care; while robust health, equally amenable to the same physical laws, takes no thought of man's mortality, but moves upon the crest of the volcano without considering the insecurity of the foot-hold. Nor is life to be measured by rules so exact, that the least deviation from the strict line is sure to bring about disaster. That in order to enjoy health we must weigh our food, submit it to a chemical analysis, set bounds to our cups. That we must go to bed early and rise early—(some philosophers go so far as to say, that the earlier you rise the longer you will live—to which opinion they are welcome). That you must not go out in wet weather lest you get your feet wet, and take cold. That you must not keep yourself too hot or too cold. In fact, that in order to attain old age you must shut yourself up in prison, and have a keeper over you to wind you up every morning and see that you keep good time during every moment of the day. Now in my opinion all these precautions, however good, are rather strained and arbitrary. I believe that a man should eat and drink as much as suits his bodily condition, and that he should regulate his sleeping hours by the demands of his nature and his opportunities; but always to have sleep enough, whatever the hours, and that he is not intruding upon the laws of his being, should be continue in bed until nine o'clock in the morning. That the temperature of his body and of the atmosphere which he breathes, should be made to harmonize as nearly as possible, and that if he goes abroad and gets his feet wet no harm will befall him, provided he looks after himself as soon as he gets under cover. In short, in order to longevity we must lead regular, temperate, well spent lives, take plenty of out-door exercise, walk half a dozen miles a day, avoid all excesses, keep good hours, control our passions as well as appetites, owe no man anything but kind words, never get excited, go to bed and get up with a clear conscience, live at peace with all the world—especially your friends and your neighbors. Above all, remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth and throughout life—"in whose hands our breath is, and whose are all our ways."

### So you have Nightmares.

"Amongst my patients," said a specialist in mental disorders, "are one or two people who suffer from chronic nightmare. In their case, it is not a question of late suppers or indigestible diet, which, after all, are only secondary causes. 'The root of the evil is a morbid condition of brain and nerves. Every human mind has a certain subconscious and automatic action. In sleep, when the will is dormant, the mind has a tendency to create images on its own account. When there is a depressed con-

dition of brain and nerves, those images tend to correspond in form and become repulsive and even frightful. It is a singular thing that each separate affection of brain and nerves seems to result in a distinct dream or image. One patient was always chased by a white horse; another was haunted by a mad bull, while a third was troubled by a horned and hairy animal reposing on his chest. All three dreams resulted from distinct disorders of the system. 'The remedy? Fresh air, exercise and cheerfulness are sufficient as a general rule.'

### ARKANSAS FURNISHES THE OARS.

The Factory that Turns out Orders for Every Navy in the World.

Devall Bluffs, a little town in the lumber region of Arkansas, furnishes oars for the navies of the world. There are other oars than those made in Arkansas used on men-of-war, but Devall Bluffs people have the honor of having made the oars which propel the small boats in the French and Italian navies at present, and at various times during the history of 'the Bluffs' the oar factory there has furnished oars for the other big navies of the world. An Arkansas statesman, commenting on the resources of his state, said:

"If you happen to be something of a globe trotter take heed when next you see a boat lowered from a French or Italian man-of-war, and as the crystal drops shower from the oar blades you may note beneath the fine firm grain of Arkansas or Missouri ash. Charles Wells, the Devall Bluffs manufacturer, confesses his inability to remember how far back in the past the industry dates, but to his grandsire belongs the honor of first shaping oars by machinery, and the Wells oars were recognized as the standard of excellence long before the need of a closer timber supply brought about the establishment of works in America. At one time or another every navy in the world has had oars from Devall Bluffs.

"The oar factory regularly employs about fifty hands, and, having its own electric lighting plant, can work night shifts when crowded with orders. Its ordinary output is some 250 pieces in a ten-hour run, including oars of all lengths, from six and a half to twenty four feet. A good share of its finished product is placed through its English branches in London, Liverpool and Glasgow, but a vast demand is supplied from the factory direct.

"The salmon fisheries of the Pacific coast furnish a good market, and the Wells brand of oars is not unknown on the Atlantic sea-board of the States and provinces. Foreign countries, are large purchasers, large shipments go regularly to New England, while for years past the French and Italian navies have annually placed large orders with the factory, the requirements of the two countries being practically the same with regard to specifications and models. France's orders for the present year aggregates 5,200 pieces, or about the same as in years past."

### How it Was.

The loyalty of the Scottish Highlander to his kilt is a picturesque thing. He will never admit it makes him cold; and Highlanders who were suffering from cold in the ordinary dress of civilisation have been known to substitute the kilt for it, in order to get warm—though this would be much like removing one's coat and waistcoat and rolling up one's shirt-sleeves for the same purpose. It is said that a stranger, seeing a soldier in a cold wind, in Highlander uniform, asked him— "Sandy, are you cold with the kilt?" "Na, na, mon," the soldier answered indignantly, "but I'm nigh kilt with the cauld."

## AN OLD BULLY.

People who live in fear of his attacks.

### How to avoid him or beat him off.

If biliousness isn't the bully of the body then what is? When once biliousness gets the upper hand you don't dare say your stomach is your own. "Don't you dare eat that dish says biliousness, or you'll see what I'll do." You take the dare and you do see or rather feel, the weight of the bully's revenge. The head aches, not a regular ache, but an open and shut ache. The eyes ache, not with a dull, tired ache, but with an aggressive ache, as if they were being bored by a gimlet. The stomach trembles with nausea. "The whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint." There are scores of hundreds of people who live so under the dominion of this bully biliousness that they don't dare eat or drink without his permission. There's no need of such slavery. Dr. J. C. Ayer's Pills effectually cure biliousness.

"For fifteen years I have used Dr. J. C. Ayer's Pills, and find them very effective in all kinds of bilious complaints. They are mild in operation and easy to take. I prefer them to any other pill, and have yet to see the case where they have failed to cure."—A. SWANBER, Texarkana, Ark.

"I have used Dr. J. C. Ayer's Pills in cases of biliousness and general disorders of the stomach and bowels and have found

them to be always reliable. They are less liable to gripe than other purgatives, and although mild in action, they are thorough in operation. They are the best family physic that can be had."—PETER J. DUFFY, Rockport, Texas.

"Having used Dr. J. C. Ayer's Pills for years and thoroughly tested them, both as a preventive and cure for biliousness, I can truthfully say that I believe them to be the best medicine for the purpose and they do all that is claimed for them."—JNO. E. KOLB, Shark, Ark.

Biliousness is in general but a symptom of a more stubborn disorder, constipation. Constipation is the root of almost all physical evils, and Dr. J. C. Ayer's Pills cure almost all these physical evils by going to the root. They cure constipation, and the consequent maladies, biliousness, heartburn, palpitation, shortness of breath, sleeplessness, nervous irritability, foul breath, coated tongue, and a score of other miserable maladies that have their origin in constipation. Dr. Ayer's Pills are the surest and safest remedy for all diseases of the liver, stomach, and bowels. Send for Dr. Ayer's Curebook and read the story of cures told by the cured. Free. Address the J. C. Ayer Co., Lowell, Mass.