

[From the Quebec Official Gazette, February 19.]

### FEVER AT GIBRALTAR.

We are indebted to a friend for the very interesting description of this terrific visitation, which follows. It was written by the Reverend Mr. BARBER, Missionary at that place; and we regret to add, that this gentleman fell a victim to the disease, very shortly after writing it. The last accounts from GIBRALTAR, happily, state that a change of weather had arrested the epidemic, and that health would be soon restored to the garrison.

#### EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM Mr. BARBER.

Dated Gibraltar, Oct. 10th, 1828.

I cannot neglect the opportunity afforded by the packet of writing to you, interested as you must be in our present situation. The newspapers will, no doubt, have informed you that the yellow fever, so fatal here in 1804 and 1813, has again made its appearance; and in spite of the most vigorous measures to prevent it, has prevailed to a very painful extent. It is probable that the report has exaggerated the truth; I shall, therefore, confine myself to a simple statement of facts, for which, indeed, I am in some measure qualified, by the friendship of Dr. Hennen, the Head Physician of the garrison, and the frequency of my visits to his office for the purpose of rendering myself useful, if possible, combined with my activity, at present, in a somewhat official capacity, in the place of the Garrison Chaplain, who is ill of the disorder.

It was in the end of the month of August that alarm was first excited, by the successive illness of several of the members of a very respectable family, in the habit of attendance at our chapel. The servant of that family sickened, and eventually, after removal from the house to another situation at no great distance, she died. The disease was taken before this event, by two individuals; the one a Mrs. Silcock, who unfortunately concealed her illness till it was too late to remedy it; the other a Mrs. Smith, who, after a very severe illness, was kindly, in the mercy of God, restored to her husband and numerous family. The police and medical regulations of this place are always put especially on the alert in autumn; and these cases, as they were immediately known, became instantaneously the impulse of increased precaution and daily examination. A very few days, however, decided all doubt in the most competent quarters; for new cases of disease occurring, it became clear that we should have to see the progress, and to contend with the miseries of a very decided and malignant epidemic fever, to which the Medical Gentlemen gave the appellation of "autumnal bilious remittent;" I suppose, because the popular term, "yellow fever," is either not scientific, or of very alarming sound; but of the nature of the disease there exists, I believe, in no quarter capable of forming a just estimate, the shadow of a doubt.

There is also another very important point connected with this disease, which seems equally to have fixed all the Medical Gentlemen in one uniform opinion, with reference to its origin. Many have maintained that yellow fever is not a native of the place, but always imported when found at all. I suppose the history of the fever this year will leave no more doubt remaining; it is most plainly and certainly of native origin; and whoever contemplates the circumstance of the place from actual observation, will be surprised, not that infectious bilious fevers should originate here, but rather that any year should pass without its appearance, and unmarked by its awful devastations. What the atmospheric influences may be in originating this calamity must remain, I suppose, as it always has been, a mystery too deep for investigation, and too uncertain to admit of consistent theory: one thing, however, is certain, that the past has been the coolest summer known here for many years; most assuredly the coolest I have spent here; and to this, the very unusual prevalence of westerly winds, which are always regarded as by far the most healthy for us, has mainly contributed. Another circumstance, singular enough, is, that while there have been each year insulated cases of decided yellow fever, they have been for years confined to the individual sufferers; while in this, the coolest, and, every one thought, the healthiest year of many that have passed over us safely, the cases which, when they commenced, seemed slight, almost immediately became epidemic: and now it is hidden among the secrets of God, when and where it shall stop.

But my business is not to indulge reflections, but rather to give you a sketch of facts; which, if I should be permitted to live till these calamities are overpast, I may more

particularly fill up.

Alarm began to spread about the 4th of September; and on the 5th, an order was issued from the Government, that every individual living in the district infected, should immediately leave home, and encamp on the Neutral ground, tent equipage being provided for them there. You are aware, I suppose, that the Neutral ground is that portion of the sands forming the isthmus which joins the Rock to the main land; it is outside the fortifications, but may be swept by the garrison guns. The impression produced by this decided and vigorous measure was both strong and painful: some imagined it was tyrannical; while many, remembering the sufferings of former epidemic years, felt a gloomy terror accompanying the apprehension of witnessing similar scenes of aggravated distress. It would be very difficult to convey any just idea of the scene presented to view. The order, to be of any use, was necessarily urgent: it was hoped, that by clearing away the entire population of the district, all the infected individuals might be put outside the town: but this expectation was speedily baffled. The disease took, for some days, a well-marked course from the very spot in which it commenced; till mingling, at length, with the mass of the population, all effort to restrain it was in vain. Very soon, nothing was left but to thin the population as much as possible, and bending every effort of medical and police regulation to lessen the mischief, to mitigate an evil, which God would not allow to be extinguished.

Upwards of ten thousand people, it is calculated, have left the garrison; and yet, it is supposed, there are not fewer than three thousand within who have not passed the fever; although nearly two thousand five hundred cases have already occurred, and more than four hundred and fifty have died. It is fearful to figure to one's mind the possible, perhaps probable, range of the disease among so many, especially as the worst part of the Season has yet to be passed. However, I cannot avoid expressing my deep personal conviction, that we owe to the distinguished zeal and vigilance of the measures authorised by His Excellency the Governor, and urged by the head of the medical department, Dr. Hennen, that we have not the whole town and territory of Gibraltar one great mass of disease and death. When I consider the amount of the population, estimated at nearly thirty thousand, including soldiers; the peculiar malignity of the disease, the subtlety of its infection, and the number of actual cases of sickness, I am surprised that our deaths are not even more numerous than they are; nor is there a day I live but I feel grateful to God, that, by the measures adopted, one third part, at least, of those who could be food for this unsparing devourer of human life, are placed almost in assured safety: for, on the Neutral Ground and in the Bay, the probability of security is very great.

On the 7th September our chapel was opened for the last Sabbath services; but the congregation was so diminished, that we occupied no more than the lower part. We celebrated on that day the two ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The child baptised was an infant of Sergeant Gray, of the Royal Artillery. He and his excellent wife were present: they had set their minds upon the day's exercise with peculiar feeling; and we were more than ordinarily happy in the celebration. Our circumstances were very solemn; we apprehended it was the last time the chapel would be open; and every one seemed to feel the uncertainty of ever meeting it again; though, on looking around, no one seemed likely to die. On pouring the water on the face of the infant, I felt myself urged to offer up a prayer for its preservation, and for its parents, with more than common power. These were friends with whom I was in habits of the greatest intimacy; both were persons of superior mind, and eminent for piety of the most consistent kind. He, for solidity and firmness of principle and conduct, was seldom equalled, perhaps never surpassed; she for animation and energy, and zealous effort, has not left her superior behind. But both are gone. They were incessant in their attentions to the neighbours in the next house, who were attacked slightly by the fever; and this, with the very bad situation in which they lived, being in the line of the fever's direction, and of a drain from the side of the hill, from which the disease, it is most probable, arose, prepared them for a heavier stroke. I was with them this night three weeks; we spent some time in conversation, and closed in prayer. They were then both well; and talking, among other things, of what was to be done in case of an attack of disease. The next day, or that which followed, Mrs. Gray sickened: in four or five days Mr. Gray himself was incapable of holding up any longer. I called that morning to inquire after them, and was told that he was just going to the hospital. He was

still the same unmoved but deeply feeling man that, in more happy times, I had always found him. I assisted him to the hospital waggon. He just told me, he felt his circumstances very painful, but was quite satisfied; no thing like a murmur escaped him, though, from his appearance and manners, I felt persuaded his recovery was highly improbable; and I think he felt so himself. Mrs. Gray revived for a day or two, but sunk at last after leaving behind a most delightful testimony of clear and animated faith, and love, and hope. "O!" said she to a friend, who is at this moment down with a severe attack of the disease, "Oh! if this be dying, why, O why did not the Lord let me go just now? Should I recover after this, no more names or parties for me—none but Christ and his faithful followers!" A few minutes before she expired, she was probably delirious, when she thought she saw a friend, of whose death, two or three days before, she had not been informed. After pointing, and mentioning his name, she said, "He is beckoning me to come to him. Well," said she, addressing him, "just stay a minute, and I'll come with you." And so she did, for she almost instantly expired. This excellent pair are thus removed together, for her husband died the same night at the hospital. They were very dear to me, and I shall feel the loss of them greatly. They were not members of our Society; he was of the Scotch Church, and she an Independent of Mr. Parsons's Church, at Leeds: but their decided piety commanded my veneration, while their personal attachment won my heart.

Another invaluable friend we have lost, is Quarter-Master Sergeant Vagg; a member of my Class, and my very intimate friend. The last time we met in Class, several observed the peculiarly happy and holy state of his mind. He, like Mr. and Mrs. Gray, was universally esteemed: even the profligate admired him, and would gladly oblige him. But I cannot say more of him or others now: my paper is full, and my time is gone; and my heart recoils from the recital of such losses, even though I am strongly reminded of the probability that ere long I may cease to have power to deplore them.

All places of public assembly were ordered to be closed on September 9th; and almost all business was immediately suspended. The respectable, I mean the monied inhabitants, who could, made their escape in every direction which was open; though by this time a cordon was laid down by the Spaniards; and soon after a proclamation, denouncing the punishment of instant death to any one landing from Gibraltar, was published by the Governor of the Province.

Some days ago, a letter was addressed to me from the Governor, requesting the use of the chapel, in this emergency, as an hospital. I immediately called together several of our leading Members, and read the Governor's letter; when it was instantly, and without difference of opinion, decided that the chapel should be placed with all cordiality, at the disposal of His Excellency.

The Chaplain of the Forces has taken the complaint very severely. Dr. Hennen told me just now, it is most likely by far he will die; he is at present on the verge of the last hour. I have been requested by the Government to officiate in his stead, in the melancholy work of burying the dead. Twice a day, therefore, I have the painful duty of going a mile and a half to the ground. Thence I have just returned, after burying five bodies in one grave, and a civilian separately. The correspondence on these subjects you will one day receive if I live; if not, it is perhaps enough to know, that my conduct has been approved in the highest quarters here, and I hope that, if I drop, this will turn out to the furtherance of the Gospel hereafter. I am, undoubtedly, now so exposed, that nothing but special Providence indeed can protect my life. I have it now, indeed, in my hand. But when better motives run low, I ask myself, why should I not be exposed, as well as medical men and others? And there is nothing in me better than another to make me exempt, by merit, from a death, however sudden and calamitous, into which others, far, far more worthy, more pious, than I, have sunk. I feel of course, deeply, at the possibility that this is the last letter I shall write you; for I have no constitution to stand against a violent attack of fever. But should that be the case, I now leave my deliberate testimony, that I believe salvation by Jesus Christ to be the true and only worthy object of human life, as a whole. I lament and bewail my own personal unfaithfulness, and ministerial insufficiency. I feel most deeply that I have nothing to trust to for eternity, but the love of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord. The atonement of the son of God, the sanctification of the spirit of Jesus; here is the only ground of hope to your affectionate servant.

I forget to mention, that my manservant took the fever