

QUARANTINE.

Statistical Report for 1869—Comparison With Mortality of Former Years— Yellow Fever Report.

The cessation of midsummer heat and the near approach of autumn's invigorating temperature have terminated the season of pestilence at Quarantine, and affairs are as dull in the hospitals of infection as can be imagined. No infected vessels, have arrived for some time past, and there are no cases of yellow fever or any other pestilence at Quarantine. A few vessels which arrived during the summer with fever are idly swinging at anchor in the bay, awaiting the purifying influences of frost, and a small number of nurses linger in [the hospital for any new cases which may arrive; but aside from the regular visits of the health officers to passing ships Quarantine matters are as dull as in midwinter. During the summer, however, Quarantine has been busy enough, and the almost daily arrival of vessels, including several United States war steamers, brought vividly to mind the terrible visitations of pestilence upon New York and other Atlantic cities in previous years. At one time there seemed to be great danger of yellow fever reaching our population; and with a realization of the awful havoc which such an epidemic would make in our crowded and uncleanly city, the most strenuous efforts were made to confine the disease to the lower bay. The quarantine statistics of the year show that the number of yellow fever cases has been greater than that of any previous year since 1855, with the exception of 1864, as will be seen by the following

YELLOW FEVER REPORT FOR 1869,

which shows the total arrivals from the 15th of June to the 1st of September, with and without sickness, from the different ports infected with yellow fever, together with the number of sick and deaths upon these vessels in port, on the passage and in quarantine:—

Infected Ports.	Arrived with Sickness.	Total on arrival of passengers.	Port.		Passage.		Quarantine.	
			Sick.	Dead.	Sick.	Dead.	Sick.	Dead.
Havana.....	8	25	22	8	12	8	31	14
Matanzas.....	6	24	12	5	8	8	6	2
Sagua la Grande...	1	17	—	—	—	—	—	—
Santiago.....	1	8	1	1	—	—	—	—
Remedios.....	1	10	—	—	—	—	—	—
Zaza.....	1	1	1	—	2	2	—	—
Porto Rico ports...	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
St. Domingo city..	1	4	—	—	5	3	2	—
Port au Prince....	—	5	—	—	—	—	—	—
Guadaloupe.....	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Martinique.....	—	8	—	—	—	—	—	—
Key West.....	1	2	—	—	1	1	—	—
Spanish Main.....	2	18	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rio Janeiro.....	10	26	27	7	8	3	—	—
Aspinwall.....	2	12	—	—	—	—	—	—
Vera Cruz.....	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total.....	34	170	63	21	29	19	39	14

In addition to the above there were the following cases of other sickness on these vessels:—Havana—Passage, 2 sick, 1 death. Porto Rico—Passage, 1 death; quarantine, 2 sick. St. Domingo—Passage, 5 sick, 3 deaths. Key West—Passage, 1 death. Spanish Main—In port, 1 death; passage, 3 sick, 1 death; in quarantine, 3 sick. Rio Janeiro—Passage, 2 deaths. Aspinwall, passage, 1 death; in quarantine, 1 sick.

It is interesting in this connection to review the statistics of yellow fever at this port since the establishment of quarantine in 1739, and to see the relative mortality at the several ports from which the fever is brought to this country. In a period of sixty-six years 633 yellow fever vessels have arrived at this port. The following shows the ratio of infection at each yellow fever port and the poisoned vessels therefrom during that time:—Havana, 33 years, 211 vessels; St. Domingo, 15 years, 16 vessels; Matanzas, Charleston and New Orleans, each 12 years, with an aggregate of 84 vessels; Vera Cruz, 9 years, 27 vessels; Sagua la Grande, Cienfuegos, Kingston and St. Thomas, each 8 years, with an aggregate of 93 vessels; Central America, 7 years, 8 vessels; Santiago de Cuba, 6 years, 8 vessels; Coast of Africa, 5 years, 21 vessels; Trinidad, 5 years, 8 vessels; Rio Janeiro, 4 years, 8 vessels; Guaymalala, Cardenas, Guadaloupe, Savannah, Key West and Mobile, each 4 years; Goncalves, Guayaquil and Martinique, each 3 years; Nassau, Nuevitas, Ponce, Norfolk, Newburn, Demerara and Bahia, each 2 years and Manzanilla, St. Johns, Curacao, Tortugas, Pensacola, Spanish Main and Pernambuco, each 1 year. Our latitude of north 40 deg. 42 min. seems to be nearly the northern limit of the disease. It is entirely unknown in England, whose summer heat is given as 76 deg., though her West India and other tropical trade is at least equal to ours. But it has been known to prevail in seaports, on the coast of Spain and Portugal, from Gibraltar to Oporto, whose latitude is north 41 deg. 43 min., or nearly as high north as ours. That it has not been reported in China or the Indian ocean, nor at Calcutta, Bombay and other ports of the tropical East, is probably due to the absence of trade with the African coast whence we derived it. That it is the original coast fever, somewhat modified both by latitude and longitude, is not now doubted, as from every place both in this country and Europe where it originally first appeared it has been traced directly to the coast of Africa. It was brought thence to Martinique by the Oriflamme in 1685, to Barbadoes in 1691, to Philadelphia in 1699, to Charleston in 1732, to Virginia in 1541 and to New York in 1733. Since the earliest of these dates it has reappeared spontaneously every year in several of the West India Islands and ports of Mexico, like a botanical product indigenous to their soil.

In this city, in 1793, when New York contained but 50,000 inhabitants, between 2,400 and 2,500 died of yellow fever. Again, in 1803, out of 1,639 reported cases, 800 died of malignant fever. In 1804 the number of deaths in the city from yellow fever was 702. In 1805 there were 600 cases, of which 275 resulted fatally; and in 1822 there were 240 deaths in the same city, from the same disease, out of 411 reported cases. In 1795 732 died at Philadelphia, Pa. In 1798 3,506 died in the same city. In 1793 4,041 died of this fever. Again, in 1855, the epidemic which nearly depopulated Portsmouth, Va., and vicinity, with a population of about 4,000, 1,000 died. About 2,000 of these were whites and about 900 of whom died, while of the 2,000 blacks only 100 died.

At no period in the history of this country were the ravages of this terrible scourge so destructive and wide spread as during the year 1864. In other yellow fever epidemics, although many of our seaport cities and towns suffered severely, the disease never penetrated into the country districts. In 1864, however, it overstepped all former boundaries, and, carried by panic-stricken fugitives, spread far into the interior. From New Orleans it extended up the Mississippi as far as Memphis, while the whole Gulf front of Texas, embracing an area of more than 200 miles in length by nearly 150 in breadth, was fearfully visited. New Orleans suffered more severely than in any former epidemic, excepting that of 1853. Galveston, Indianola, Houston, Corpus Christi and many other towns, were almost depopulated. Pensacola, Key West and Mobile also suffered to a considerable extent, while in the West Indies yellow fever was unusually prevalent. The ports of Havana, Port au Prince, Miragoane, Kingston and St. Thomas were also seriously infected.

SHIP FEVER.

Since the 1st of January twelve vessels have arrived at this port with cases of ship fever on board. The total number of persons on board exposed to the disease was 7,653, of which eighty-three were sick on arriving in port and twenty-five died on the passage and in quarantine. Overcrowding, imperfect ventilation, improper and insufficient food and uncleanness, formerly so commonly met with upon vessels bringing immigrants, are now happily the exception, and in the absence of these active agents in the production of ship fever this disease is fast disappearing from the marina. In exceptional cases however, when a vessel makes a long passage, or when, through the prevalence of bad weather, the passengers are shut up for any length of time between decks, cases of ship fever from time to time occur; but in these instances the character of the causes mitigate the intensity of the disease and in most cases develop it in a mild form.

CHOLERA.

Notwithstanding the prevalence of cholera during the summer in Cuba vessels arriving at this port have been remarkably free from the disease. Very few cases arrived at Quarantine, and none of them were of the malignant type so frequently met with on West India vessels.

SMALLPOX.

The smallpox report for the year shows 24 vessels, with 143 sick persons out of over 12,000 exposed to the disease on board ship, and 17,800 vaccinations at Quarantine. This disease has been more prevalent the past summer than in any previous season for several years. The average number of deaths in New York from smallpox from 1803 to 1848 was 106 per annum, and from 1848 to 1865 the average annual mortality was 400, while in 1866 the total number of deaths from this disease was only 23, in 1867 12, and in 1869 the mortality had fallen to 18. These figures include all the cases sent from vessels in quarantine to the Smallpox Hospital on Blackwell's Island. Last year smallpox prevailed in an epidemic form throughout the Pacific States and Territories. From sixty to seventy deaths per day occurred at San Francisco out of a population of 150,000, while in many places in the interior of the State the scourge was even more severe. The disease travelled by every stage and railroad route in California, while by sea it was carried to almost every port on the North Pacific coast. Crossing the Sierras it reached Virginia City and other towns east of the mountains, extending its ravages with fearful mortality among some of the Indian tribes. It also appeared in a malignant form in Montreal and in Europe, and great fears were entertained that it would extend to our Atlantic and central States.