

The plague question / by P.A. Schleisner.

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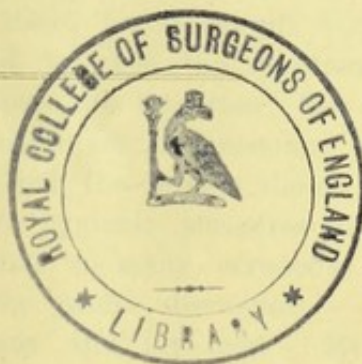
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Is there really any imminent peril for an extension of the Plague to Europe?

If any question deserves to be called a question of the day, it is certainly the plague question, at present exciting both the minds and the pens of so many people. The following treatise contains a reproduction of some articles, which at the end of February have been published in a highly reputed Danish paper.

Though I feel rather disinclined to discuss scientific and especially hygienic matters in a daily paper, I have nevertheless, partly as the medical officer of health of the city and partly on account of the subject itself, found myself bound to do so. It must be granted, that there is less occasion now to raise the question, the whole plague-panic being probably *à retour*, and soon perhaps quite forgotten; but as my excuse for bringing this matter before the public, I must allege the circumstance of my considering it necessary, that a man of intimate knowledge with the subject should treat it in the daily press.

The reason, I dislike to treat hygienic measures and questions in the daily press, is, that I know by experience, that so many erroneous views concerning this subject are in circulation, that only a very prolix discussion — and even that difficult enough — will set right both physicians and lay-men. Every practitioner considers himself skilful in hygiene and fit to advise and instruct the sanitary authorities, while the fact is, that Denmark for instance at the most possesses only 3 or 4 physicians, who have made a thorough study of the hygiene and have had occasion to control the theories by their own experience. In the country you will generally find a much sounder view of hygiene than in towns and cities, where on the contrary a greater clinical experience in the treatment of the sick is to be found.

The very greatest part of practitioners do not keep in mind the peculiar sense of every hygienic measure, viz to operate on a large scale and upon the great body of the people,

and still less the difficulties, with which the very execution of this sort of measures so often meets. In this respect I need only mention, how often too rigorous quarantine measures, especially the blocking up of boundaries, have not only been totally illusive but sometimes perhaps even injurious. By long experience I have come to the result, that proposals in this respect, and a criticism thereof, must be made with the utmost caution: on account of the present very uncertain scientific basis of the hygiene, we are often brought to doubt the use, nay even the necessity of the proposals, we have to put forth.

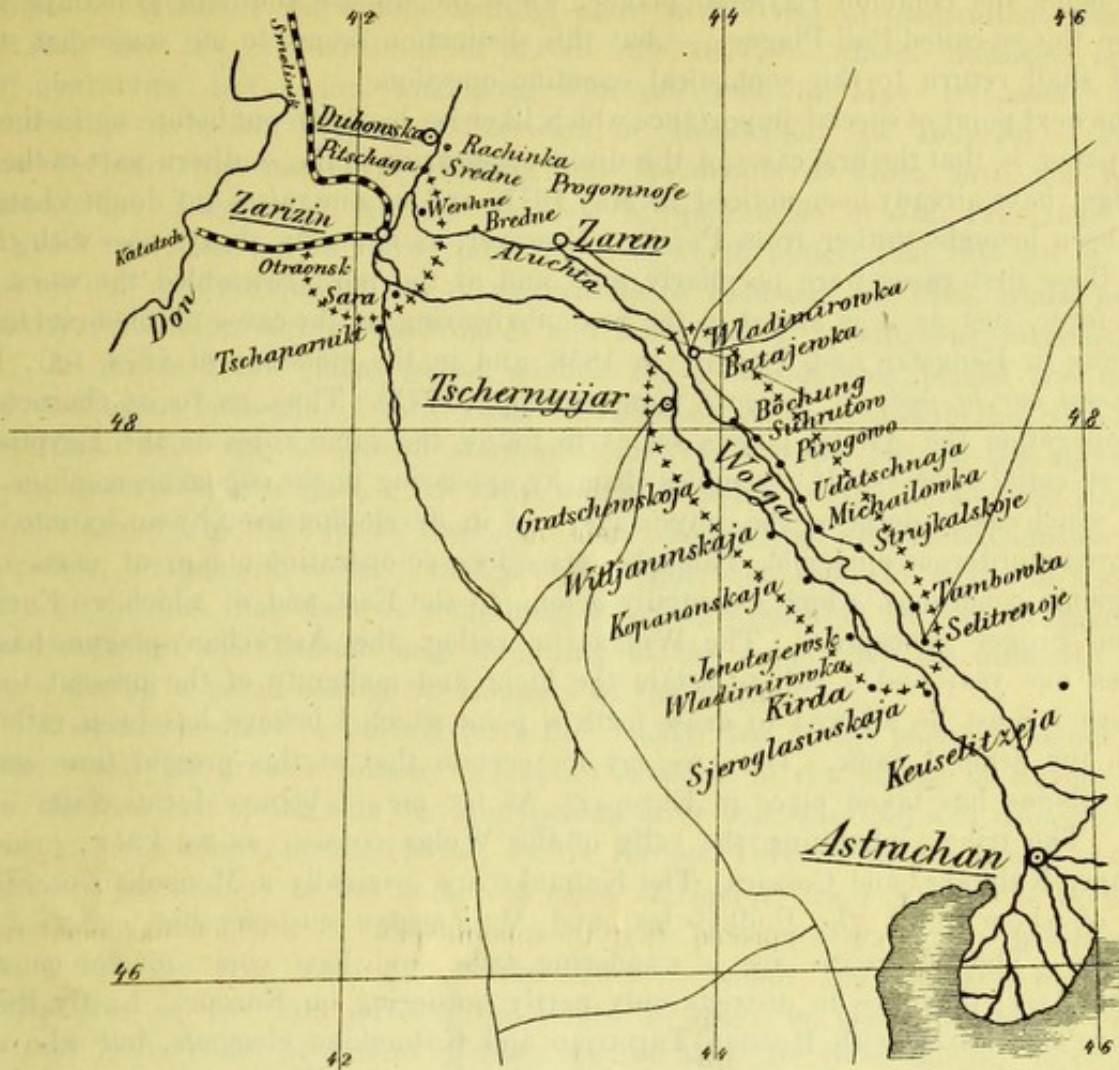
The above statement holds good especially as far as pestilential and other dangerous epidemical diseases are concerned. Every one who has studied the science of hygiene has arrived at the conclusion that it is not only important to keep these diseases from the frontier, or to prevent their approach to the densely populated centres, especially the larger seaports, by suitable quarantine provisions, but that the main point is also, to meet epidemical diseases with rational isolating measures, either in order to cut off a commencing epidemic or at all events to prevent its further extension — in which we have succeeded several times in this very city since 1865. The contrary view would be to admit that the hygiene was a great lie.

In the dangerous epidemical diseases there is however another subordinate circumstance, which every intelligent physician will take into consideration, viz: the panic, so easily raised under these conditions, and which causes irreparable harm in so many points and with respect to the farther extension of the epidemic doubtless is a very dangerous disposing cause. Any one who has been obliged to combat epidemics can speak from experience in this respect, and I for my part have now and then obtained so sad an experience, that I was forced to give up all measures.

It was scarcely to be expected, that the plague panic, — which has been raised in Germany, Austria and Roumænia and since then with such an incredible rapidity, almost like an avalanche, has spread over nearly all Europe, — should entirely have spared our little country. But as we inhabitants of the northern countries are generally considered rather phlegmatic and able to meet imminent perils with a certain cool and quiet reflection, it might have been hoped, that our capital would not have been infected so speedily by the nervous excitement, which has appeared at so many other places. I am sorry to say, that this hope has not been fulfilled, and the best proof of this is, that a journal, otherwise so well instructed as the Copenhagen paper „*Dagbladet*“, in its No. of Monday 27th ult. has published a very alarming article „On the Plague and Plague Epidemics“, written by a professor at our university, not indeed of epidemiology and hygiene, but of pathological anatomy. Against this loose and in many respects incorrect article it becomes quite a relief to be made acquainted with the information contained in the appendix of the weekly bulletin of Febr. 3rd, published by the „*K. D. Gesundheitsamt*“, established a few years ago in Berlin and of which the director, Dr. Struck, every wednesday sends me a copy in exchange for the „Weekly Summary“ for Copenhagen published by me.

Giving here a more copious extract of these informations, than I was able to do in the last No. of my „Weekly Summary“, and referring to the adjoined map, copied from the German original, I beg to give a more detailed explanation, and to add some new information, which in some respects might not be without interest. I hasten to state, that the before mentioned article in the official German „Weekly bulletin“ may be considered to be of special importance, though I have to regret, that it has come forward so late, as in the reverse case the panic, no doubt, would soon have given way to a calm consideration of matters.

MAP OF THE PLAGUE DISTRICT IN THE WOLGA-VALLEY.



(The signature +++ marks the military cordon established partly to protect the railway station Zarizin, partly to cut off the communication with the plague-district on both sides of the Wolga).

One of the most significant points discussed in the above mentioned „Weekly bulletin“ of the German Board of Health and which has been quite clear to every epidemiologist, who is thoroughly conversant with the course of epidemical diseases, is, that of late epidemical plague has reigned at intervals in Mesopotamia, Kurdistan, and Persia, for the last ten years nearly annually, and that, in spite of the unusually frequent intercourse which takes place between these countries and the Russian Caucasia, such an uncommon event as the war between Russia and Turkey was wanted to convey the pestilence from Kurdistan and Persia to the valley of the Wolga. Nearly everybody agrees in the opinion that the plague at the present time reigning in Russia has its origin from Persia, but it is perhaps rather doubtful that it has been imported by sea from Rescht to Astrachan, as Professor Hirsch seems inclined to suppose, though that statement is in accordance with the fact that the disease generally travels by sea, or, that the supposition embraced by several Russian and Austrian physicians should have more ground, viz, that by the unusual gathering and dispersing of troops the plague has made its way — in this case by land — to Russia.

The significance of the above elicited point consists in the fact that the Asiatic plague has been ten years getting to Europe. The general opinion seems to be the same

as appears by various English statements as to the plague which reigns on the Himalaya mountains being the common Egyptian plague, while the disease south of Himalaya is supposed to be the so-called Pali-Plague, — but this distinction seems to me somewhat strange. Later on I shall return to this sophistical scientific question.

The next point of special importance which likewise has been put before us in the above mentioned paper is that the first cases of this disease appearing in the southern part of the valley of the Wolga, have already been noticed in May 1877, and no one raises any doubt whatever of its having been brought thither from Persia. However, as it nearly always goes with the like epidemics, these first cases were peculiarly mild and at the most resembled the worst forms of typhoid fever, just as it is stated in the accounts bearing on the cases of the first Outbreak of the Plague in Bengatzi and Tripolis in 1858 and in the epidemic of 1874 (cfr. Dr. L. Arnaud, *Essai sur la peste de Bengazi*, Constantinople 1875). Thus, as to its character and way of propagation the Asiatic plague seems to follow the same rules as the Egyptian and the like pestilential diseases. It resembles them by appearing in the commencement in a very mild form, which easily deceives the physicians, and in developing itself by and by into a more serious or even murderous epidemic. This takes place by a co-operation of a great mass of precarious hygienic conditions, which essentially belong to the East and of which we Europeans can form no proper conception. The Wolga- or rather the Astrachan plague has thus nearly taken one year and a half to attain the height and malignity of the present time.

Here I must be allowed to draw forth a point which I believe has been rather disregarded in the general panic. Dare we say for certain that at this present time an invasion of the plague has taken place in Europe? As for me, I believe I can claim a right to deny it. The tribes inhabiting the valley of the Wolga consist, as we know, principally of Kirgiseans, Kalmuks, and Cossacs. The Kalmuks are originally a Mongolian or Siberian tribe most of whom follow the Budhaistical and Mahomedan customs but many of them are Christians. The Kirgisians are a wandering tribe and have come for the most part from Russian Asia; they live in districts only partly bordering on Europe. Lastly the Cossacs, who are intermixed with Russian Tartarian and Kalmukian elements, but who mostly must be considered Asiatics, live in wretched hovels along the Wolga in an atmosphere of dirt and filth which almost surpasses every conception. Looking over the map of the plague district, which appeared in the oft-mentioned German paper and of which the above sketch is given, you will see, that the greater part [11] of these miserable huts and villages belong to the Asiatic side of the Wolga, whereas the smaller part [8] belong to the European side. We remember, that the oft-mentioned paper itself has been obliged to admit that the plague district is very limited; moreover that at Astrachan the Wolga is not free from ice till March 25th and at Saratow not till April 19th; and furthermore it is added, that according to the statements, which are hitherto given, not one single case of the real plague has taken place in any of the ports on the Asowian and Black Sea. Therefore one must indeed wonder at the precautions, that have been taken in so many places under influence of the panic raised, precautions which according to my view of the matter are not easily to be approved of, when criticised by sober minded people. We see, that most of the governments of Europe acting under a great pression have already declared the ports of the Asowian and Black Sea suspicious, but this is not quite correct in the strict sense of quarantine. It may moreover be remembered, that our government has been blamed for having delayed the further decision of this question, till we had gained more accurate information from Holland and Belgium; but this resolution was after my advise approved of by the Minister of Justice, to whose jurisdiction the Board of Health belongs. This has furthermore been proved to be pretty well considered, for it appears from a telegram, which I received from my

friend, Dr. van Cappelle, the Director of the Board of Health in North Holland, that the cautious Dutchmen have done nothing more in the way of quarantine, than to put in action their new law of quarantine of March 28th 1877, — which, however, is no regular law of quarantine but a law analogous with our own of May 1st 1868, quite equivalent to the so-called System of Revision or Inspection. In Belgium a kind of quarantine of observation has been ordained, but the details of which have not yet come to my knowledge. Lastly, in Norway the law of quarantine of Juli 12th 1848 which still holds good, has been put in force; however, it is worth notice, that this law is not so draconical as our own antiquated law of quarantine of February 8th 1805, which possesses the peculiarity of classing certain quadrupeds and birds among "pestiferous" articles.

As far as I can judge having studied for a considerable period the course taken by the Astrachan epidemic, I have come to no other conclusion than that this malady has no disposition whatever to spread southwest towards Europe but on the contrary in the north-east direction into Asia. The only doubtful point is the immediate vicinity of the Don for steamers as far up as Zarizin. Thus considering all the circumstances at issue put together, it appears to me, that people ought very soon to come to a clear understanding of the fact that there is something exceedingly uncalled for and exaggerated in the present fear; yet one cannot help admitting at the same time the difficulty of keeping moderate during a panic caused by rumours of the plague.

I do not hesitate in putting forth the remark that in the plague epidemic in Bengazi 1874 there was far greater reason to fear an invasion of the plague in Europe; the same was also the case last spring with the approaching large concentration and dispersion of troops in Armenia. In a letter addressed to me, by Mr. Barner, Director of our Board of Quarantine, he expressed his anxiety of the numerous cases of typhoid fever which has been put down in my „weekly return“ for St. Petersburg. On the ground of my above mentioned opinion I then stated the true situation of the different camps and military hospitals at the Armenian seat of war and advised the Board to apply to the ministry of Justice with the request to have the provisions of the law of May 1st 1868 put in force as to the exanthematic typhoid fever in vessels from St. Petersburg and Kronstadt, which was accordingly approved of.

Tough naturally it was out of the question to put the law of May 1st 1868 in force against other diseases and harbours than those which at that moment were concerned, i. e. Kronstadt and St. Petersburg, where the exanthematic fever then raged, I must confess that I had taken the plague and dysentery into consideration too. Dysentery especially prevailed in a very contagious form among the Russian as well as the Turkish soldiers, and shortly before that time the city of Copenhagen was attacked with a small but very contagious epidemic of that disease, which nevertheless had been successfully cut off. From earlier experience concerning this epidemic, especially from the frequent epidemics in Slesvig, where for ten years I acted as a Medical Superintending Inspector, I had gathered that it was exclusively due to fresh contagion either from tropical or sub-tropical countries or conveyed thither indirectly from the seat of war. I was moreover well acquainted with the excellent description of the extension of this disease by contagion (by the Norwegian Physician E. Homan, Christiania 1860), and I felt reassured, that our modified law of quarantine if put in force would make us capable of keeping watch also in that direction. That at the time mentioned there was a question of a possible invasion of the plague in Europe, I had so much the more reason to suppose as the renowned Professor of epidemics, A. Hirsch, two years previous to this in the German hygienic society in Berlin had brought the question into discussion: „What has Europe to

fear at this immediate period from the Oriental plague" (conf. *„Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für öffentliche Gesundheitspflege“*, 8. Band, 1876, pg. 377). This interesting lecture which among other things contains a thorough explanation of the occurring outbreaks of the plague in Persia, Mesopotamia and Africa after 1858 was of so much the greater interest as it appeared to me, that Mr. A. Hirsch in some points had deviated a little from his previously stated opinions in his well-known *„Handbuch der historisch-geographischen Pathologie“*, which, according to my view, not quite justified he defended against the French writers of plague-epidemics (conf. my notice of this matter in the memorandum delivered to the Congress in Vienna: *„L'apparition du choléra en Danemark depuis sa première invasion en Europe, comparée avec l'apparition de la maladie dans les pays limitrophes et les ports voisins; Vienne 1874“*).

Though I am not altogether a stranger to the fact that the precautions which last spring were taken by our Commission of Quarantine against the exanthematic typhoid fever were considered by some people exaggerated and perhaps even may have caused a little diplomatic resentment on the part of Russia, however, it is at least evident from this, that the medical officer of health of Copenhagen has been on his guard.

I shall now proceed to inquire as briefly as possible into the intricate question of what sort of plague is spoken of in this case, though I fear to tire my readers by the minute details I shall have to put forth. My first observation must be to assert that, according to my apprehension, the so-called „Black Plague“ is quite out of the question here, the name of this mylady, of which we possess the most copious accounts, is in itself sufficient to act on the imagination and cause a great panic. The „Black Plague“ as it is called, came, as far as we know, from China, and according to the detailed statements mentioned, it must be looked upon as originated in a universal revolution of the earth, to which all the eastern part of the globe was subject*) — as that period America was still unknown to us. As it was a solitary event in the history of the world, thus it was undoubtedly connected with some phase of the developement of the earth, with atmospheric peculiarities, followed by social calamities, which spread over vaste areas of the then known part of the world (cfr. especially the detailed account of the tellurian revolt in Hecker, pg. 34 and following). These peculiar terrestrial and climatic phenomena appeared first in China, 13 years before the outbreak of the plague there, and 15 years previous to its appearance in Europe. They are described as most remarkable, by the precipitation of mountains, inundations followed by famine, etc. etc. In the year 1346—47 some thirteen millions of men are said to have fallen victims to this form of plague. Also in Europe the outbreak of this disease was preceded by earthquakes inundations and the most strange climatic changes, but they did not take place till 1348. At some places inundations like that at the time of Deukalion are spoken of; and at different places in Germany, in Cologne for instance, people sailed in boats over the walls round the town; and the same was the case in Würtzburg, Frankfurt, Dresden, etc. This plague must have had its origin in China, according to the facts at issue, and not in India, as some people would believe on account of its casual resemblance in a single pathologic point to the so-called Indian-

*) These remarks are chiefly grounded on the interesting relation by Hecker: *„Die grossen Volkskrankheiten des Mittelalters gesammelt u. s. w. von Dr. A. Hirsch, Berlin 1865“* — which appeared later, and in some respects differs from his manual of 1860.

plague. It poured out from China by different ways of communication over India, Europe, Syria, Arabia and Afrika but in the end found its way to the respective ports and seatowns.

This peculiar form of plague, which with its complication with inflammation of the lungs has been described with great precision, in spite of the incomplete diagnostic means then at hand, cannot at all, according to my view, be identified with the plague in Astrachan. When therefore at the meeting of the international Board of Health in Constantinople, January 28th this year, the British Deputy (no doubt Dr. Dickson, physician to the British Embassy) has considered it necessary to allude to the great analogy between this disease and the Astrachan plague, having previously given an historical sketch of the plague in China, — I cannot help remarking that it appears to me that his opinion was completely contradicted by Dr. Bartoletti, the skilful medical Director general of Turkey. Dr. B. was by a combination of dates able distinctly to show that the present Astrachan plague originated in Persia (Armenia); and in this point he was backed by the authority of Mr. Hirsch and several other physicians.

The circumstance that most of the epidemiologists now agree in this point that the Astrachan plague has not its home in China, is of special moment, as it is impossible to designate it any longer by the alarming appellation of "the Black Plague". In a lecture which Mr. A. Hirsch lately gave at Berlin, he also expressed himself with great caution, only speaking of "the Asiatic plague".*)

What form of plague is the so-called Indian or Pali-plague, sometimes also denominated "the Black-plague", is at the present time a very irrelevant question, which of course may be used to alarm people, but which I think ought rather to be confined to the intimate study of scientific men. It is a very idle occupation now to inquire whether the disease the Mähāmari, which at intervals appears on the Himalaya mountains and which is described by English physicians as an Egyptian Bubonic-plague, is the same that principally infects the valleys, especially the southern decline of the Himalaya, and is said to have one point in common with the plague in China, that of appearing together with inflammation of the lungs.**)

At this occasion I cannot refrain from mentioning a leading article in the English medical journal „The Lancet“ for January 11th this year, in which the quarantine precautions of the Russians are ridiculed in the strongest expressions, while the article puts me in mind of an expression of John Simon, most likely uttered a long time ago, by which he denominated contrivances in the way of quarantine as „paper-plausibilities of quarantine“. Occasioned by a memorandum on the plague by J. Netten Radcliffe, lately published, the journal returns in a later No. to the same theme, and speaks of the measures, taken by Russia, Germany, and Austrian-Hungaria in the strongest expressions.

*) As far as the plague in Persia and Asia Minor is concerned, of which I possess several very copious accounts, I have to remark that especially the Persian plague must without doubt be considered to have a special connection with the system of burial in the East, particularly with a kind of cadaverous putrid infection, — what the French writers justly have observed of the Egyptian Bubonic-plague. Dr. Polak, the Persian Deputy at the congress at Vienna expressed himself strongly in favour of this view (comp. for the rest his interesting book of travels: „Persia, das Land und seine Bewohner“ 1865). Among other reports I shall quote one of Castaldi „La peste dans l'Irak-Arabi, Constantinople 1875“ of which we learn that in one year (1873) 12000 bodies in a more or less putrid state were conveyed to the holy places of Nedjeff and Kerbellah — not to be interred but to be deposited in cellars and vaults of vast dimensions, in the vicinity of the holy mosques. Especially the notes of the Turkish Commission are of interest.

**) For the rest the Himalaya mountains are considered very healthy to live in by English physicians in India and are recommended as „a Health Resort“ for the English soldiers and government officers.

The strong language which this highly estimated journal makes use of, gives me the opportunity to remind the Editor of the fact, that England (i. e. the now deceased General Board of Health) in 1849 has published an ominous „blue book“ on quarantine, by which it really succeeded in making many European states adopt her miasmatic view of the matter and completely do away with the quarantine against the cholera. Since then sad experience has taught many countries, that the cholera was indeed a contagious disease, and especially that ventilation, contrivances in the way of cleanliness, good drinkingwater etc. etc., (the so-called passive hygiene) are quite insufficient measures to prevent a threatening epidemic; and Europe will surely not suffer herself to be lead astray once more. No sensible physician moreover ever dreams of denying the excellence of the common hygiene under ordinary and peaceful circumstances. *)

The General Board of Health which finished in becoming a Board of Works has died a natural death. It was to a great extent influenced by architects and engineers who did their best to make the English medical world believe, that if they had only sewers and drains, a sufficient and good water supply, effective ventilators etc. etc., they were quite safe against the influence of epidemic diseases. *John Simon*, the practical man, who succeeded this Board of theoretical men, has the honour of having made away with the ruinous passiveness in the above mentioned respect. To this eminent hygienist — the intimate acquaintance of whom I have enjoyed in a couple of years — it is due, that so many sanitary reforms were introduced, as in respect to vaccination, erection of epidemic hospitals, sharpened measures against the cholera etc. etc. I entertain some doubts as to the eminent epidemiologists in England, among others *Dr. W. Budd*, *Dr. Robert Lawson*, *Dr. Macnamara*, *Dr. Macpherson*, *Dr. John Murray*, lately Inspector-general of the English troops in India, or the present medical officer of the Local Government Board, *Dr. Seaton*, feeling disposed to agree with the late General Board of Health in its views on the whole and especially respecting the cholera as a mere miasmatic disease. The above named *Dr. John Murray* seems especially not to embrace the hypotheses of *Pettenkofer* but rather inclined to the views of the French hygienists, f. i. to those of *Dr. A. Fauvel* as regards the cholera. On the other side I understand very well, that the theories of *Pettenkofer*, dictated by an eminent chemist who, however, unfortunately is not a physician and perhaps never has seen much less treated a cholera patient, consequently is perfectly devoid of the physiological erudition so necessary in order to understand the significance of contagion, — still must be in high reputation in England. The same seems to be the case in India among the English physicians residing there, while *Dr. Cornish*, Sanitary Commissioner of Madras, forms an exception in that respect. These views which for such a long time have infatuated so many physicians, but fortunately in Germany itself begin to loose ground, I consider not only quite incorrect but even very noxious **).

*) That Denmark has given sufficient proofs of her being fully aware of the necessity of hygienic precautions under ordinary circumstance is proved at »Le Congrès international d'Hygiène, de sauvetage et d'économie sociale à Bruxelles 1876«. The commission formed for that special purpose was able to exhibit 38 pamphlets and tracts mostly elaborated by public authorities but also by several private physicians and professors of hygiene, for instance a treatise by *Dr. Cold*: »Observation nosographique de la pratique rurale«; by Professor *Stadfeldt*: »Les maternités, leur organisation et leur administration«; *Dr. P. A. Schleisner*: »Exposé statistique de l'organisation des hôpitaux civils en Danemark«; *Dr. Hornemann*: »Cités ouvrières en Danemark«; *Dr. Krabbe*: »Notice explicative sur les mesures prises en Islande contre la maladie causée par les Échinocoques«; *Fjord*: »Notices sur la cuisson dans le foin«; Professor *Falbe-Hansen*: »Représentations cartographiques des institutions danoises de prévoyance«; *Knudsen*: »Exposé statistique des institutions et sociétés danoises philanthropiques« etc. etc.

**) Comp. the elocution, which *Mr. John Woodworth*, Supervising Surgeon-general in Washington, gave at the

Thus I shall have still to adhere to my before mentioned opinion as regards the small probability of the present Astrachan-plague extending itself further over Europe, as well as to the point that we must make a strict distinction between that disease and "the Black-plague", — even quite leaving out the question of the relation between the China- and the Pali-plague. I am mostly inclined to consider the invasion of the cholera just as great a misfortune as that of the plague, because I look on this disease as a far more deceitful epidemic.

As to the panic in Germany and Austria which has given rise to very different opinions, the most natural explanation is perhaps that it principally was caused by the different opinions of the physicians in the plague-commission, some of them being disposed to extreme precautions, whereas the epidemiologist, Mr. A. Hirsch, seems to have taken a very sober view of the matter. This appears more plainly from a lecture delivered by Mr. Hirsch at Berlin at the end of January, of which most of the papers have given a short extract. This lecture was the cause of my immediate referring myself to my honoured colleague. The occasion so to do was so much the greater as we had already before exchanged opinions concerning hygienic matters; moreover, I know from my stay at Vienna during the cholera-congress, held there in 1874, that Mr. Hirsch valued the epidemiological statements of the Danish physicians and had shown me the attention in the medical society at Berlin in 1871 to give a lecture on the "Copenhagen Regulations against the cholera"; worked out by me.*)

This became of special importance at the congress mentioned, as far as "the Copenhagen cholera-regulations" for the most part were made the foundation of that complex of precautions which were approved of as to the sea quarantine against the cholera, while the majority of the delegates were against all blocking up by „cordons“ as „inexecutables et inutiles“.**)

I therefore presume to have a reason to regret that this system was not named as it ought to have been: "The Danish or Copenhagen-Regulations against the Cholera", but was called: "A System of Revision", which I opine to be an incorrect title, that has given rise to diverse misunderstandings. Thus for instance the deputies who spoke in favour of more rigorous precautions, the delegates from Spain, Portugal, Greece, Turkey, Egypt, and especially the French medical representative Dr. A. Fauvel, the Inspector-general of the civil Board of Health, misled by this incorrect denomination, have hitherto refused to approve of the above named system

It must however be remarked that this system, in the manner in which it has been executed by us in accordance with the now existing law of May 1st 1868 "Law resp. the

exhibition at Philadelphia in 1876 of the precautions taken in America against the invasion of the cholera from which we learn, that the practical Americans seem to be perfectly regardless of Mr. M. v. Pettenkofer's theories and hypotheses.

*) Comp. an article in that respect in "the British and Foreign medical and surgical Review" October 1871, entitled "The Cholera in Copenhagen 1866 etc.", adressed to Dr. W. Moore in Dublin.

**) It must be taken into consideration that the cholera-congress at Vienna 1874 cannot be classed with the usual meetings of medical men, on account of its consisting of a very limited number of about 30 physicians, conversant with the subject, all of whom (with the exception of Mr. Pettenkofer, the chemist) were more or less experienced in treating and preventing epidemics. Where the diplomatic agents were not present, these men had, moreover, a sort of diplomatic mission and in a way the right to make the respective states enter into common international and sanitary agreement. I will not here loose myself in a closer discussion of the fact that the result was not as expected and that the proposition of nominating an international commission of epidemics came to grief. (Comp. an article by Professor Sigmund at Vienna in "Die Vierteljahrsschrift für öffentliche Gesundheitspflege", 8 Bd. 1877, pg. 230).

measures for preventing the introduction of the Asiatic Cholera by sea" must be acknowledged to be founded on modified and very moderate quarantine precautions: — and the experience of 20 years has shown us, that it can protect us thoroughly against the invasion of Cholera. The same experience has been obtained in Norway.

Having made myself acquainted with Professor *Hirsch's* above mentioned lecture, I judged it right to put myself in relation with my honoured colleague. From Professor *Hirsch's* answer to my letter, previously addressed to him, I was very pleased to learn that he declared himself essentially of my opinion as far as my moderate view of the danger, supposed to be at hand, was concerned, as well as to the real existing form of the plague. My letter to Mr. *Hirsch* was mostly, however, of a practical hygienic nature, while I principally called his attention to the necessity of using stronger disinfecting remedies than had originally been proposed by the Russian physicians sent to the plague-district.

I am not far wrong, I think, in the supposition that the epidemiologists on the continent and in England do not agree on the whole with the suspicion which has been raised against the Russian physicians during the plague-panic. This is confirmed by the fact, that such distinguished physicians at St. Petersburg as Dr. *Pelikan*, Dr. *Lenz*, Dr. *Maydell*, Dr. *Kade*, Dr. *Kastorski*, Dr. *Zdekauer*, Dr. *Rosow*, etc. have declared their agreement with the precautions taken by their government and their opposition to Professor *Botkin*, whose name has been so often mentioned in this affair.

Through the kindness of Mr. N. Radcliffe I have later received his memorandum on the plague, expected by many with a certain excitement. The title of this memorandum: „On the Progress of Levantine Plague in 1877 and part of 1878; together with an Account of an Outbreak of the Bubonic Plague of India (Máhámari) in 1876—77“ must, as far I can judge, be sufficient to set right every physician, who has some knowledge of this subject. That through the reports, given by Prof. *Hirsch* and Prof. *Eichwald* from the plague-district itself, it now has been confirmed, that the Astrachan plague is really of the same character as the Levantine plague, and that it perhaps originates from Kars in Armenia — I need perhaps not mention.

Lastly I shall mention, that though the Danish government has taken a great many steps and precautions in this affair, and though it has been obliged to take these measures in conformity to the steps which Sweden, Norway and in some degree our southern neighbour Germany have already taken, it has not allowed itself to be carried too far by the general panic. At the last we have finished in putting in force against the Plague our moderate quarantine-law of 1st Mai 1868, respecting the Cholera, only supplied with some sharpened regulations in that respect.

Copenhagen, March 1st 1879.