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THE NEED OF IMPROVED QUARANTINE STATIONS.

The threatened invasion of our seaports by cholera has rapidly grown into prominence as day after day new ships from the infected ports of Europe have anchored in the mouth of the harbor of New York, which may be said to be the principal gateway of the continent.

The federal government has, by its declaration of quarantine, re-enforced the local authorities. Under the circumstances, the absolute exclusion of cholera should be an easy task. The situation of New York, the great tracts of uninhabited territory near it, the small width of water to be patrolled, are factors that facilitate the health officers' work.

While this state of things obtains, the methods hitherto adopted by the health authorities are open to criticism. The antiquated idea of quarantine, which is the detention of all persons arriving from infected ports, and their confinement on board of the infected vessels, has been carried out to the letter. Instead of promptly removing the passengers to salubrious places and fighting the disease with nature's weapons—fresh air, good food, and pure water—the least possible thought seems to have been given to these great weapons of the sanitarian. Ships from the infected ports are detained. Crowded as they are at this season, they are left at anchor, with all their passengers and crew on board, fit places for the germs to incubate in.

The proper course would seem to be the establishment of rational quarantine stations on shore. At Sandy Hook, at the mouth of New York Bay, there is a tract of government property which would be admirably adapted for the purpose. Some miles to the eastward on the sandy shores of Long Island there are isolated beaches which are ideal places for the purpose. Fire Island is a beach or sand spit, separated by a large bay from Long Island proper, and facing on the ocean. Here there is a large hotel which might be appropriated for the well, while special stations could be established for those seriously sick and for the convalescent.

At last a better outlook seems at hand. Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan, of this city, has privately chartered the large and commodious steamboat Stonington, and to her the cabin passengers from one of the detained ships, the Normannia, are to be transferred. Very aptly he is the son of a partner of George Peabody, who by similar acts of philanthropy made American generosity famous.

The lesson of the occasion should not be lost. It has shown that New York is without proper means for resisting the importation of disease. For this port, above all others, a great quarantine station should be permanently established. Instead of two little islands built up on shoals in the bay, Swinburne and Hoffman Islands, there should be a quarantine and detention ground of several hundred acres extent, with the best possible sanitary appliances, water supply and drainage arrangements.

THE SECOND BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS.

Nearly eighty years have passed since General Andrew Jackson won his fame in the defense of New Orleans against the British army, concentrated on its capture. His defense of the position and the strategy he displayed in it were, to a certain extent, an important step toward the presidential chair which he subsequently occupied. We can well conceive the interest felt all over the United States when the news of the victory was received by the slow processes of mail coach and mounted mail carrier.

Eighty years later all is changed. Again a battle is fought in New Orleans. It is not a battle of armies, but of two individuals. The railroads have furnished palatial trains to carry the participants to the spot. The telegraph transmits preliminary bulletins as to the exact physical condition of the competitors. When the contest begins, every feature in it is telegraphed far and wide, so that three thousand miles away the results are almost as quickly known as at the ring side. The crowded streets of distant cities, filled with people waiting for bulletins up to midnight of the eventful day, the daily press moralizing over the brutality of the thing in one column and devoting five times the space in other columns to describing it, preach a curious sermon.

It is questionable if any event for years past has excited the same widespread interest as the prize fight in New Orleans. The people showed that the old love for a physical contest was alive. The supposed advance in civilization has not cured their love for it—it has only made them a little ashamed of it. The coming presidential contest will hardly prove more exciting than the story of the downfall of the world's pugilistic champion.

The development of personal contests since the days of the classic athletes of Greece and Rome has to an extent brought us back to their methods. No fight of recent time has been conducted in costume more in accordance with the old gymnastic customs. Even the old cestus or armor for the hands, used by the Greeks and Romans to make the blow a more severe one, found its representative in the five ounce gloves of the modern contestants. These, worn to bring the affair ostensibly within the statutes of the law, if anything made the blows more severe than if the bare hands had been used.

The methods of training have been notable in the tendency to light gymnastics. The great effort to attain quickness of action seems in the case of the victor to have been so successful as to win for him the fight. The skipping rope was a favorite with both contestants in their training. The picture presented to the mind's eye of a modern Hercules skipping the rope like a school girl is, to say the least, a curious one.

The contest of Dares and Entellus, described in the Æneid by Virgil, and parodied by Thomas Moore in his matchless verse, has been cited as analogous. In both cases there was a difference in age, but where Virgil gave the victory to the older man, better training, better ability, or some factor or factors, gave the prize in New Orleans to the younger contestant.

In the methods of the fight there is room for a feeling of interest. The general principles of the winner were repeated blows upon the same part of the body and face of his opponent. In the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN SUPPLEMENT, No. 776, we gave an article descriptive of the points on the human person most susceptible to the effects of a blow. These were given as the gist of the explanations by Dr. Philip E. Donlin, the corner's physician of this city, who has made coma and shock a special study. In the recent contest, one of these blows were nearly given, which, it is stated, would have ended the contest much earlier, had it been received.

The ethics of the affair take another aspect. By making himself champion of the world the victor has opened for himself a business career which otherwise, even under the auspices of his former millionaire employer, he would never have had. He at once acquires a small fortune in the stakes at issue. He will next travel through the country and exhibit himself, and at the end of a year, with proper management, he can afford to retire as a capitalist and live sumptuously on the returns from his invested capital.

All this shows that the world has not greatly changed from the days when the Roman mobs clamored for "bread and games." The fact that to witness three prize fights over \$100,000 in admission fees were paid by the spectators tells a strange story. Railroads, hotels, and the telegraph all reaped immense returns, and the daily press can wish, if not for more worlds, at least for more Sullivans to be conquered.

"Footprints in the Sands of Time."

Quarrymen operating in the Portland sandstone quarries in the Connecticut Valley recently blasted out a block, 130 feet beneath the earth's surface, that was spotted with very interesting and curious marks. The marks, according to scientific men, are footprints of the Anisichnus deweyanus, which was very common in the valley several million years ago, the beast being a combination crocodile-bird.

It is the opinion of Prof. William North Rice, of Wesleyan University, to whom the fossil slab was sold for one hundred dollars, that at the time the deweyanus flourished there was no Connecticut River, but in place of it a bay that was fifteen miles wide, extending from the sound to the border of Massachusetts. In that epoch, a good many million years since, this crocodile-bird used to bathe in the bay, then come out of it, shake himself, and gambol awhile on the plastic micaceous sand, then on top of the earth; and so he left his mark on it. In time the sand became gelid, the world grew over it, and now workmen toiling in the bowels of the earth, 130 feet below its surface, come on the playground of the Anisichnus deweyanus; and a professor studying the tracks imprinted in the sandstone is able to tell just what sort of a creature strode about in the Connecticut Valley when Time was a babe. Wonderful, indeed, is the eye of Science, even when it wears spectacles and follows the humdrum vocation of teaching the modern dude.—Stone.