

The annual register, or, A view of the history, politics, and literature for the year ...

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THE
ANNUAL REGISTER,
OR A VIEW OF THE
HISTORY,
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AND
LITERATURE,
OF THE YEAR
1832.



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1833.

Hunt led to a very formidable riot, in which several persons were dangerously wounded. At Bolton, the mob engaged with the constables and pulled down the barricades erected at the polling places to facilitate the coming up of voters. The riot became so furious, that the returning officer had to exercise the power given to him by the statute of suspending the poll. It was again opened; but again had to be closed, the riot becoming so alarming, that it was only by calling in the assistance of a military force, after reading the riot act, that the election could proceed. The prison was broken open, and the incarcerated rioters set free. Huddersfield, too, and South Shields, had each its riot. At Walsall, the rabble of the most radical candidate took possession of the ground around the polling place, and by violence prevented the voters of his opponents from coming up. The police, after a severe contest, were unable to remove them. That could be effected only by military force; and then the radical protested, that the calling in of military to prevent his mob from preventing voters from appearing, was interfering with the freedom of election. A similar scene took place at Nuneaton in Warwickshire. At Sheffield it was found necessary that the military should fire, and several lives were lost. At Carmarthen, Warwick, Mansfield in the north division of Nottinghamshire, Uxbridge in the east division of Somersetshire, and other places, the poll had to be suspended in consequence of riots.

In our annals of last year we have recorded the appearance of the cholera morbus, or of a disease which resembled that malady in its symptoms and mortality so

much as to entitle it to the same name. At the end of the year, it had principally attacked Sunderland, where it first appeared, and had spread to Newcastle, and its suburb Gateshead. Thence it made its way into the villages on both banks of the Tyne, above Newcastle as well as below, and attacked the population connected with the different collieries. In the beginning of February, when the disease in that quarter had run its course, there had been in Newcastle 934 cases; of which 294, less than one third, had terminated fatally. In North Shields and its neighbourhood, out of 257 persons attacked, 67 had died. From the north of England, the disease took its course into Scotland, and, leaving untouched the whole intervening country, appeared first at Haddington, where the deaths were more nearly one half than one third of the whole number of cases. After Haddington it appeared at Musselburgh, a small town within six miles of Edinburgh, where its malignity proved peculiarly extensive and obstinate. The northern capital was in great alarm, but likewise had adopted in time all proper precautions. Supported by voluntary subscriptions, the poor were supplied with warm clothing and nourishing food. A board of health was erected, guided by the advice, and aided by the active services of the whole medical school of Edinburgh. Every provision was made, both to prevent, as far as was possible, the approach of the disease, and to crush it, wherever it should appear. The first cases occurred in the last days of January, and the malady continued to linger on for several months; but so well arranged had been the measures prepared to meet it, that

in no spot of the United Kingdom, looking at the population, did the visitation pass off so slightly. After the first alarm, the citizens of Edinburgh, though now surrounded with infection, felt little apprehension. The disease, following its erratic course, after attacking the villages around Musselburgh and Haddington, appeared all at once at Kirkintilloch, seven miles from Glasgow, on the banks of the great canal which joins the Forth to the Clyde. It then appeared in Glasgow, where its approach had been much dreaded, from the mass of squalid population with which Glasgow swarms, like every other large manufacturing town. For a while its ravages were alarming; and here, as in Haddington and some other places, after a decline which seemed to announce its extinction, it revived for a time, with increased energy. But though the number of cases was great, the mortality was smaller than in many other places, being altogether about one in three. In some of the manufacturing villages round Glasgow, it was much more fatal. Its progress could no longer be traced. Every day brought intelligence of its appearance in some new quarter; and, during the summer, it penetrated through the whole of the north and west of Scotland, being no where more fatal than among the highland villages of the counties of Caithness and Sutherland.

By this time, however, preparations had everywhere been made, by legislative authority, to meet its approach, and check its progress. So long as the disease appeared to have started from Sunderland to attack only Scotland, parliament was silent. The citizens of that part of the empire were left to

defend themselves by their own voluntary contributions, their own activity, and their own medical skill, directed by their own good sense. But, in the beginning of February, the cholera showed itself in London; although, so far as was known, the whole intervening country, whether between Newcastle and the capital, or between Scotland and the capital, remained unaffected. It appeared first among the crews of vessels afloat in the river, in Southwark, and districts in the immediate neighbourhood of the Thames. By the 20th of February, forty cases had occurred on the river, and in Lambeth, Southwark, Limehouse, Rotherhithe, and Ratcliffe, of which twenty-one more than one-half had terminated fatally. Other districts of the capital and its environs were speedily affected, and the rate of mortality in proportion to the number of cases, continued nearly the same. So soon as the presence of the disease was positively ascertained, bills were brought in, and hurried through both houses, giving the privy council large powers to make regulations for meeting the danger. A central board of health was established in London. The privy council was empowered to establish them in all parts of the kingdom, and direct the formation of hospitals for the reception of the sick. The expenses were to be defrayed by assessments levied on the towns, parishes, or counties, to which they were applied. Notwithstanding, however, all these precautions, the malady soon spread itself over the whole kingdom, and speedily included in its sphere the squalid population of Ireland. But every where it was much less fatal than preconceived notions had antici-

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pated. The alarm was infinitely greater than the danger ; and when the disease gradually disappeared in the course of the autumn, almost every one was surprised that so much apprehension had been entertained. The number of cases in the United Kingdom was smaller out of all proportion than those which occurred in Paris alone. The precautions adopted, and adopted in vain, by France and Holland, exposed the foreign intercourse of the country to some inconvenience : but the internal communications were never inter-

rupted. The cholera left medical men as it had found them—confirmed in most opposite opinions, or in total ignorance as to its nature, its cure, and the causes of its origin, if endemic,—or the mode of transmission, if it were infectious. In Great Britain, as elsewhere, it fixed its residence among the most needy and squalid classes of the community. There were instances of its attacking persons of a different kind ; but they were too few to affect the general law which it seemed to follow, and could often be traced to particular causes.

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