

## CANADA.

in the south and west of Ireland, had more or less sick. The greatest number was invariably found, as in former years, in vessels from Liverpool. The overwhelming number of sick Irish who crowded every part of this town has earned for it this year the appellation of the hospital and cemetery of Ireland. Cork and Dublin rivalled Liverpool in sending out sickly emigrants.

I have had occasion to observe in former reports, that emigrants who come from distant country places to large sea-ports, there to await the sailing of a vessel, living in the meantime in crowded cellars and lodging-houses, invariably suffer more from illness during the voyage, and arrive in a more unhealthy condition than those who have but a short distance to come, and little delay at the port of their embarkation.

I have heard fewer complaints from passengers this year of the quality of the ship's stores. I think, upon the whole, these were better than past seasons. No Indian corn meal was issued, and the biscuit and oatmeal was in most cases good and sound. The only exception to this remark was the use in some vessels, chiefly from Sligo and Killala, of what was called *whole meal*, a kind of coarse flour made from wheat, barley, rye, and pease, ground together, and not bolted; this, though a good article of food when freshly ground, and properly baked into bread, speedily attracts moisture on shipboard, where it heats and becomes caked into a solid mass, requiring to be broken down with an axe before using. In some of the vessels supplied with this article, I was assured by both captain and passengers that it was sweet and sound when inspected by the emigrant agent before leaving port. An inconvenience attending the use of this meal as food, is the impossibility of using it in any form but made into bread, and from the limited extent of the cooking places allotted to passengers it is difficult for each individual to get the use of the fire long enough to thoroughly bake the thick cakes into which it is made; hence it is frequently eaten when half baked, in which state it is sodden and indigestible. It would be desirable in all cases that one half at least of the rations furnished by the vessel should consist of oatmeal. The class of people who usually emigrate are accustomed to this food. In stormy weather, when the fires cannot be made (an occurrence which often takes place in the smaller class of vessels), it can be eaten mixed with water, in which state it is neither unpalatable nor unwholesome.

It would conduce much, however, to the health of passengers if a small portion of animal food was issued three times a-week during the voyage.

The great mortality and sickness this season cannot be attributed either to a deficiency of food or over-crowding. In support of this opinion I would beg to instance the fact that, out of 7500 German settlers who arrived this season, there was not during the voyage, or on arrival at Grosse Isle, as many sick as are usually found in a like number of the same class living in their native villages. The same remark applies to the English settlers from the ports of Hull, Plymouth, Padstow, and Penzance; and to the Scotch settlers from Aberdeen, Dundee, and Leith, among whom few or no sick were found. Though in the case of these emigrants (the Germans especially) they were more crowded from having a much greater quantity of baggage. And as another proof that a sufficiency of food, good medical attendance, and comforts, do not suffice to protect Irish passengers from disease and death on the voyage, I would cite the case of the pensioners and their families who came out in the transports "Blenheim" and "Maria Somes," from Cork. The passengers of these vessels were under military discipline, had the medical attendance of a staff surgeon; they received daily rations of the best of provisions, issued under the direction of the transport agent; yet fever and dysentery prevailed throughout the voyage among the passengers and among the crew after arriving at Quebec. The "Blenheim" lost 12 passengers, and had 17 sick; and in the "Maria Somes" 17 died, and from 40 to 50 were admitted to hospital.

The disease which proved so fatal was, in most cases, brought on board, and many masters of vessels would, on going into the hold, point out to me the particular berth, place, or places, where the disease originated, and the direction in which it spread; in all such cases it was ascertained that the family occupying this berth had come on board diseased or convalescent from fever with foul and unwashed clothes.

The total number of passenger vessels inspected at the station this year has been 400, being about double the number of any previous year, the number of passengers being also double that of any former season. Of these vessels, the large number of 129 have had fever and dysentery among their passengers; 20 have had small-pox, and nine have had both fever and small-pox. 5293 passengers have died on ship board, being at the rate of 5.39 per cent. upon the whole number of passengers; of these, 11 were women in child-birth.

The sickness and mortality of the masters, mates, and seamen of emigrant vessels has been proportionably great. Few of those who had fever among their passengers escaped an attack of the disease, and many died. The great demand for passages to America induced many owners of vessels to fit them out whose masters were ignorant of the trade, and of the means to be adopted to preserve the health of their passengers. When fever once broke out they became alarmed for their own safety, and would not go down into the hold, which from neglect of cleanliness soon became one vast reeking pest-house; the vitiated and contaminated air of which soon enfeebled those who were of necessity obliged to breathe it, even when not struck down with fever, and rendered them indifferent to all exertion, even to the preservation of life itself, that first law of nature. In some vessels where great mortality prevailed this apathy was so great, that difficulty was experienced by the masters in inducing the passengers to remove the dead. In one vessel, the "Sisters,"