

way qualified to give such an opinion. But we believe that the Old Castle, where the family passed much of their time, was very far from being in the sanitary state a regal palace should command. Most of our readers will remember the repeated outbreaks of illness which occurred in the Prince of Wales' family and suite until the cesspools of Marlborough House were discovered and cleared out ; and some may know what is now the condition of things in the War Office in Pall-mall. There is, unfortunately, reason to believe that the Old Castle or Palace of Darmstadt was, or may be is, in a somewhat similar condition. It is a received application of a well-known axiom in this country : whenever sore throats of a bad, what used to be called a putrid, kind recur again and again in a household—look to your drains. And it is quite possible that some such or similar causes may have given this tendency among the children of the Princess Alice to the sore throats referred to, and possibly to the fatal diphtheria.

But whatever may have been the cause of the Princess Victoria's illness, direct infection or gradual blood-poisoning, the history leaves little doubt that the illness of the rest of the family could be traced to her. True, the Princess, as soon as the nature of the malady had been discovered, was separated from the others, but probably the mischief had been done before the exact nature of the malady had been ascertained ; and the fact that the rest of the family were attacked in such rapid succession distinctly points to a common source of infection, both as regards time and place. The intervening period of from five to eight days is exactly that known to occur where diphtheria has been clearly traced to infection. As to the mode of infection, the physicians distinctly indicate a mode of propagation so powerfully indicative of domestic affection that it adds a pang to the sad story of this fatal outbreak. That the affectionate intercourse of parents and children with each other should be converted into a minister of death is mournful beyond conception. Yet so it has been ; and Lord Beaconsfield, in his speech in the House of Lords, brought this home to us with a fulness of pathos which cannot fail to deepen the regret for the lost Princess wherever and whenever her story is told. He said, ' My Lords, there is something wonderfully piteous in the immediate cause of her death. The physicians who permitted her to watch over her suffering family enjoined her under no circumstances whatever to be tempted into an embrace. Her admirable self-restraint guarded her through the crisis of this terrible complaint in safety. She remembered and observed the injunctions of her physicians. But it became her lot to break to her son, quite a youth, the death of his youngest sister, to whom he was devotedly attached. The boy was so overcome with misery that the agitated mother clasped him in her arms, and thus she received the kiss of death. My Lords, I hardly know an incident more pathetic. It is one by which poets might be inspired, and in which the professors of the fine arts, from the highest to the lowest branches, whether in painting, sculpture, or gems, might find a fitting subject of commemoration.'