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Foreign Office, December 30, 1872.

EARL GRANVILLE, K.G., Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, has received from the Right Honourable Sir E. Thornton, K.C.B., Her Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Washington, the following Despatch on the subject of the Epidemic among Horses in America:—

*Washington,
December 6, 1872.*

MY LORD,

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram of the 27th ultimo, I have the honour to inform you, that the epidemic amongst horses, which has lately been, and still is, prevalent over a great part of this continent, seems to have had its origin, or at least to have been first particularly observed, at Toronto, in Canada, where it appeared on or about the 30th of September last. It then travelled over a great part of Canada, invaded the United States at Niagara Falls on the 11th ultimo, and has gone through a great part of this country already, having reached as far south as Galveston, in Texas. I have the honour to enclose a list of several places, both in Canada and the United States, with the dates at which the disease has appeared in those places. These are, of course, only a few of the places which have been visited by it, and it is to be observed that wherever it appeared in towns or villages, it also prevailed in the country all round those places. The dates in the enclosed list may not be very correct; they have been gathered from the newspapers; but they will probably point out the time of the arrival of the disease within two or three days.

It is impossible to suppose that it can have been caused by any but atmospheric influences. None but these could have caused its rapid diffusion over such an immense extent of country.

It travelled from Toronto, in Canada, to Galveston, in Texas, in less than two months; and at New York, for instance, within ten days from the date at which it was first noticed there, 40,000 horses were attacked by it. That it should have spread so rapidly cannot be attributed to contagion alone, though it is not likely that, once it invaded a stable, a single horse would escape it in a greater or less degree.

The disease seems to be a catarrhal influenza or distemper, accompanied by a good deal of fever. The premonitory symptoms are dullness, a staring coat, a watery discharge from the nose, speedily followed by a severe hacking cough, the pulse is

quickened and the mouth hot, the nasal membranes are injected, and the ears and legs are unnaturally cold, the discharge from the nose increases, becomes very thick and clammy and somewhat offensive, and of a greenish yellow colour. The breathing becomes more difficult and oppressive, and is sometimes very laboured and severe. In some of the more violent cases there is constant watering from the eyes, and when the lungs or the brain are attacked, the result is generally fatal.

The disease seizes indifferently horses in bad or good condition, in hard work or the contrary. But bad or close stables evidently aggravate it, and horses in the country, kept much in the open air, have not suffered so much as those in the large towns.

As is usual in such cases, the treatment has been of a most varied character. As my own has been singularly successful, I may be excused for mentioning it. My five horses were attacked under disadvantageous circumstances. They came from Newburyport, Massachusetts, by road to Boston, waited eight hours on the mole to be put on board the steamer; during the voyage to Baltimore were exposed to extremes of heat and cold, and came thence by road to Washington during a violent storm of wind and rain. On their arrival here they had running from the nose and coughed, and showed evident symptoms of the epidemic, as I then only knew it by description. I clothed them well, put flannel bandages upon their legs, and kept the stable well ventilated, though not cold, but temperate. I gave them hot bran mashes with about a tablespoonful of nitre, till their bowels were sufficiently relaxed. Their oats were reduced to about a third, and were always scalded, and about the same allowance of hay was given. As the runnings from the nose became thicker and more offensive, and the cough more violent and evidently painful, their throats were rubbed with a strong embrocation, which nearly blistered them. This seemed to afford great relief. During the whole time of the running from the nose, it was constantly sponged with about one part of carbolic acid to twenty of water, which served also as a disinfectant for the stable. Contrary to the advice and practice of most of my neighbours, I caused my horses to be gently exercised every day when it did not rain, and they seemed to experience great relief from their airing. It was during it that in coughing and sneezing they got rid of great quantities of offensive matter. In the open air they were more clothed than in