

mostly amongst the Chinese population. When the white man became affected, and how, or what may be his history, we know not, as we have never seen him. The discussion that is now going on in England and in various parts of the world on this disease is very interesting to us out here where it at present exists, and from the position in which we occupy as regards the Orient where leprosy is always prevalent, it is of practical importance, inasmuch as the citizens of Vancouver or Victoria have to pay for their maintenance.

BRANCH OF BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

A branch of the above-named association was formed for British Columbia at a meeting of some of the leading practitioners of the Province, in Victoria, on June 7th, 1893. The following officers were elected: President, J. S. Helmcken, M.R.C.S., etc.; Vice-President, J. C. Davie, M.D.; Hon. Secretary, Edward Hassell, M.R.C.S., etc.; Hon. Treasurer, M. Wade, M.D. Council: Drs. A. E. Praeger, Nanaimo; G. D. Johnson, A. H. Thomas, W. D. Brydon-Jack, Vancouver, and E. B. Hanington, Victoria.

THE REGISTRATION OF MIDWIVES.

The evidence adduced at a recent meeting of a Select Committee of the Imperial House of Commons with reference to the registration of midwives in England is of interest to the profession in this province, where, though there is a strict Medical Act in force, it is yet defective in this particular, that it contains no clause prohibiting the practice of midwifery by any person whatsoever who wishes to engage in it. At the time the present Medical Act was passed, midwifery was included with medicine and surgery in the prohibitory clauses, but when the bill was brought before the Legislature that part of it was thrown out, as it was held by some of the sapient legislators of that period, that, in consequence of the scarcity of physicians in some of the remote parts of the interior of the province, many women would suffer if unqualified midwives were not allowed to attend them. This kind of an argument, absurd as it was, proved sufficient, and the whole bill would have been killed if the profession had not given way and accepted the re-

mainder, on the ground that half a loaf is better than none. There seems to be an opinion prevalent, even among the members of the Provincial Legislature out here, that such an Act as the Medical Act is made for the exclusive benefit of the physicians, and while they are willing to help them out by giving them the exclusive control of medicine and surgery, by way of an offset for this favour, they leave midwifery open to public competition, as if it was something any ignoramus, male or female could dabble in with impunity. That such is an erroneous opinion it is not, of course, necessary to tell the medical profession, but that it is the opinion of the public seems to be a fair conclusion from the premises.

The result of this practice by ignorant persons is very often disastrous to the lives of the unfortunate victims, who, from one motive or another, employ unqualified midwives, and many of those who escape immediate death live lives afterwards of prolonged agony and suffering. The medical profession does not suffer in a pecuniary way from this state of affairs, for the operation rooms of our specialists are full of those who have run the gauntlet and have escaped with their lives, though at the expense of displacements and lacerations. When they (the midwives) get a severe case, they hang on to it till the patient in many cases becomes moribund, when they flee in terror and then throw the blame of the woman's death on the doctor who has been called in to see her breathe her last. One of the reasons why they are employed is that they are cheap. A poor workingman, who only earns a couple of dollars per day, feels often indisposed to give five and twenty dollars to a practitioner who is qualified, when he can get the same work done as well, as he thinks, for probably one-third of the sum, and the nursing thrown in for a trifle more. Sometimes it is all right, but often it is not. In the old time, when white women were few and money plentiful, it made very little difference as to what the law was on the subject, as every lady in her confinement obtained the very best skill, in her estimation, regardless of expense; but now the case is different—the patients are plentiful, but the money to pay for attendance is rather deficient. It would therefore be well for our legislators to include midwifery in the Medical Act, in order to protect a valued part of the public