

too often told—that the universal advice of all the best authorities on the subject is, to destroy all traces of decomposing organic matter of every sort—in short, to wash, disinfect and be *clean*—and not to rely upon quarantines, which, as many state, are liable to do more harm than good by giving a false security. The general opinion is that the disease will reach this continent next summer, it may be early. It will travel along the lines of railways, and the cleanest places will suffer least. Towns which are perfectly clean it will not visit. As to its being contagious—communicable from one person to another—there is a difference of opinion. As to its development on filth, and spread therefrom by air or water to the human body, there is no difference of opinion. And the worst of all filth is that putrifying in badly-built sewers and in privy vaults.

THE REPORT on births, marriages and deaths for the Province of Ontario for the year 1883 is but just received as we go to press. The volume manifests the usual care in its compilation, and while there was a fair increase in the number of births registered during the year, there was a falling off in the number of deaths. There were considerably more than twice as many births as deaths registered. In the chief cities, the registrations must be fairly complete, but when many counties only register a death rate of from 7 to 10 per 1,000 of population, it shows great defects somewhere. The chief officer in the work, Mr. Inspector Crewe, appears to do all that can reasonably or possibly be done in the circumstances to make the system successful, but now, after thirteen or fourteen years of such imperfect returns, it is plain that either one or the other of two things must be done: either prepare for enforcing the system by persistent fining of all who neglect to register, or alter the system entirely. We purpose noticing some interesting points in the report in our next issue.

WHY NOT ABANDON the collection of vital statistics so far as the Ontario system is concerned, and leave the work to the Federal

authorities? We can see no possible advantage in the province incurring the expense of a continuation of the system, and believe that if the matter were fairly laid before the Federal and Local Governments, an arrangement might be settled upon by which the former would extend still further the method first put in operation about two years ago, and collect the vital statistics of the whole Dominion.

PRACTICAL SANITATION—THE OUT-CLOSET. —A physician and member of parliament, now in Ottawa attending the session, who has a large general practice in Ontario, and who, by the way, is one of the oldest subscribers to this JOURNAL, has been describing to the editor the way in which he has his out-closet arranged, and how the excreta is disposed of at his home in a country town. It is well worthy of imitation by thousands of heads of families throughout the country. As he remarked, some would think the plan a very troublesome one, but he is of a different opinion; it is comparatively no trouble at all or the trouble is not worth mentioning. He had two ordinary coal oil barrels sawed in two transversely, thus providing for four closet seats. These are fixed on runners and the whole placed under the seats. The closet is raised, and open behind, below the seat, in order that the tubs formed by the half barrels may be drawn out when filled and returned again under the seats. Every day, ashes from a large tin can in the closet are thrown over the excreta. When the tubs are full, they are drawn out by a horse and the contents put upon the garden. There is no offensive smell whatever. The father of the writer, at his home, 30 years ago, disposed of the closet excreta in a similar manner, the only difference being, that a long plank box was used instead of tubs, and earth instead of ashes.

THE ENGLISH CHOLERA COMMISSION, Drs. Klein and Gibbes, have published their preliminary report. It has been given in some of the daily papers and we need not occupy the space of this JOURNAL with it. Suffice