

Colon over-crowding has obtained, to an incredible extent, but in Colon the inhabitants have pure drinking water, and not cemetery drainage as in Panama. In Panama proper the natives throw all kinds of filth over the sea-walls; as it is not washed away by the tides, there it remains, an insult to the eye, a foul, reeking, death-dealing mass. In the suburbs the inhabitants throw their excretæ and filth into lanes and vacant lots, this, plus heat and moisture generate poisons best left to the understanding of our *confreres*, God forbid that it should ever reach their nostrils. A few drains within and without the city are never flushed except by the rains. During the dry season, December to May, they are simply so many receptacles for excretæ. The odors that pour forth from them are unbearable.

It ceases to be a matter of wonder that, under such conditions, the Canal hospitals offered a rich field for clinical observation for Dr. Gererd and his Canal *confreres*. Drs. Meurrisse, Didier, Vernial and the late George W. Nelson.

Dr. Gererd's special observations on yellow fever and its specific microbe extended over three years. He had an able staff of assistants, and the finest of appliances that science could suggest, and it was his singular good fortune to recognize and isolate and cultivate the special microbe. Its propagation was brought about by Pasteur's well-known methods and apparatus.

With Dr. Gererd it was more than a mere matter of scientific enquiry pushed to a successful issue—with him it was a matter of absolute faith, and he abundantly proved it by inoculating himself with culture-microbes, and finally resorted to a crucial test, in allowing himself to be bitten by mosquitoes, that had just fed on a yellow-fever patient. Dr. Finlay, of Havana, we believe, was the first yellow fever expert to point out the propagation of yellow fever by mosquitoes. Dr. Gererd's experiments are a highly important contribution to tropical medicine. His three years of persistent labor were crowned with success, and he deserves all the praise that science and his Government (he is a Parisian) may accord him.

Yellow fever is one of those fearful scourges in whose dread presence physicians feel powerless. So little is known of the cause producing it and the great variety of treatments are a silent but tacit admission that our tropical *confreres* hitherto have been working in darkness, some epidemics killing 75 and 80 per centum, others 8 and 10. The last great epidemic at New Orleans and vic-

nity is credited with having swept away 30,000 victims.

Yellow fever on the Isthmus of Panama is nearly always fatal, that is, true specific yellow fever. Of twenty-seven admissions to the Canal hospital, Panama, for a series of weeks but one recovered.

The Dingler Expedition to Panama—fully endorses the above. M. Dingler, Chief of Works of the Panama Canal, accompanied by his wife, and family, in all a party of thirty-three, including Canal engineers, arrived at Colon on the 29th of October, 1883; up to January, 1885, or in fourteen months, fourteen of the party had had yellow fever with but a single recovery, M. Dingler losing his whole family, wife, son and daughter. The recoveries truly are the exceptions that prove the rule. The malignancy and intensity of the disease there destroys the blood. Intense malarial poisoning is supposed to be an important factor, no doubt increased by the unsanitary conditions already described.

Dr. Domingo Freire if we remember rightly, was the first observer to recognize a microbe in yellow fever and to conduct experiments and publish the results. One of his first contributions on this subject was translated from the Spanish by Dr. W. Nelson, and published in the RECORD some three years ago. *Science* in a recent issue refers to Dr. Domingo Freire's excellent work at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and states that in 7,000 inoculations by him, only eight died of the disease, while 3,000 inoculated persons living under the same conditions were victims to the disease.

Dr. Joseph Holt, the very able and indefatigable President of the New Orleans Board of Health, whose quarantine regulations are undoubtedly the best known, recently has used his influence to secure the passage in Congress of a Bill to enable an American Commission to visit the yellow fever centres and study the disease, and the methods of skilled men like Dr. Domingo Freire and Dr. L. Gererd. Should the Commission verify the experiments of the gentlemen named, preventive medicine in the tropics will have entered on the grandest discovery of modern times, one that will protect millions of people.

The RECORD has been promised a series of original papers on yellow fever, by physicians of recognized standing in Brazil, Mexico, and at Panama. They will appear as received, as well as a series to be written in Cuba, the hot-bed *par excellence* of the disease.