

## British Columbia.

*Under control of the Medical Council of the Province of British Columbia.*

DR. MCGUIGAN, Associate Editor for British Columbia.

### BREEDING PLACES OF DISEASE.

THE Orient has been called the *officina gentium*, which may be translated, "The cradle of the nations," for from it have been derived the primitive peoples who figure so largely at periods remotely historic, and whose civilizations in fragmentary forms have descended to us at the present day.

The Assyrians, Babylonians, the Persians, and the Egyptians, are familiar names, but back of these we have no records that are reliable, though the Chinese pretend to antedate them by some thousands of years. Tidal waves of humanity have from time to time swept over Europe, whose origin was Asia, and as it has been with people, so has it been with disease. During the Middle Ages the various epidemics, such as the sweating sickness and the black plague, nearly exterminated the inhabitants of the West. Cholera first originated on the banks of the sacred river of the Hindoos, the Ganges, and crept, step by step, over intervening countries till it reached the Levant; and from that, as a vantage ground, it gradually took possession of the shores of the Mediterranean. The rate which cholera travels, and the path which it pursues in some epidemics (at least it was so in the past) was likened by Eugene Sue, in his great work, the "Wandering Jew," to the distance which an ordinary walker would accomplish in twenty-four hours with all the windings hither and thither which a traveller might make who sauntered carelessly along the way in crossing a country.

In very recent times sanitary science has been extending its boundaries, but the great Chinese Empire is almost, if not as completely isolated and backward in the modern sense of the term, as it was a thousand years ago. Nothing is known

of what we call the science of public health, and filth diseases are just as prevalent now as they were in the days of the crusades.

In this connection we take much pleasure in laying before the readers of the JOURNAL the report of Dr. Geo. H. Duncan, the energetic Medical Health Officer of Victoria, who recently visited China, and had opportunities of seeing the inner lives of the Chinese population while in Hong-Kong. It is of practical importance to the people in the East, as this is the western gateway into the Dominion. Dr. Duncan attempted to put his views into practical operation on his return home, but on an appeal to the courts it was declared illegal to subject Chinese passengers to any extra quarantine regulation, though those who read his report must come to the conclusion that it is a great mistake to allow them into the country without a very searching disinfection of their clothing and baggage, and such as is not given them in an ordinary examination unless there is actual disease in the shape of a patient on board the vessel.

*To His Worship Mayor Teague and Board of Aldermen, Victoria:*

GENTLEMEN,—On resuming my duties as Medical Health Officer of the city of Victoria, I tender you my sincere thanks for the opportunity afforded me of visiting Japan and China for the purpose of securing surgical practice possible under the present international conditions in the East. I may say I availed myself of the occasion to acquaint myself as far as possible with the health conditions of the peoples from whom at present British Columbia draws the bulk of her immigration. As is well known the port of Hong-Kong is the one at which