

SCIENCE

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1888.

THE UNITED STATES CONSUL at Manila, Philippine Islands, has written to the State Department to announce that the disease that raged during the summer at Taytay, about eight miles north-west of Manila, and which subsequently spread to the latter-named city, has subsided, and that there is now little apprehension of an epidemic. This disease was officially declared to be Asiatic cholera. It now appears, that, just before the sickness broke out at Taytay, a large consignment of rice, which had been stored in a damp place and soured, was sold among the native shops of the village by some speculative Chinamen, who had purchased it at very low rates owing to its damaged condition. As far as is known, all who ate this rice were attacked with what was supposed to be cholera. The symptoms attending the first cases were undoubtedly those of ordinary cholera-morbus, but subsequent cases showed the most prominent features of Asiatic cholera. The theory that disease is produced or aggravated by the imagination finds some support in this case. The masses, native and European, seem to live in mortal terror of cholera, which has made fearful ravages throughout these islands; and the first indication of an outbreak fills every one with fear. After the disease at Taytay was pronounced genuine cholera, the daily death-rate increased very rapidly; and, although the village was rapidly quarantined, the sickness spread to Manila, and within a week between sixty and seventy deaths occurred. As the death-rate failed to show the usual rapid increase, the hope gained ground that the physicians might be mistaken, and that what was supposed to be genuine cholera might be an unusually aggravated form of cholera-morbus. At all events, the number of deaths began to decrease a few days later, and the fear that the terrible plague of 1882 was to be repeated has now quite subsided. The total number of deaths in Manila since the disease appeared there late in August is 186.

THE AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION.

THE Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association was held at Milwaukee, Wis., Nov. 21, 22, and 23. More than one hundred and fifty members were present, representing almost every State in the Union and the provinces of Canada. The opening address was given by Dr. C. N. Hewitt of Minnesota, the president of the association. An abstract of this will be published in a future number of *Science*. Following the address, a large number of papers were read during the session of the association, to the most important of which we shall refer.

Benjamin Lee, M.D., secretary of the State Board of Health of Pennsylvania, read a paper on 'Memoranda of Visits to the Quarantine Stations of the Atlantic Coast, made during the Summer of 1888.' In this paper Dr. Lee criticises in most unfavorable terms the quarantine stations of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Norfolk, and Wilmington. He sums up the defects of the entire system in the following language: "1. Want of uniformity in quarantine regulations, placing one port at a disadvantage [either commercially or sanitively] as compared with another; 2. Conflict of authority, owing to the methods of appointing officials; 3. Entire lack of appreciation on the part of local legislatures, whether state or municipal, of the importance of the expenditure of considerable amounts of money in order to render quarantines at once efficient and inoppressive; 4. Tendency on part of local civic and sanitary authorities to limit their responsibility to the protection of their own city, reckless of the consequences which may ensue to inland communities if they permit infection, which circumstances render harmless to themselves, to pass unchallenged to the latter."

Dr. Crosby Gray of Pittsburgh, Penn., read a paper on the contamination of the water-supply of a portion of that city by surface drainage. The death-rate in this portion of the city (the south side) was higher than that of the rest of the city, and typhoid-fever had been very prevalent there. An investigation proved that the water-supply drawn from the Monongahela was being seriously, steadily, and increasingly polluted by sewage, factory-refuse, and by bumboat nuisances; and that the epidemic in question had been caused by the sudden downwash, through rainwater surface drainage, of typhoid excrements from certain gulleys far above the intake, the disease having for some time been endemic in those localities in a small way.

In the course of his remarks he called attention to the following facts: "The cash value of a human life to a community has often been computed, and it is a moderate estimate of the average value of the 260 lives lost on the south side, over and above its just percentage of the current death-rate in Pittsburgh, at \$1,275 each, or \$331,500 together. To this should be added the burial-expenses at \$50, or \$13,000 in all. But, as for every death there are many ill who recover, it would be a juster estimate to capitalize the sick at ten times that of the death-rate. That would mean 2,600 people ill. The average time these persons would be compelled to remain unemployed would be, say, 30 days. This would give us 78,000 days' work lost. From this deduct 15 per cent for those below the productive period of life, which would leave 66,300 days lost. Averaging the value of a day's work at \$1.25, the total loss in productivity would be \$82,875. Add a quarter to this sum, on the basis of but 31 cents per day, for otherwise productive time devoted to nursing, etc., that amounts to \$20,718 more; to which should be added certainly not less than \$2 per case for medicine, i.e., \$5,200 more. And finally there should not be forgotten the legitimate profit (say, one-third a day's wages) on its putative product, to wit, all of \$27,625 more. These amounts tally \$480,918 per annum, which, literally fatal waste, might be stopped once for all by the establishment of an improved water-service, drawing its supply from unpolluted sources one hundred miles off, by the timely and wise investment of this sum for two or three years."

'Yellow-Fever, Panics, and Useless Quarantines, its Limitation by Temperature,' was the title of a paper by John H. Rauch, M.D., secretary of the State Board of Health of Illinois. 'The Canadian System of Maritime Sanitation,' by F. Montizambert, M.D., quarantine officer at Grosse Isle, St. Lawrence River, and 'The Quarantine System of Louisiana, and its Improvement,' by Lucien F. Salomon, M.D., secretary Board of Health State of Louisiana, formed the subjects of papers presented by their respective authors. One of the most valuable papers presented to the association was that entitled 'Garbage-Furnaces and the Destruction of Organic Matter by Fire,' by S. S. Kennington, M.D., president of the Minneapolis Board of Health. He described the Fortenau garbage-crematory in use in Milwaukee, the Ryder in Pittsburgh, the Mann in Montreal and Chicago, and the Eagle in Minneapolis, Des Moines, and Coney Island. This latter style of furnace has just been completed in Milwaukee, and was put into operation for the first time during the session of the association. Health-Officer Clark of Buffalo described the garbage-crematory in use in that city, and said that its entire running expenses were defrayed by the lubricating oils extracted, alone; so that even if no market could be found at times, or at all, for the resultant fertilizers, they might at least be used as the furnace's fuel, and thus save coal.

One entire morning session was occupied in discussing the subject of yellow-fever, which was of unusual interest by reason of the epidemics in Jacksonville, Fla., and Decatur, Ala. The following papers were read: 'The History and Administration of Quarantine in Texas, 1887 to 1888,' by R. Rutherford, health-officer of Texas; 'The Outbreak of Yellow-Fever at Jackson, Miss., in September,