

MEDICINE IN CHINA.*

THESE medical reports, published by order of the Inspector-General of Customs, Peking, contain matter of much novelty—indeed some of them are not only interesting in the facts they narrate, but excellent specimens of medical reports. There are twelve contributors to the volume.

The first paper is by Dr. Dudgeon, on the health of Peking. He says that fever is the most fatal of all the ailments to which foreigners are subject, and, next to small-pox, is the most prevalent disease among the Chinese themselves. Carbuncles, which are at all times prevalent among the Chinese, were especially so during the summer of 1871. Dr. Dudgeon says he was much struck by their frequency and size. They were situated almost exclusively on the posterior part of the trunk and neck—the largest was almost one foot long by eight inches broad, the smaller ones averaged about four inches in diameter. The individuals attacked were commonly beyond the middle period of life, and in a debilitated condition of health. The mortality was of course great. Ague was also very common during the same period, and Dr. Dudgeon remarks that the symptoms of this disease are minutely and correctly described in all Chinese medical books from 2600 B.C. down to the present dynasty.

Dr. Watson's Report on Newchwang contains some interesting information quite apart from that of a medical kind.

Dr. F. Wong, in his Report on the health of Canton, adverting to the relative rarity of typhoid fever there, states that he has, during a residence of more than ten years, seen only two cases of that fever among foreigners. This immunity from enteric fever is the more curious seeing that the conditions usually supposed to be productive of that fever are in full operation. In Canton large numbers of the native population are in the daily habit of using water and inhaling air charged with the impurities of human excreta. The creek San-t'-sung, is not far from the foreign settlement; it is comparatively narrow and crowded with boats; the alvine dejections and other impurities of thousands of inhabitants along it are daily discharged into the stream, and yet the water—too dirty one would say for washing—is daily used for culinary purposes.

Boucnemia tropica, or elephantiasis Arabum, is a disease often met with in Amoy. Drs. Müller and Manson, in their report on this district, state that their ideas of the pathology of this disease are in accord with those generally accepted—namely, that it is an affection of the lymphatics excited by malarious influences. They have never, or very seldom, observed enlargement of the spleen coexisting with this disease, although ague and malarial fever are the normal accompaniments of its development, and its ostensible exciting cause. They recommend in elephantiasis of the legs, accompanied by acute exacerbations that the treatment by blistering, iodine, and bandaging, with quinine and iron and a liberal diet, should be persevered in for some months. The operative measures proposed for adoption in those cases in which the disease involves the genital organs are discussed, and the method employed by the authors is very elaborately set forth and illustrated by woodcuts.

Dr. W. W. Myers, in his report on the sanitary condition of Chefoo, alludes to the remarkable efficacy in his hands of ipecacuanha in the treatment of dysentery, to the utility of atropine as an antidote in cases of opium poisoning, and to the advantageous employment of quinine as an application to granular lids, with pannus, as recommended by Mr. Bader in the columns of THE LANCET.

Dr. Edward Henderson's memoranda on Steppe-Murrain in Shanghai is a paper embracing the results of a good deal of hard work and careful thought, and the facts recorded ought to be of interest to those engaged in the study of the diseases of China.

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