

(6.) The body shall not be carried to the place of burial in a hearse or other conveyance ordinarily used for burial purposes.

14. Every care shall be taken in the case of Chinese and others who lay stress on the non-mutilation of the dead to satisfy the relatives and friends of the deceased that no portion of the body is being removed.

15. In no case shall the grave of any such person be opened until at least five years have elapsed from the date of interment.

TO PRODUCE SULPHUR-DIOXIDE.

Break roll or rock sulphur into pieces between the size of a cherry and a loquat, place the pieces in an iron vessel supported over a tub of water, wet with a little methylated spirit, and set on fire.
One pound and a half of sulphur is sufficient for a room of 1,000 ft. cubic capacity.

With precautions such as these, and complete destruction of all sputa by burning, there is next to no chance of any of the attendants suffering in any way.

Hospitals of a more or less temporary nature have been erected at the various possible points of attack; quarantine-stations have been appointed; the cargo of all ships coming from infected ports is carefully fumigated, and a most careful inspection of all passengers and crew is carried out. The inspecting officers, while fully alive to the importance of the duty intrusted to them, are careful to interfere as little as possible with the despatch of business. The public are not infrequently apt to overlook the responsibility and onerous nature of the work performed by the Port Health Officer. They are apt to grumble at a work, the value of which they are unable to estimate. Let a case of smallpox be admitted into the colony through the want of care of one of these oft-abused officers, and what would be the result? Apart from the awful consequences of the introduction of such a disease among an unprotected population such as ours, the very men whom they now grumble at they would condemn—and rightly—for their want of care. When shippers and the world at large realise that these unavoidable delays must take place in order to prevent greater losses, maybe of life as well as money, things will run much more smoothly.

I am very pleased to say that, although now and then a little friction arises, the shipping companies generally have lent us great help, and if the same spirit of give-and-take which now exists continues we will hear less and less from the anonymous correspondent.

Method adopted for Fumigation.

The method adopted for fumigation of cargo was by means of sulphurous-acid gas. Several forms of apparatus were tried. Pans containing rock sulphur were placed in the holds of the ship and set light to, while all the hatches were battened down. This, though a tedious method, was fairly effectual, many dead rats being found near to the few air-inlets which had not been blocked up. I had an apparatus made in Auckland, whereby SO_2 gas was evolved on the deck of the vessel, and then led by means of a pipe into the hold of the vessel. This answered the purpose fairly well. I question, however, if anything approaching real disinfection—that is, the destruction of disease-producing organisms—can ever be accomplished by any agency which will not in some measure destroy the material of which the cargo is composed. As the action of the gas on the metal fittings of the saloons would have been disastrous, a solution of formalin was used for the disinfection of cushions, &c.

Fumigation of Mails.

As you will see by the following extract from the report of the Venetian Convention which was appointed to consider the whole question of plague-prevention, mails were exempted from fumigation:—

“Les lettres et correspondances, imprimés, livres, journaux, papiers d'affaires, &c. (non compris les colis-postaux), ne seront à aucune restriction ni désinfection.”

Believing strongly, however, that by means of letters, papers, and books, &c., which have been handled by persons suffering from an infectious disease, danger of transmitting it might arise, all mail matters from infected countries were subjected to fumigation. The method adopted was to wet the bags, spread the letters upon a grid, and sulphur in the proportion of $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. to the 1,000 cub. ft.; was burned in a close chamber. This was not, as might be expected, quite successful, so steam under a pressure of 3 lb. to 5 lb. was used instead. This was undoubtedly the only effectual way; but it was found that the steam affected leather goods, such as gloves, feathers were uncured, and samples of tea and tobacco were spoiled; and in some cases, where sealing-wax had been used, one or two of the letters were found to be fixed together. Despite these disadvantages, I consider that until we get the apparatus whereby we can expose the mails to formalin gas, *under pressure*, disinfection by steam is the only method of any value, the others being more of the nature of a *placebo*.

There is one thing to be borne in mind in estimating the value and cost of the precautions taken in this colony, and that is, that no single State in the Australian Commonwealth has as many possible points of infection as we have. When Victoria has guarded Melbourne, when New South Wales has cleaned up Sydney, these States are fairly safe; but here we have not one but many vital parts which must be carefully watched. But while we guard against the enemy from without, let us not forget that our main danger lies within our walls. Plague, like typhus and some other infectious diseases, while it cannot be produced by filthy habits and insanitary surroundings *per se*, still finds in these that *optimum habitat*, that best of all conditions, wherein it may flourish and thrive.

The power which insanitary conditions, the breathing of impure air, or sewer gas, has in lessening the vitality of animals, and thereby rendering them more liable to infectious diseases, has long passed the stage of speculation. The experiments of Sydney Martin and others demonstrate clearly that animals which have been exposed to sewer-gas can be killed by a dose of animal poison, which otherwise would have had little or no effect upon them. This is a truth which cannot be too strongly insisted upon, for we find, not infrequently, that this powerful factor in the causation of ill-health is overlooked and occasionally denied. A sewer or drain which