

JAPS BRING FRIGHTFUL DISEASE



Official Examining Newly Arrived Japanese on the Doric for Indications of Trachoma, the Dreaded Infectious Disease of the Eye.

DANGER NOW IS IN THE SCHOOL

Unwise Law Gives
Diseased Asiatic
Place as Pupil.

MANY COME IN
ON EACH SHIP

EVERY month there are landed in San Francisco more than twenty-five Japanese who are suffering from trachoma, one of the most terrible and infectious diseases of the eye known to medical science. It has been whispered for some time that a danger lurked in the 300 brown men who are allowed by a mistaken liberality of the law to attend the public schools and sit side by side with native American children, but the nature and extent of the danger is by no means appreciated by the public at large.

The average number of Japanese arriving at this port direct from their native country is about 300, while upward of 200 a month come from Honolulu. Fully 12 per cent, and in some instances 80 and 90 per cent, of the former class are deported on account of the presence of trachoma.

Honolulu being technically a home port, no examination is made of the eyes of the Japs, who are crafty enough to stop a few weeks at Honolulu and reship for the United States. If there is any difference in the physical condition of the immigrants whose passports read from some Japanese port and those which are dated Honolulu, it is all in favor of the former. Certainly more than 12 per cent of them would be deported were they examined for this loathsome disease which is now menacing the health of San Francisco's native population. No less certainly, this 12 per cent and whatever excess there may be is allowed to land and spread the infection.

CONDITIONS FAVORABLE.

As trachoma flourishes best in crowded districts, and is favored by low altitudes, dampness or dust, every condition for its propagation exists here save one, and that, too, is found in some of the crowded lodging-houses where newly arrived Japs are herded together. All other reasons which have been urged against the free immigration of Oriental coolies pale before this, the urgent necessity of im-

mediate protection for the children of the public schools from a loathsome Asiatic scourge.

Trachoma is classed by the immigration laws, along with tuberculosis, under the head of dangerous and contagious diseases, but the quarantine regulations take no note of it. This fact has evidently been discovered by those interested in the coolie passenger trade, for the tip has been sent abroad that the key which unlocks the door of the promised land is a passport from Honolulu, which puts the holder beyond the reach of the immigration authorities, and allows him to land without an examination of the eyes. That those suffering from the disease have not been slow to avail themselves of the situation is shown by the fact that the manifests of vessels clearing from the islands have of late shown an immense increase in their Japanese immigrant lists, while those clearing from Japan show a corresponding falling off.

EASILY EVADE THE LAW.

A high immigration official declares that by comparing the names on the manifests of various vessels he had discovered that a large number of these roundabout immigrants, who use the newly acquired insular possessions of the United States as a stepping stone, have resided in Hawaii but a week or ten days. Then, having remained just long enough to enable them to evade the spirit of American laws, they continue the trip across the Pacific. So strange a phenomenon was not long in attracting the attention of the authorities in Washington, and an investigation which they have instituted has as yet failed to bring to light a single case of trachoma which has been detained by the Honolulu inspectors. This would indicate that a much higher ratio of the diseased reaches California from Honolulu than from Japan, where intending emigrants are somewhat carefully examined by Dr. Moore, acting under orders from the Government. The estimates given at the beginning of this article are therefore incorrect only in being sadly too small.

They are based on an average of several years, and take no note of an enormous increase in the percentage of infected which has recently been noted. Of the nine Japs which the Doric brought over on her last trip eight are being detained on account of manifestations of the dread disease, while of the twenty-four brought here on the last trip of the Korea twenty-one were deported for the same cause. These arrivals were direct from Japan, and if the incoming hordes from Honolulu who slip into the country without eye inspection have shown anything like a corresponding deterioration in their bill of health the number of trachoma patients now being allowed to land must be in the neighborhood of 150 a month.

NUMBER OF CASES UNKNOWN.

"No one knows how many cases of trachoma there are in this city," said Dr. F. E. Trotter, who, as medical inspector of aliens, is responsible for the condition of the eyes in immigrants from Japan. "Our department deports all aliens afflicted with trachoma, but we cannot prevent those proving citizenship from landing and spreading the disease."

Acting Commissioner Crawford, who in the absence of Commissioner North is at the head of the Immigration Bureau, verifies the statement that Japa-

nese hailing from Honolulu are exempt under the regulation from eye-inspection. Charles Mehan, Inspector of the Chinese Bureau, testifies to the same state of facts. Dr. Blue, a former inspector, says that in his time only citizens were exempt and that the percentage of deportations on account of trachoma was then from 10 to 12 per cent, though he has heard from his colleagues that there has lately been a great increase. He also says that he believes it has made its appearance in the schools.

Trachoma is in its origin a filth disease and made its first appearance in Egypt, before historical times. Its effects are terrible in the extreme, and as there is no certain specific, it leads in severe cases to total and hopeless blindness. Almost always it leaves the eyes in a bad condition, with vision impaired and often with the lids horribly distorted. By some, it is believed, like other Oriental scourges, to be allied to certain infections of a shameful nature, and no measures calculated to check its spread could be deemed too severe.

In its first stage it is manifested by an inflammation of the eyelid. Granulations then develop, which convert the underside of the lid into a rubbing board which scratches the eyeball in winking. The infected surface looks as if it were covered with frog spawn. Later the opaque white spots develop on the cornea, the lids become deformed and turn out or droop, while the sight is lost.

HEALTHY JAP IS RARE.

Dr. Louis C. Deane, who is chief inspector of the special senses in the public schools, said to an interviewer yesterday that it was a rare thing to see a Jap who did not show some traces of trachoma. He admitted that it was contagious in its inflammatory stages, but thought most of the cases seen here were not dangerous.

Dr. Albert Cohen, one of the assistant special sense examiners, said that he would not be willing to say that there was any stage not infectious. "The disease cannot be detected by a superficial glance," he added. "It is very treacherous, and one pupil would threaten an entire room of pupils. It is particularly likely to be transmitted by towels, and one of its worst features is that it may lie dormant for years and then break out suddenly in an acute form."

Another specialist who has been engaged in the work of examination under Dr. Deane is Dr. Anson P. Hall. He flatly contradicted the opinion that trachoma was a disease from which whites were immune, or which could not become epidemic in this country.

"All of the cases which I have treated have been among the white population," he declared. "It may affect any race and its symptoms are such that they might at times escape the notice of a general practitioner." He then described the terrors of the disorder and told how it lasted for several weeks in its acute stages and lingered for years in its chronic form. He showed the roller-like forceps which were used in crushing the granulations and outlined the heroic treatment necessary to check its ravages.

MANY CASES HERE.

Another local physician who has made a specialty of eye diseases is Dr. George Brady, and it so chanced that at the very time a representative of the "Chronicle" was calling upon him a Japanese afflicted with trachoma came for treatment. The under surface of his eyelids was in a state of ulceration, yet one would have passed him upon the street as a healthy looking man.

"It is one of the most infectious diseases I have to treat," said the physician, "and I always take the utmost precautions to protect myself from it. I find lots of cases of it here in San Francisco among all races, though it particularly affects those who live in dirty, unsanitary lodgings."

Dr. Robert E. Cohn, during his long residence in Vienna, treated no other disease, and thinks that it is a standing menace to the children of San Francisco.

"We should put every safeguard between us and this invasion," he said earnestly. "The difficulty lies in the fact that the Japanese herd together in such a way that one infected individual soon spreads the disease to all the others in the house. A single towel has been known to infect ten people. The Japs are a menace socially, commercially and physically,

in my opinion. Trachoma is an insidious disease which at some stages is very apt to evade ordinary inspection, and we should take special precautions here, as has been done in New York, where the ailment is being brought in by immigrants from the more crowded quarters of Europe."

In all, some, twenty of the most prominent specialists in San Francisco were interviewed for their opinion in regard to this disease, and with great unanimity they testified to its serious nature, the great danger of infection at nearly all stages and the necessity for immediate steps to rid the city, which is already infested with cases to an alarming extent, from further diseased importations from Japan.