

## REEKING IN FILTH.

### Horrors of the Chinese Quarter.

#### A HEALTH BOARD VISIT.

##### A Decomposed Body Discovered in an Undertaker's Dark Cellar.

The Board of Health inspected Chinatown yesterday. Shortly before 10 o'clock the members of the board, accompanied by the police surgeon and other officials, left the receiving hospital on a tour of inspection. Police Sergeant Bethel was detailed by Chief Crowley to escort the party. The Chinese Consul, Colonel Bee, who called upon the board just prior to the commencement of the tour, informed the physicians that it was his desire that they make a thorough inspection of the Chinese quarter and take a look at the worst features of Chinatown life.

The guide, equipped with a dark lantern, first led the way into the dark recesses of a most filthy alley off of Jackson street, between Nos. 612 and 614. In a six by nine compartment there was found an old and blind Chinese woman living in darkness and squalor, having only a regiment of cats as companions. Another old decrepit blind woman was found in the same locality.

The old Gibson house at 618 Jackson street, which is known as the Palace Hotel of Chinatown, with its four stories of filth and rotunda reeking with foul smells, was the next point of interest. Here a dozen opium joints, dark and ill ventilated, were found on the lower floor. Just across the street, in another alley, the board visited the quarters of the Chinese rag pickers. An underground passage in this particular quarter led to a deserted water well or reservoir, formerly used by a Chinese water company. From this point the party passed through a long, narrow, underground passage, emerging on Bartlett alley. An old building on the narrow thoroughfare, one of the worst of the old rookeries in Chinatown, was condemned on the spot by the board. An opium joint under the sidewalk and in total darkness was next inspected.

The sensational feature of the tour made itself felt when the party descended into the foul basement at 635 Pacific street. There is where Gun Kee conducts a combination hospital and undertaker's shop. Several sick Chinamen were found in the dark recesses of the cellar, and in a rear room the dead body of a Chinese was discovered. The remains were already in a decomposed state, and the man had evidently been dead for several days. Up to yesterday the case had not been reported to the Coroner. Several others were dying in the cellar. These Chinese undertaking establishments follow the custom in vogue in China, of allowing dying men to be brought there to die and be buried.

The notorious Chinese hospital in Bull Run alley, near Pacific street, was the next locality of interest. A dozen sick Chinamen were found there, lying in ill-ventilated quarters. Upon the roof of the building an old and insane Celestial ran about in a bewildered condition, his long black hair streaming in the wind. The combination hospital and undertaking shop of Main, Fook & Co. at 732 Pacific street, and that of Quong Fook of 742 Pacific street, were thoroughly inspected. Half a score of dying Chinese were found in these places. A similar institution was found at 712 Pacific street.

The leading streets in Chinatown were found in a passably clean condition; but the alleys were reeking in filth and garbage. Sullivan alley and Ross street, where the tan gamblers hold the fort, were found in good condition. At 35 Waverly place the party looked in upon the joss house of the Tong Wah Wen Society. At 749 Clay street is a three-story building occupied by the Hop Wo Benevolent Society. The upper floors are gorgeous in their appointments, but the cellar received the condemnation of every official present. This basement is utilized as a hospital and dying house for members of the society. The place is as dark as a dungeon and indescribably filthy. Half a dozen Chinese lay at the point of death in the dark recesses of the cellar. Not long ago two dead men were found in the place several days after death. The Health Board agreed to condemn the cellar at the next regular meeting.

While at the Hop Wo establishment the members of the board discussed the question of establishing a Chinese hospital outside the city limits. The statement was made that the Board of Supervisors had absolutely refused to entertain any proposition of this kind. Under the present circumstances the health officials think an outlying hospital for Chinese is one of the great necessities of the city government.

The old Globe Hotel, one of the landmarks of San Francisco, proved an object of great concern to the touring officials. This old building at the corner of Jackson and Dupont streets was in former days the leading and most fashionable hotel in the city. Today it stands as an old rookery, with iron-doored gambling bells on the lower floor and hundreds of Chinamen lived in the upper stories. The owner of the building, who receives \$500 a month in rent, lives in Paris. Nothing has been done in twenty years to cleanse or renovate the place. The Board of Health will take action in this matter at its next regular meeting. At all events the authorities will order the old rookery cleansed and whitewashed.

After visiting numerous other filthy and neglected corners and cellars in the Chinese quarter, the members of the board returned to the City Hall. At the next regular meeting the board will devote considerable time to Chinatown, and will order many buildings condemned, while dozens of others will be ordered cleaned and whitewashed.