

tory legislation can object to. Upon this very point Utah has taken a retrograde step from a position once occupied, and its effect has not been good. A forward movement to the former position is a present necessity to every thinking mind that seeks the State's welfare through its schools.

IS IT A FRAUD?

We have received inquiries from several parties in Utah county regarding the reliability of the Atlas Publishing company, said to have its headquarters in Salt Lake City. The statement is made that agents for this alleged company have been canvassing the towns of Utah county and elsewhere for a proposed county history of the State, in which are to be inserted brief biographies of old settlers. The canvassers, who are of the usual loquacious type, give a rate of \$5 for the biography, which is to be attended with a portrait of the subject, and require a subscription to the book, which is also \$5. The five dollars for the biography is to be paid down, the price of the book to be collected on delivery. In making the canvass, the parties promised to send someone on a given date to take memoranda for the biography, and in several complaints to us it is alleged that this part of the scheme has been violated, although the money was paid. In some other cases, but half of the price for the biography was paid, and subscribers are now receiving letters calling for the other half. The inquiries sent to us ask whether or not the scheme is a fraud.

As to an Atlas Publishing company in this city, we can learn of no reputable concern of that name, or of any publishing house that intends issuing a history such as that described to us as being canvassed for. We learn that the parties who are receiving the money on this account give postoffice box 516 in this city as the place of delivery of their mail in this city; and if they are engaged in any crooked work they are liable to prosecution by the government for using the mails to defraud.

Regarding this scheme, or any entitled to come before the public as legitimate enterprises, a very simple and safe rule might be invoked to protect the people from fraud. It is that when a legitimate enterprise is launched in the line referred to, the public press usually gives due notice of it. Those schemes that are dubious and crooked avoid the newspapers every time, because they do not want light turned on their methods. If the parties who complain in this instance had observed the rule named, they would not now be worrying over the thought that they have been duped into paying out their money for no return except bitter experience. Responsible enterprises do not work by dark-lantern methods; neither do they require payments before there is something tangible in sight. How much money has been collected for this alleged history we do not know; from what we can learn there has been quite a large sum. But this publication of complaints made may save some localities in the State

from being imposed upon, or it may make parties a little more careful before parting with their hard-earned cash, and also bring to light any legitimate designs which the promoters of the scheme have in view.

THE BLACK DEATH.

From Russia comes a warning to Europe on account of the plague raging in India. The St. Petersburg papers anticipate that the epidemic will visit the Russian empire, and recommend that physicians at once be sent to the stricken country to study the nature of the disease and the remedies against it. The *Novoye Vremya* thinks that "with England's present methods in permitting the population of the stricken districts to emigrate, the plague will very soon be all over the country." Another paper says:

History has shown that Russia is always the country that suffers most from the pest. Russian doctors should at once go to the plague-stricken districts and find out the truth and study the disease, as we cannot rely on the reports of the English, whose commercial interests have eaten into the humanitarian instincts of all nations. The world should unite to form a cordon around the devastated districts.

Dr. Daly of New York, writing to the *Herald*, expresses the view that the probability of the plague reaching our shores is very remote, although it has been allowed to spread at an alarming rate in India. He bases this statement on the fact that the Suez canal, the chief gateway from India, is well guarded by quarantine stations, equipped with modern disinfection apparatus under the superintendency of an international quarantine commission presided over by Dr. Melville of Alexandria. He also points out that filth and famine are among the chief factors in the propagation of the disease and that countries comparatively free from these furnish but little encouragement for its further spread.

In England the feeling is one of rather insecurity. A medical journal, *The Hospital*, finds that Great Britain is not entirely safe for a new invasion of the plague. The paper points out that its ravages in the middle ages were frightful. It has been calculated that no less than twenty-five million persons, or one-fourth of the whole population of Europe, died in the epidemics which swept across the land in the middle of the fourteenth century, and in certain parts of England it would appear that the whole population was carried off. In the fifteenth, in the sixteenth, and in the seventeenth centuries successive epidemics occurred; but since then England has been free. But the disease seems always to have persisted in one part or another of that vague geographical expression, the East, and has again and again stretched out its tentacles to gather victims in Turkey, in Russia, and along the shores of the Mediterranean.

After this brief review of the history of the plague the journal mentioned says:

No doubt the sanitary conditions in which many of the people live have been vastly improved since the time of

the black death of the fourteenth century. But both then and in the time of the great plague many snug and comfortable citizens were carried off, so that it was not altogether a matter of poverty; and, as to sanitation, it would, we think, be idle to contend that toward the end of the seventeenth century the sanitary surroundings became so much better, the poverty so much less, and the food so much more ample throughout Europe than they had been during the three preceding centuries, that the plague, which up to then had occurred so frequently, could no longer find a foothold among the people.

With sadness we have to accept the fact that we do not know on what depends the periodical development of epidemic virulence in plague. We know that plague remains endemic in certain districts in a minor form for long periods, and then breaks bounds, spreading far and wide as an intensely fatal epidemic, but why this happens we do not know. We know that, whether in regard to endemic prevalence or epidemic spread, the presence of filth, and especially of pollution of the soil, seems to be a determining agent in regard to the localities to be attacked. But in view of the fact that the plague vanished of known accord from Europe during the seventeenth century, it would be presumptuous to say that the improvement which has taken place in such conditions will prevent its recurrence. So far as our sanitation helps to protect us from other zymotic diseases, so it will do from plague, for plague is essentially a filth disease. But sanitation is a wide term. We are told that overcrowding of dwelling houses is a powerful contributory cause of plague; but have we no overcrowding? We are told that "of all social conditions, poverty and general social misery seem to be the most influential in its production" (*Allbutt's System of Medicine*). But have we no poverty and social misery? And as for dirt and pollution of the soil, although our well-drained towns may probably assume that they are safe from a disease so peculiarly allied with filth as plague is, we would ask: Are there no midden towns in England? Are there no villages yet undrained? Are there no hamlets yet unprovided with water except such as soaks into the wells from neighboring cesspools? * * * We do not wish to be alarmists, but to those who boast that England is immune to such diseases, and that by her cleanliness she is saved, we say: Do not boast too soon.

The great trouble in the Orient is that the common people with their ideas of an unavoidable fate can hardly be induced to take common precautions against the propagation of any epidemic. Their prejudices against western methods are so strong that they will avoid, if possible, to follow the directions given for their own benefit. Co-operation of the natives with the European health officers is not to be counted on. Prohibition against pilgrimages to Mecca and ordinary quarantine regulations will be regarded as measures of oppression, not to be submitted to, and therefore the disease will find outlets to the great centers of the world, unless indeed most drastic measures are adopted.

Then, it is not apparent how quarantine measures can be enforced against the little pests that, according to all reports, utilize vessels for their passage from one part of the world to another, just as human beings do. The rodents will enter a ship by means of an anchor chain, a rope or a gang-