

Jerusalem  
November 20. 1900

No. 63.

Sir,

In reference to the recent outbreak of smallpox of a virulent type in this Consular District, alluded to in my despatch No. 61 of the 13<sup>th</sup> instant,

I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of a report drawn up by two of the Medical officers attached to the "London

Society

M. de Bunsen Esq. C.B.  
Her Majesty's Charge d'Affaires  
Constantinople

Arthur Hetherington  
Nov. 13 1900.

80 per

Consul General  
No. 62  
By the  
Medical Officer  
Resident  
at Jerusalem

Society for Promoting Christianity  
amongst the Jews," making certain  
suggestions for the cleansing of  
the city and the arrest of the  
disease.

This town hygienically, no  
doubt, resembles in every respect  
every other town in the Turkish  
dominions and probably in all  
eastern Countries under native  
government. Nevertheless in  
view of the thousands of Russian,  
English, French, German, and  
other

other pilgrims and tourists who  
annually visit Jerusalem, the  
suggestions contained in the foregoing  
report for preventing the spread of  
epidemic disease and improving  
the sanitary condition of the city  
may be worthy of the attention of  
the Central Board of Health at  
Constantinople.

I have the honour to be,

With the highest respect,  
Sir,

Your most obedient  
Humble Servant.

John Dickson

Jerusalem 195  
13.<sup>th</sup> November 1900.

Dear Sir,

We the undersigned British  
Medical men practising in the  
city of Jerusalem, feel it our  
duty to call your attention, as H.  
M. representative, to the deplorable  
sanitary condition existing here.  
The present state of affairs is a  
standing danger to British residents  
and visitors but with the plague  
so near at hand to leave things as  
they are is to invite a disaster.

Jerusalem is extraordinarily  
well furnished with private  
Hospitals

[illegible]

Hospitals supported by various foreign societies & there are many medical men of all nations, but such are the conflicting interests of the various nationalities & religions represented here & especially such is the entire indifference of the Ottoman Government, that nothing so far is being done or can be by private individuals be done, to improve a condition of things which, considering the prominence of this city in the eyes of the world, is a disgrace to civilization.

As regards those things patent to all - the streets are kept in a state of constant filth with perhaps the exception of one or two of the carriage roads: piles of vegetable

vegetable & animal substances in a rotting condition, are allowed to accumulate in every corner & are left there for days & often even months. In the Jewish quarter especially, being the largest & poorest of all, the state of things is deplorable. When, as is their custom on Fridays the Jews clean out their houses the house refuse is poured freely into the roads & we can testify that often it is left there uncleared for many days. On the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday) the accumulated dirt in the streets is most objectionable.

Secondarily in all but the main streets & especially under archways (where foul air can specially accumulate) it is the custom for the people to answer the calls of nature whenever convenient to themselves. Several streets, frequently used by British visitors & travellers, and one in particular passing between British property on both sides of the road, are rendered almost impassable by the effluvia of the

the streets against the walls & along the sides. No attempt appears to be made either to stop the nuisance or to clean away the filth, indeed in one of the worse places soldiers of the Government are among the chief offenders. Public urinals are practically unknown.

Coming to such large questions as drainage & water supply it is impossible to fully represent the state of affairs & as things are, hopeless to expect much improvement. The drainage is utterly filthy, the stone lined channels are constantly getting blocked & overflowing & the distribution of the sewage in the valley leading to Siloam (Silwan) is one which no civilized municipal authorities would tolerate. The house drains are practically all untrapped and are constantly

constantly getting blocked.

The water supply by cisterns under the houses is most unsatisfactory — especially as regards quantity. Among the poor during a great part of the summer water of, often, most questionable quality, has to be purchased in skins. As this city is steadily growing in population the water supply is becoming a question of increasing urgency. It seems to us that there can be no satisfactory solution short of restoring, as could be easily done, the supply of water which in olden times entered the city as a regular running stream from the springs at "Solomon Pools" and "Arub." These supplies brought to the city in iron pipes, carefully guarded

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To H. M. Consul  
Jerusalem

Jerusalem, Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>  
General Beckton  
No. 63  
1 Street.  
Recd.  
By Post  
Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> Dec. No. 61.  
That is the name of the  
aunt of the copy of the  
English Doctors meeting in  
the month of -  
seen at present  
St. James's, No. 10  
A. M. of the 11<sup>th</sup> Dec.  
This is the name of the  
Municipality of the  
A. M.  
81 Dec.

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guarded & looked after, would do  
so much to make the city more healthy.  
It appears to us that the only possible  
way of getting this undertaking taken  
in hand would be by a joint repre-  
sentation to the Ottoman Government  
from the various Embassies or if  
necessary by the grant of a Firman  
to a European Waterworks Company.

The above mentioned nuisances  
lay the inhabitants & visitors of this  
city open to constant attacks of:  
Malaria, dysentery, diarrhoea & enteric  
fever, but they also directly & indirectly  
open the road for Epidemics of a  
serious nature. A large part of the  
city is now just in the condition which  
would give a most ready lodgement to the  
Plague or Cholera. The close crowding  
of the inhabitants, their general  
poverty

poverty & the condition of their constitutions  
undermined by poor living, the breathing  
of sewer gases, the drinking of foul water  
& the constantly recurring attacks of  
Malaria, dysentery & diarrhoea present  
a combination most favourable for such  
a visitation.

Such an epidemic being more than  
probable we ask what provision is  
there to meet it? We are now in the  
throes of an epidemic of Small-pox  
more severe than has been known here  
for many years. Whole streets have been  
visited, house by house & a considerable  
proportion of the inhabitants have  
perished from malignant & confluent  
attacks. Our hands, as private medical  
men, are powerless to strike at the root,  
or roots, of the evil, & the municipal  
Authorities appear to us to have made  
no attempt whatever to cope with it. The  
two

two urgent necessities, the isolation of the sick & of infected households & the vaccination of the healthy has never been attempted. As regards the first there is not a single hospital bed in Jerusalem open to the poor for any infectious disease. The houses of the poor are invariably one room. The smallpox case lies in one corner while the children of the house, usually unvaccinated, the other relations & usually too the children & adults of other households freely pass in & out. We can testify from experience that there is, almost invariably, no attempt to keep visitors from other houses from the 'houses' of smallpox cases nor to prevent convalescent but still infectious cases wandering into other houses or promenading the streets. Our difficulty in visiting such

such cases is to keep the room a little clear while we are there & to our certain knowledge the disease has been conveyed from house to house & street to street by this personal contact with the sick. Needless to say the sick are neither properly nursed nor otherwise attended to & many die of neglect and ignorant attention.

Then as regards Vaccination, only a small proportion are properly vaccinated & among the unvaccinated we find the utmost distaste to submitting voluntarily to this simple & safe preventative. This is we believe due largely to two main causes (1) confusion of vaccination with

with inoculation - which is still largely practised in the villages & is a fruitful cause of the spread of the disease - And (2) To the fact that vaccination has in the past been so carelessly & unskillfully performed by ignorant and untrained natives as to have been not only no protection but even the cause of death. Offers to vaccinate gratuitously, threats & entreaties all often fail even when one case of small pox is present in the house. We know of cases when prompt & compulsory vaccination would have infallibly saved life.

The Government has insisted on vaccination of their soldiers & the Government pupils. The scholars attending foreign schools (British, Russian,

200  
Russian, German &c) have all been re-vaccinated with the most gratifying results, but the other scholars are freely left to fall victims to the prevailing malady. These scholars are by no means all Turkish subjects being many of them Jewish children from Britain, America, Germany, Austria & Russia, but in the enforcement of vaccination each authority from the Governor downwards waits for some one else to interfere.

We feel most strongly that as regards small pox vaccination, and during an epidemic re-vaccination, should be enforced by the Government and, as regards foreign subjects by the Consulates, and with regard to this & other epidemics, that may & will arise, the most urgent need at present is the compulsory isolation

of

of the sick, who cannot be thoroughly isolated in their homes, in a special "Infectious diseases Hospital". This might be largely supported by the various Communities here, a certain daily charge being made to the head of each community for each patient kept there from his particular people. Separate 'blocks' might be assigned to 'Christians' 'Moslems' and 'Jews', and a large part of the hospital might be constructed of temporary materials & be destroyed at the end of the epidemic.

Lastly to facilitate a gradual improvement in all these sanitary matters & in view especially of the very large proportion of European foreign residents in Jerusalem as well

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well as in the interest of the great number of foreign visitors coming every year, we would recommend that the various Embassies or Consulates should combine to appoint an international City-Officer of health who should give his whole time to the improvement of the sanitary condition of the city receiving notification, at any rate from all the foreign doctors, of every case of infectious disease and every death (both of which are entirely neglected) & making those Bacteriological & other examinations which are necessary in every Public Health department. At present no one is responsible & the native doctor in the pay of the Turkish Government cannot be expected

expected to initiate any radical or thorough reforms. Such an officer of health would need to be not only thoroughly up in his own department but also one well up in modern languages, essentially French, English & German, but need by no means necessarily be an Englishman. He should certainly not be a private practitioner.

These are some of the suggestions we would make as remedies for the present & other threatening dangers. In the meantime we would respectfully request you to see if anything can be done with the local authorities at the present time to remedy a state of things which even in Jerusalem is

a disgrace at the close of the Nineteenth Century.

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/S/ Percy S. Er Wheeler M.D. F.R.C.S.E. etc &  
Medical Supt. English Mission Hospital.  
Turkish Diploma

/S/ Ernest H. Gurney Masterman.  
Supt. Public Health Cantab. F.R.C.S.  
Turkish Gov. Diploma.

Jerusalem, 203  
November 20. 1900

No. 64.

Sir,  
I have the honour to acknowledge  
the receipt of Mr. Marling's Despatch  
of the 3<sup>rd</sup> instant in reference to the  
claims of Messrs. Thos. Cook & Son on the  
Turkish Government, and to state  
in reply that I have communicated  
its contents to their Agent in this  
city.

I have the honour to be,  
With the highest respect

Sir,  
Your most obedient,  
humble Servant  
John Dickson

L. d.  
sen. Eq. C.B.  
Chargé d'Affaires  
Constantinople

Doctor Whelan & MacGowan  
Great Britain  
Jerusalem, Nov. 13. 1900

With much of small force -  
suggestions for meeting them  
4 -

Frederick  
de la Courne & Dickson  
Dep. No. 63 of Nov. 20  
1900