

plague of cholera, which rapidly spread over the Asiatic continent, and thence into our own hemisphere.

It must not be forgotten that the *deltas* effecting a combination of salt and fresh water, polluted by organic matter—such as the vegetable detritus which the rivers amass at their mouths—concentrate every condition capable of vitiating the air, and rendering it injurious and deadly to human life.

The reaction which takes place between the organic matter and the sulphates dissolved in the sea-water convert these salts into sulphurs; which in their turn are decomposed by the carbonic acid of the atmosphere; and the sulphuretted hydrogen resulting from this decomposition, diffused in the air, endows it with mephitic properties. Intermittent fevers, more or less severe, invariably ferment upon the coasts which present the conditions we have just enumerated; and when these conditions reach a certain excess, as in the Gangetic delta, they originate the most formidable epidemics.

[The delta of the Ganges begins at Seebgunge. From thence to the Bay of Bengal, the descent, along a line of 285 miles, averages not more than three inches in a mile. It now commences to throw off its various branches; the Bhagrutti at Seebgunge, and, about 70 miles lower down, the Jellinghi—which afterwards unite to form the Hooghly; below the starting-point of the Jellinghi, the Ganges gives birth, successively, to the Marabhanga, the Gorae, the Chundui, and the Kirtynassa; on the other hand, it receives numerous affluents from the Brahmapootra,—the entire area between the two great rivers forming a perfect network of watercourses, which eventually find their way into the Bay of Bengal, through fully twenty estuaries. Of these, the most available for navigation, at present—though fears are entertained of its filling up before any long period of time has elapsed—is the Hooghly, in lat. $21^{\circ} 40' N.$, and long. $88^{\circ} E.$

It has been computed that the Ganges delivers into the sea, on an average, a yearly total of 534,600,000 tons of solid matter. Towards the end of July, the delta is inundated over a breadth of nearly one hundred miles; presenting a broad waste of level and slowly-moving waters, studded by clumps of trees and villages, and navigated by every kind of craft. To reduce the inundation, extensive dams and embankments have been constructed, with a total length of one thousand miles.]

[There are several deltas on the American continent.

That of the mighty river Orinoco begins at about 130 miles from its mouth, where it throws off a branch which flows northward into the Atlantic. Several of its mouths are navigable; and the main stream, the Boca di Nuvios, is divided by a line of low green islands into two channels, each a couple of miles in width.