

PROCEEDINGS OF THE PLAGUE COMMISSIONER.

(1898)

MISCELLANEOUS.

No. 365

DATED 25.10.98

[Despatch Abstract.]

Plague at Visharum, N. Arcot.

Recording report of the Collector of N. Arcot
stating that the people of Visharum have substantially
fulfilled their promises regarding disinfection
of the infected houses.

BACK PAPERS.

No.	Date.	No.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

No.	Date.	No.	Date.
7/5	18-11-98		

FROM

THE COLLECTOR AND

DISTRICT MAGISTRATE,

North Arcot.

To.

The Plague Commission.
Madras.

No. of Enclosures.

Letter, dated 13. oct 1898

is No. 212 of 1898

SUBJECT.

Submitting detailed
report about the measures
adopted at Viskhanam
for the prevention of plague.

Plague

NORTH ARCOT, COLLECTOR'S OFFICE,

Arthur & 13th Oct 1898.

No. 212 of 1898.

From

J. H. Batten Esq.

Collector & District Magistrate,

North Arcot.

To

The Plague Commission
Madras.

Sir,

I have the honor to confirm
the following telegram despatched
on the 10th instant:

"Tahildar Treot wires one Abdul
Karim left Bangalore fourth died
"Kalavai Treot Taluk eighth
"probably plague. Tahildar
"and hospital assistant conducted
"disinfection & preparation and
"proceeding Kalavai myself!"

2. On the morning of the 8th instant
the village magistrate and the police
station house officer of Kalavai in
Treot Taluk received information
that one Abdul Khareem had
arrived at Kalavai on the
morning

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Morning of the seventh, and was sick. They went to the house and found the man to be ill and they suspected plague. They sent a report to the Great Taluk office which was received by the head Accountant at 2 P.M. on the 8th. The Tahsildar being in Chittoor for a District Board meeting, the stationery submagistrate, the Great Hospital Assistant and the Police Inspector proceeded to Kalavai, but the man had died at about 2 P.M. before their arrival. Their relatives refused to allow the Hospital Assistant to examine the corpse, but themselves examined it under his directions. No buboes were found, but the case was no doubt plague, as the man died of high fever with delirium, and he is also stated to have spat yellowish matter and to have been stupid, and rambling in manner. The corpse was buried six feet deep, the relatives

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relatives themselves procuring Corrosive sublimate and putting it in the grave. This they did only after some persuasion, and they refused to use Government disinfectants. The inmates of the house where deceased died, 22 in number were segregated in a shed built for the purpose, the house was unroofed and the thatch burnt and the floor is disinfected by the Kilm method. The Tahsildar who arrived at Kalavai on the 9th had been with me at the Tiruvattur case and knew exactly what to do. Before removal to the segregation shed, one of those segregated escaped and went to Statheri, but was brought back and put in the camp.

3. It appears that Abdul Kharim left Bangalore on the 4th inst., arrived at Arcot Railway station on the 5th, and proceeded to Melvisharam an important Mussalman

Mussalman town of 5000 inhabitants about 4 miles from Arcot. He went to the house of his uncle Muvittu Fakir Mahomed Sahet. On the 6th he got fever and became delirious, rambling, and stupid. His father happened to come from Kalavai to Vishoram for some ceremony and found ^{his} son in this condition. On the night of the 6th he took him to Kalavai in a Hindu's Country Cart (which has since been partly burnt and the rest disinfected). In the cart travelled the deceased, his father and females of his family, all of whom were segregated at Kalavai. ~~deceased's uncle~~ ~~Muvittu~~ Muvittu Fakir Mahomed and the uncle's next door neighbour, Khader Moideen, a cook by profession, engaged the country cart, accompanied the party to Kalavai, and assisted the father to lift the sick man into and out of the cart, thereby becoming infected. They both deny having gone

gone to Kalavai but the bandymen says they did, and the father admitted that they did so when I saw him at Kalavai on the 11th.

4. On the morning of the 9th on ^{learning} these particulars the Tahsildar who was then at Kalavai sent a message to the Arcot Revenue Suspecter to go to Vishoram and conduct segregation and disinfection operations. The Revenue Suspecter arrived there late in the morning, and with a good deal of difficulty before nightfall induced deceased's uncle - Muvittu Fakir Mahomed Sahet and his family to go for segregation into a chutnam on the outskirts of the town. Several Dubbais objected, but a Muhammadan Constable helped the Revenue Suspecter to

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to persuade them, and the bulk of the inhabitants had not got wind of what was going on, and so offered no opposition. But the news soon got about and there was considerable excitement. In the course of the 9th, the Revenue Inspector sent a message to the Tahsildar saying he met with some resistance, and the Tahsildar sent off the Police Inspector and the Stationary Magistrate to Visharum. They arrived there in the morning of the 10th, and tried to induce the people to get the coat Khader Mohideen above mentioned and his family segregated, but immense crowds collected and nothing could be done. Khader Mohideen, moreover, was not to be found.

5. On the night of the ninth, I got the first intimation of the case by a telegram from the Tahsildar, but in this there was no mention of any resistance.

7.

At about noon on the 10th I received a further telegram saying that Dubhais were resisting at Visharum. This was based on the Revenue Inspector's first report. I started by the 2.5 pm train for Vellore, and as there was nothing to show what the extent of the resistance was, I took with me the European Reserve Inspector Mr. McKen^{en}, and two head Constables and 12 Reserve Constables, being the whole of the Reserve ^{that was} available. I also telegraphed to the Assistant Superintendent, Vellore, Mr. Hamilton, to meet me at Vellore. In order to avoid a riot if possible, I also wired to the Sub Magistrate to take no further steps until my arrival. At Vellore I engaged Juthas to convey the police, and I rode with them and Mr. Hamilton to Visharum where we arrived just before dark.

We

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to be met by the Police Inspector,
Shi Hussain. I saw Nurvitta
Fakis ^{Mahamud} ~~Mahamud~~ Sahet, who was
in the Chattram with his family
under a guard of the local police.
I then proceeded to his house,
the place where the deceased
was taken ill and where he
had stopped for about 36
hours, which was therefore
infected. An immense crowd
gathered and I spoke to the
leading man of the place
one Khader Batchu Sahet
and the other elders, and
explained to them the nature,
purpose and advantages of
disinfection and segregation
etc etc. They politely but firmly
declared the impossibility of
any further measures of the
sort. It was now dark and
it was impossible to do
anything more that night, but
I left a police guard on the
infected house and on the next
house, Khader ~~Wordeen's~~.
Khader Wordeen's womankind
declared

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declared he was not at home
and they did not know where he was.
But I got Batcha Sahet to promise
to produce ^{him} the morning. I went
to break and returned to Visharun
in ^{the} early morning of the 11th, taking
with me the Ranipet Apo the early with
disinfectants. I went straight to Fakis
Mahamed's house, where again a large
crowd of certainly more than 2000
people collected round me.
Batcha Sahet was not forthcoming,
and I have ^{learnt} heard that he was
so abused by his coreligionists
for having offered to assist me
that he thought it better to keep out
of the way. Other elders however
took his place, and explained
that even if they themselves consented
to what I wanted, yet the crowd
would certainly not consent. I
explained exactly what I wanted
done viz. that the thatch of
Fakis ^{Mahamud's} ~~Mahamed's~~ house should be
removed and burnt, that the
floor should be disinfected
and

and afterwards ¹⁰ burnt by the
Kiln method. I found Khader
Moideen in his house next door
where I believe he had been all the
time. On my saying to him that
he must go into segregation at
the Chattram with his family, he
refused saying he would sooner
have his throat cut. I told him
and the leaders of the crowd
that he must go whether he liked
it or not. I also sent for water
to mix with the disinfectants
and for bratties for the Kiln
disinfection. Meanwhile the
leading Mussalmans gave
me to understand that even
if they themselves should be
induced to consent to these
measures, yet the crowd would
certainly not allow me to carry
them out. I argued with them for
a considerable time but without
effect so far as carrying out
the measures myself was
involved. Finally however,
the three leading men, Alauji
Mahomed

Muhammed II.
Mahomed Isak sahib, Lowcar
Abdul Kharim sahib, and Patel
Sada sahib undertook to carry
out my proposals themselves in
a modified form. They held
themselves responsible to burn the
thatch of Fakir ^{Muhammed} Mahomed's house
to dig up the floor, and burn it
by the Kiln method (which I
explained to them) under the
Hospital assistant's superin-
-tendence, to whitewash both
houses, to burn straw on the floor of
Khader Moideen's house and to
induce Khader Moideen and
family to go into segregation
in a bungalow. (approved of by me)
belonging to Alauji ^{Muhammed} Mahomed
Isak sahib. Disinfectant
they refused to employ. The
alternative was now before me,
whether to accept these undertakings
given by the people themselves or
to attempt to carry out segregation
and disinfection by force.
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I adopted the former alternative as with the small force at my disposal and in the face of overwhelming odds the attempt to use force would have inevitably resulted in a riot, and even if we had succeeded in effecting our purpose, which I very much doubt, it would have only been after resorting to the use of fire arms. What influenced my decision as much as anything else was the consideration that a riot and its results would have forced the hand of Government in deciding on the policy to be adopted. I therefore acceded to the proposals of the above three men and returned to Arcot, leaving a police guard and the Hospital assistant in charge of the two houses. I sent you a telegram briefly stating the circumstances and saying that coercion was impracticable and asking for your presence and advice.

advice.

6. The same afternoon (the 11th) I visited Kalavai, 13 miles from Arcot to see how matters were getting on there, as I had received no detailed report. I found all the necessary measures had been carried out in a most efficient manner, and I returned to Arcot the same night. At about 9.30 PM, I got information that Abdul Razack who had come to Viskaram on the 8th from Bangalore had presented himself for examination before the village munsiff on the 8th & 9th but not on the 10th and 11th. On the Hospital assistant and the Village Munsif going to his house (which is a tiled one in the same street as the houses of ^{Muhammad} Mahomed Ali Fakir and Khader Noideen) on the afternoon of the 11th to ascertain ^{the} his reason ^{they} were told by the inmates that he was merely sick, but it was suspected from

from what the neighbours said that he was already dead. The Hospital assistant was not allowed to see him. At 10 pm. I received a further report that in spite of the ^{remonstrances} ~~interference~~ of the police, who asked them to wait for orders, the crowd came and buried the corpse in the cemetery at 8 pm. There is no doubt but that Abdul Razak died of Plague.

7. you arrived at host and went to Visharum on the morning of the 12th and it is unnecessary for me to recount what action you took. The promises made to me had been partially carried out, namely the Thatch of ^{Muhammed} Mahomed Fakir's house had been burnt and the floor dug up ready to be burnt, but Khader Moideen had not yet been removed from his house.

I have the honor to be
Yours most obedt servant

W. S. A. S.
Agallikar

P. S. Since writing the above, I got from the District Surgeon a letter at 10 pm. on the 13th at Kattadi saying that another man who had arrived from Bangalore on the 8th had died of plague at Visharum at 11. am and had been buried at noon that morning, and that the people in spite of their promises to you refused to employ disinfectants on the ground that they caused plague. This letter I showed to you in the railway carriage at Kattadi. As directed by you I shall await your further orders.

W. S. A. S.

Agallikar

W. S.

Is.

C No 665

Office
1898
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From

The Collector of North Madras

To

The Plague Commission
Madras

Reference No 238. P. of 28

D 20th October 1898

Received

22/10/98

Submitting a report
as to how far the people
of Vicharam have
kept up their promises.

Arcoth Submagistrate's office

Dated 17th October 1898

Ref on order No 298 P. of 88

From The Sub Magistrate of
Arcoth

To, The Collector
North Arcot.

Sir

With reference to your honor's
telegram dated 16-10-98 asking me
to send express report as to how far
Visharam people have complied with
their promises, I beg to report as follows:-

1. In the house in which about
Karam (Kalarai patient) first
halted at Visharam, the earth was
scraped and burnt and the roof
was also burnt; but no whitewashing
was done.

2. In the next house belonging
to Kadi Mohideen the roof was
removed a little so as to admit
of the sun inside.

3. In the house in which about
Razack died on the 11th and also in
the house in which Amuridin died
on the 13th instant, the earth was scraped
and burnt, the tiles were removed
and whitewashing was done. In
both these cases, clothes were also

boiled in hot water. The people
refused to receive lotion from the
Apothecary but they purchased
Carbolic Soap and mixed it with
Chunam for white washing.

On the whole I report
that the people at Vishram
have substantially fulfilled
their promises. The persons whom
the Revenue Inspector first
got removed to the Segregation
Camp have been ordered to be liberated
this evening under your honor's personal
order.

I beg to remain
Sir

Your most obedient servant

(sd) S. Tyagarajaper

Subthangho.

Ref No 298-P. 10/10/98

(True copy) Submitted to the
Plague Commissioner, Madras
for information in continuation
of this office letter Ref No 298
dated 13th October 1898.

W. B. Allen

For the local collection
Office, Camp Vallance
19th October 98

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When copied

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