

PROCEEDINGS OF THE PLAGUE COMMISSIONER.

(1898)

MISCELLANEOUS.

No. 863

Dated 6-12-98

Despatched

[Despatch Abstract.]

Treatment for Plague

Recording a paper re an old successful — read before the Madras Medl. Association on 18-10-98 by J. V. Ramaswami Nayudu, L. M. S.

BACK PAPERS.

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LAGUE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE. (1898)

CURRENT No. 1623

*note Perhaps, this might be
forwarded to the Surgeon General
for remarks
being
30/11/98*

From *The Secretary, Madras
Medical Association.*

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SUBJECT.

*Submitting for favour of
present a paper read
before the Madras Medical
Association on 18-11-1898
by J. V. Ramaswamy
Nayudu L. M. & S.*

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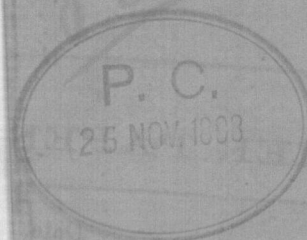
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AN
OLD SUCCESSFUL TREATMENT
FOR
PLAGUE.



A PAPER
READ BEFORE THE
Madras Medical Association

ON
18th November 1898

BY
J. V. RAMASWAMY NAYUDU, L. M. & S.,
Medical Practitioner, Madras.

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AN OLD SUCCESSFUL

❖ TREATMENT FOR PLAGUE. ❖

A paper read before The Madras Medical Association

ON

18TH NOVEMBER, 1898,

BY

J. V. RAMASWAMY NAYUDU, L. M. S.,

Medical Practitioner, Madras.

Of all places visited by this pestilence countries near the Medi-
teranian suffered much earlier, more frequently and for a longer time.
It is natural therefore to expect that experience gained there will be
useful in throwing some valuable hints for combating the disease in
our country.

It was with this expectation that I went over some books on the
subject that I could lay my hands on, and I found that among the various
drugs used, there was one which was very highly spoken of as having
been largely used with great success, which struck me as deserving a trial
here also. I therefore made it my purpose to bring it to your notice.

The drug I mean is

OLIVE OIL

which is said to possess both preventive and curative properties.

Mr. Baldwin, the British Consul at Smyrna, observed that out of nearly a million people who died of Plague in Egypt in the space of four years, there was not a single oilman or dealer in oil. Taking this hint he suggested unction with Olive oil as a protective against Plague. The method was first tried in 1792 when 22 Venetian sailors repeatedly annointed with the oil lived for five days with 3 infected persons (all of whom died) without a single individual catching the infection.

Three Armenian families consisting of 27 persons were saved from infection by adopting this precaution, though they lived in the same floor and constantly attended on Plague patients.

The nurses in the Plague Hospital at Smyrna were effectually protected against infection by this method.

On the 14th June 1819 in answer to a question from a select committee of the House of Commons, Sir Brook Faulkner, Physician to the forces at Malta, said that the military attendants at the pest hospital were protected against infection by wearing a dress of oiled silk.

In 1804, Sir J. Mc Gregor recorded in the medical sketches for the year that during the Egyptian campaign all men employed in applying oil to the feet of camels escaped the Plague.

Mr. Jackson recorded in page 46 of a book on the Commerce of the Mediteranian that the coolies working in the oil stores at Tunis smeared themselves with oil and that they were rarely affected when the epedemic raged in the city.

The oil was subsequently tried as a curative in the early stage of the disease and found to answer well; and for this purpose the oil was applied warm all over the body.

Though the preventive property of the oil was admitted by many eminent men some were a little doubtful about its curative effects; even they unreservedly admitted that the abundant perspiration which it undoubtedly produced was condusive to recovery in no small degree by expelling the poison.

Mr. Jackson, in his account of a very destructive Plague which prevailed in Morrocco in 1719, recommended this oil to many, both as a preventive and curative. He said that the oil was eminently successful in both capacities.

Here is something more *authoratdive* and *emphatic*.

The Rev. Lewis of Pavia, Chaplain and Agent to Hospital called St. Anthony's at Smyrna after trying this oil for five years pronounced it to be the most efficacious of all remedies made use of during a period of 27 years.

His directions were simply these:—

"Immediately after a person is perceived to be infected with Plague, he must be taken into a close room, and over a brazier of hot coals, with a clean sponge dipt in warm Olive oil, his body must be very briskly rubbed all over, for the purpose of producing a profuse sweat. During the friction, sugar and Juniper berries must be burnt in the fire, which raise a dense and hot smoke, that contributes to the effect. The friction ought not to be continued more than four minutes, and a pint of oil is enough to be used at each time."

"In general the first rubbing is followed by a very copious perspiration; but should it fail of this effect the operation may be repeated, first wiping the body with a warm dry cloth; and in order still further to promote perspiration, the patient may take any warm Sudorific drink, such as elder flower tea &c."

"It is not necessary to touch the eyes; and other tender parts of the body may be rubbed more gently."

"Every possible precaution must be made use of, to prevent the patient taking cold such as keeping covered those parts of the body not

Olive oil does not seem to stand by itself in the possession of the virtue mentioned above.

For :—

When Plague or a disease closely resembling it (known as Ghant-ka-roq) prevailed in the northern parts of India Doctor Mc. Adam has recorded that the people remarked that those engaged in expressing oil were not liable to infection.—Transactions of Bombay Medical and Physical Society Vol. I. The oil spoken of here could not be olive oil.

When Plague raged in London, tallow melters and butchers were found exempt. The Esquimaux Tribes who regale on seal oil remain free. These facts seem to show that any oil nay, any fatty material is protective against infection.

It therefore struck me that Nim oil (నేపథూనై, నేపథూనై), of our country, should be much more efficacious in this respect as it possess well known antiseptic properties and that the inhabitants of some of the villages in the south who are partial to this oil should be immune to Plague.

In the Theosophist for November 1898 it is mentioned that on the third day's Session of the Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society, Doctor Edal Behram of Surat informed the members that he discovered a valuable secret of native doctors about Plague. He said that he had been working amid Plague about 2½ years, and had had charge of a hospital. He discovered that if one rubs his body all over daily with sessamun or gingely oil (thilka tel, మంచినూనె, నేపథూనై), impregnated with the juice of Margosa (నేప, నేపథూనై) tender twigs and leaves his fever, if he has any, will be lowered two degrees within an hour, and he will recover unless the disease has gone on to the most acute phase. He believes it to be also a prophylactic.

The margosa twigs and leaves must be bruised and their juice squeezed out. The juice must be strained and then mixed just as it is (without dilution with water) with an equal quantity of Sessamun or gingely oil. This must be boiled until the water of the juice is entirely evaporated, (which is known by ceasing of the froth and the surface becoming smooth). This must be bottled and kept tightly corked to prevent access of air.

Now this may be efficacious but the preparation is not as simple as it appears, for we cannot get tender margosa leaves in abundance except in Spring. The maturer leaves do not yeild much juice. Therefore why not the seed oil itself be tried ?

Native Physicians give the oil internally for many complaints.

The following is from (Sarvovshathi guna kalpam) సర్వవశతి గుణ కల్పం.

నెంబ తైలం జడమక్కవం ప్రతిష్ఠేష్ఠ జ్వరక్రిమిన్. (Nimba thylum jayath kustam vrana slashma jwara krimeen.)

Nim oil will conquer leprosy, ulcers, fever, and diseases caused by worms.

I think Nim oil if tried will conquer Plague also.

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Submitted to Plague Commission
Madras

for favour of perusal

R. Krishna Rao

L. M. S.,

Secretary

Madras Medical Association.