

PROCEEDINGS OF THE PLAGUE COMMISSIONER.

(1899)

MISCELLANEOUS.

No. 859

Dated 28.3.99

Despatched 28.3.99

Indexed 28.3.99

[Despatch Abstract.]

Plague Commissioner's Diary for 21.3.99

Containing his notes on the inspection of
Hospet & Chittavadi.

BACK PAPERS.

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type today
despatched 20/10

No. 8598283-88

NOTE FOR THE ^{herd of p.c.}
21-3-99 Tuesday. Maspet

It is indeed refreshing to come back to the Beccan after camping in the palan valley. For the people here not only realise what ought to be done but are willing to do help & not obstruct. I have today visited the village of Chikwadgi where there have recently been indigenous cases. The town consists of about 3000 inhabitants with a large proportion of Muthamadani with many rich merchants. It was expected that there would be considerable trouble & there were difficulties to begin with, but recently everything has gone smoothly. Every one has gone to the camp. The camps are built in an orderly fashion & the houses are as a rule well built. Their willingness to go out as I fancy, has been due to a great extent to the fact

+ energy of the Tahsildar, but there is no doubt that he could not have done what he has if it had not been for the help which has been given him by an influential Muhammadan Mullah ^{Saigud Ali} ~~syed~~ ^{but} ~~clauden~~. This gentleman owns a fair amount of property in the neighbourhood + keeps a free school in which he instructs all who wish to know Hindustani, Persian + Arabic. He has a very great local influence + fortunately he is willing to exert on our side. He has only to say to a Muhammadan "do this" + he does it and consequently here + Chitradgi + in Haspet too things are going more smoothly perhaps than in any town in which plague has become indigenous. A general disinfection is being made at both places. The work done in Chitradgi is now very satisfactory and the new supervisor Mr. Reemising recently ^{placed} in charge. The majority of the houses are of the usual solid floored roof beccan type, but there is a fair number of thatched huts. The latter are invariably treated with fire + the people do not object or desire compensation. More valuable timbers are taken out to disinfect + then the thatch is burnt within the 4 walls. This is a splendid way of disinfecting + if carefully supervised can be done without danger.

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The people do not object, for the thatch is in almost in all cases sugar cane leaves + the had to be renewed every year. They know that in any case they will have to renew their huts, so burning is no a matter of loss to them. They are looking forward to being supplied free, grass from jungles which if properly put on lasts not one but four or five years. We came across a strange thing in the course of disinfection: one house stunk most abominably + dead rats were of course expected. The floor was a stone one + rat holes were not to be discovered, however one of the stone slabs was lifted up and a cellar about 4 ft. ⁱⁿ depth was discovered below the ordinary floor. In this were found about 40 ^{dead} rats. The cellar communicated by a passage in an opening in the

neighbouring house & from the materials found in it, must evidently have been used as a secret place where men gathered to gamble. At the present time they must have hid it, crawling in their hands & knees & sitting in a cellar barely 4 ft high to gamble by lamp light. A list had been made for every house in fields of the people living in it. Men are appointed to ~~come~~ round every day & to obtain an account from every individual on the list. That of course was suggested by the Sanitary Commissioner to be adopted from Molaganalli & Guntakal & every evacuated villages in Bellary & in Anantapur District. But both Mr Elum & Mr Macleod were of opinion that any attempt to take daily census would result in driving the people away & I was very strongly of the same opinion. Consequently no attempt of ~~the~~ Census was made in these villages. At present Census does not alarm the people & they do not run away, but I do not think that the circumstances of the case are similar. In the one, we had an agricultural population squatting at long intervals in their own fields in poorly constructed sheds. In the other, we have a population more or less mercantile

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lining practically in a new village well laid out & well built & they have every inducement not to wander. Hindus & Muhammadans together have combined to build huts for the sick & for the contacts. They have an aversion for going to the Gout ^{plague} Camp which is perhaps understandable. Perhaps if the camp is built by themselves their prejudices disappear. A new camp is being built in a way which I consider far more to be satisfactory for any hut a large town; that is to say, instead of large more or less big hospitals & sheds being built, movable sheds of a fairly solid description each to hold one patient or one family of contacts are to be put for use. They can if necessary be burnt as the cost is trifling and the

new sheep can be put up in
 a new place. We owe this action
 very much, I believe, to the Mullak
 I have spoken of before & partly to
 the fact that the people have the
 greatest confidence in the local
 Civil Apothecary Mr. Stocking
 who has had 19 years experience in the place.

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