

THE PLAGUE.

PREVALENCE OF THE DISEASE.

INDIA.

DURING the three weeks ending May 31st, June 7th, and 14th, the total number of deaths from plague for the respective weeks were 4,214, 2,473, and 1,316. These figures show a marked decline on the two previous weeks, when they stood at 7,008 and 5,500. In the principal centres in which plague prevailed the mortality caused thereby for the three weeks ending May 31st, June 7th and 14th was as follows: Bombay City, 166, 115, and 82; Bombay District, 260, 320, and 169; Calcutta, 132, 90, and 65; Bengal, 107, 68, and 38; North-West Provinces and Oudh, 116, 55, and 36; the Punjab, 3,226, 1,600, and 776; Mysore State, 116, 128, and 103.

The decline during the week ending June 14th occurred in every one of the chief departments in which plague prevails. The decline in the Punjab is very pronounced. In Karachi during the week ending June 7th 69 deaths from plague were reported.

EGYPT.

The Director-General, Sanitary Department, Egypt, reports that during the week ending June 15th the fresh cases of plague in Egypt numbered 4, and the deaths from the disease 1 only. Fifteen persons remained under treatment for plague in the hospitals. The towns in which fresh cases occurred were Alexandria 3 (1 European and 2 natives); and Toukh 1 (native). One death occurred at Samalout.

Of the sanitary measures carried out during the week, there were 12,795 rooms disinfected; 2,456 rooms were limewashed. The thoroughness of the sanitary work in Egypt seems attended by excellent results.

During the week ending June 22nd the number of fresh cases of plague in Egypt amounted to 5, and the deaths from the disease 2. The total number of cases remaining under treatment on June 22nd amounted to 13. The towns in which fresh cases occurred were: Alexandria, 3; Toukh, 1; and Mellavin (Assiout), 1. One death occurred at Alexandria, and one death at Toukh. The rooms disinfected during the week numbered 15,822; the numbered limewashed amounted to 3,097.

CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

During the week ending May 31st there were no deaths from plague at Port Elizabeth, the only part of the Cape Colony where plague prevails. No fresh cases of plague were reported during the week. Four patients remained in the plague hospital under treatment on May 31st, and only 3 "contacts" were under observation.

During the week ending June 7th 1 fresh case of plague occurred at Port Elizabeth; there were no deaths from the disease. Four cases remained under treatment.

During the week ending June 14th 1 fresh case of plague was admitted to the Plague Hospital at Port Elizabeth, and 2 persons died of plague.

Since the commencement of the outbreak of plague 900 cases of plague have occurred in Cape Colony, and 432 deaths from the disease giving a rate of mortality per cent. of 48.0.

HONG KONG.

During the three weeks ending June 14th, June 21st, and June 28th the fresh cases of plague in Hong Kong numbered 59, 49, and 44, and the deaths from the disease 39, 51, and 43 respectively.

CONSTANTINOPLE.

Four cases of plague were reported from Constantinople on June 30th. The victims are members of a Greek family from Siphnos residing in Constantinople. The father, mother, a son and daughter were attacked. The daughter died, and the father is not expected to recover. The usual precautions have been taken against the spread of the disease.

LITERARY NOTES.

DR. GEORGE M. GOULD is preparing a supplement to his *Illustrated Dictionary of Medicine*, the fifth edition of which was reviewed in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* of June 21st. This supplement will contain all the additions to medical terminology that have been made since the publication of the first edition in 1894. It will consist of nearly 50,000 paragraphs. It is expected that the book will be ready for publication in the autumn. We are informed that the sale of Dr. Gould's various dictionaries amounts in the aggregate to over 130,000 copies.

The French Société d'Hygiène de l'Enfance offers a prize for the best small manual of hygiene for the use of pupils in primary schools. The works sent in by competitors, which must be unpublished, may be written in French, German, English, Italian, or Spanish. They must be authenticated by a motto corresponding to a motto accompanied by the name of the writer contained in a sealed envelope. They must be in the hands of Dr. Chassaing, Président de la Société d'Hygiène de l'Enfance, 8, Rue Saint-Antoine, on or before December 31st, 1902.

As a specimen of the arguments used against the inoculation of small-pox on its first introduction into England, and the temper displayed in urging them, some extracts from a "Sermon against the Dangerous and Sinful Practice of Inoculation preach'd at St. Andrew's Holborn, on Sunday, July 8th, 1722," by the Rev. Edmund Massey, M.A., may be cited. The eloquent divine said that Job's affliction was

small-pox, and that he was inoculated by the Devil. As if this diabolical origin were not of itself sufficient to condemn the practice, he proceeds to argue that inoculation is unlawful, since we have no power granted us to inflict sickness and diseases: that it is forbidden by the Sixth Commandment—Thou shalt not kill; that the danger of infection will keep people from licentious cities and the fear of it will make them sober, whereas were the danger removed and people secured "tis a chance they would be less righteous"; that God has sometimes given power to heal diseases but not to inflict disease, except in the miraculous instances of Moses with the Egyptians and Elisha and Gehazi as punishment of sacrilege and idolatry; that if diseases are sent for a trial of our faith or punishment of our sins, He alone to whom our faith must approve itself and our sins are manifest has properly the power of inflicting them. In short Mr. Massey, like a reverend orator of a later date, argued high and argued low, and likewise argued round about him. At last, intoxicated with the exuberance of his own verbosity—to use a famous phrase—he declares that if God for our presumption and contemptuous distrust of his good providence should suffer this delusion to gain ground, these physicians of no value, these forgers of lies, these *Venesici*, these spreaders of infection should be distinguished from those of the faculty that deserve honour and not permitted to mingle with them as the Devil among the Sons of God, "lest like the Disease-giving practitioner, the harlot whom Solomon describes, they entice us till a dart strike through our liver and we haste to their snare, not knowing that it is for our life."

A correspondent writes, with reference to a review of Hoblyn's *Dictionary of Terms Used in Medicine* which appeared in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* of June 21st, to point out that he has failed to find certain words in the book. Nothing would be more easy than to extend the list of missing words almost indefinitely. The date of publication of Hoblyn's *Dictionary* is 1899, and some of the words mentioned by our correspondent are absent also from the volume of the New Sydenham Society's *Lexicon* issued in that year. Indeed, one or two of them are not to be found in Gould or any other dictionary accessible to us. A dictionary of the living language of medicine, like an encyclopaedia of progressive science, can never be absolutely complete at a given time. Our correspondent seems to object to our statement that "the fact that Dr. Price's revision of Hoblyn's *Dictionary* has reached a thirteenth edition is in itself the best testimony to its value." The exhaustion of so many editions may at least be taken to indicate that a large number of medical readers have found it sufficient for their needs. Surely there could be no stronger proof of the "value" of the book in regard to the purpose which it is intended to serve.

THE "ERNEST HART MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP."

THE Council of the British Medical Association is prepared to receive applications for a Scholarship of £200 for the study of some subject in the department of State Medicine in memory of the late Mr. Ernest Hart.

Applications must be sent in writing on or before October 4th next, stating the particulars of the intended research, qualifications, and work done.

Forms of application for scholarships can be obtained from the General Secretary.

FRANCIS FOWKE, General Secretary.

429, Strand, July 2nd, 1902.

REDUCED FARES FOR THE JOURNEY TO MANCHESTER.—The railway companies throughout Great Britain and Ireland will issue to members of the British Medical Association attending the annual meeting at Manchester and their friends return tickets at a single fare and a quarter from all stations throughout the United Kingdom on production of a voucher signed by the General Secretary of the Association. Where through bookings to Manchester are not in existence, it will be desirable to give notice to the station-master a day or two beforehand, and it will be necessary to have a separate voucher for each passenger, which can be obtained only from the General Secretary of the British Medical Association, 429, Strand, London, W.C. The reduced fares will be available from July 24th to August 5th.