

CORRESPONDENCE.

The Yellow Fever in Southern Kentucky.

ED. MED. AND SURG. REPORTER:—

As I reside near the yellow fever zone, and as our little city was considerably ruffled by a small current from the epidemical wave that swept up the Mississippi Valley, I will give you a few items concerning its history, habitat, etc.

Bowling Green is situated 261 miles from Memphis, and we had daily communication by rail during the prevalence of the plague.

We had, as a consequence, fifteen imported cases, with seven deaths; and about thirty native, with twelve deaths; but I am certain that after a thorough investigation not a single indigenous case is traceable to an imported one.

The question naturally arises, what were the factors in the development of the disease at this point? The germs or fomites were brought by trains from the infected district, as the first cases will abundantly prove. These occurred in the only three houses that stood fronting the railroad side track (distance sixty feet), where passenger coaches, sleepers, and occasionally hospital cars, were swept, cleaned and aired, after a trip to the fever-stricken districts. Ten cases occurred in the three dwellings fronting this side track, and the rest of the stricken cases were persons that visited the first cases or resided in the immediate vicinity, with the exception of one case, and this could not be traced, unless she received the poison from washing her son's clothing, he being a railroader.

These are facts pertaining to the introduction of the disease into our city. Fortunately for us it did not make its appearance until about the 1st of October, consequently it did not harvest its victims to the extent it might have done if it had made its appearance earlier in the season.

Facts for Malariaists and Non-contagionists to Consider.—Three passenger conductors with their crews ran constantly to Memphis during the prevailing epidemic. To protect themselves as much as possible from exposure to the fever,

they would return seven miles, to the first station, remain over night, and go back to Memphis next morning before starting on their return trip. After a while, the disease developing in a violent form at this point, they concluded to fall back to a station called Galloway, twenty-eight miles from Memphis; on arriving here the citizens opposed their stopping, but their resident physician, Dr. Terry, prevailed on them to allow them to remain, assuring them that they need not have any apprehension, and showed his faith by inviting the conductor to sleep with him, as the town did not afford any hotel accommodation. He accepted the invitation and slept with the doctor, and so did the two succeeding conductors. Imagine the surprise of the first conductor, three or four days following, on his return, to find the doctor sick with yellow fever, and his death occurred after an illness of forty-eight hours. Seven deaths succeeded immediately, in a population of not more than fifty to seventy-five inhabitants. No case had occurred previous to the arrival of the conductors with their trains.

None of these had the disease, while several of their crews died. Here the question naturally suggests itself, what protected them? They say that they were advised by some physician en route from Paris, Ky., to New Orleans, to have their under garments steeped in brine or salted water before drying, after being washed. What influence the salt had on the epidermis, and through it operating as a prophylactic, I cannot elucidate, but suffice it to say that these conductors attribute their escape to the potency of the saline properties suspended in their garments. Will some of your readers give some plausible physiological explanation of its therapeutic action on the skin, and the process by which the salt may have assisted in the elimination of the poison.

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