The Disease Must be Imbibed First from the Soil.

INDIANS THEMSELVES AT FAULT

Frightful Sanitary Conditions at Benares and Bombay .- Alleged Cleanliness Breeds Disease -- Fatalism That Awaits Death Gladly.

From the Times-Herald.

The "Overland Route" to India is all over water, except a bit of short-cut by rall across the Lethmus of Suez. Down the Adriatic (the real starting point). over the Mediterraneau to Alexandria from Alexandria to Suez by rail, down the Red sea, embarking, to Aden, through the straits of Babel Mandeb and across the Indian ocean to Bombay That is the "Overland Route."

It is the usual thing for travelers to compare the harbor of Bombay with the Bay of Naples. Now, any harbot with Islands dotted about in it, and hills behind it, is like the Bay of Naples, more or less. Bar Harbor, with its rugged, Maine air, is perpetually likened to Naples, because of its islands and mountains. How much more, then, may Bombay, veiled in a flimy, tropical haze, with its hills behind melting into the farther haze of heaven, and its islands lying purple on the bosom its bay, be compared to the Italian city? And how much of a more than Neapolitan charm may she be said powers at times? "Bombay the Beautiful" she is called, with her sea-ward look and her scenery. And yet, Bombay the Beautiful, with her ser breeze and her boasted good health, Bombay, the text and example of her sister capitals of India-"Mumbhai. adored of western natives of her land -is ravaged by the foulest pertilent that ever walked by moonday. It is the scene of one of the most fatal epidemic the world has ever seen; and its population is not merely decimated, but report says halved, by the rapid mowing o the black death's seythe

BOMBAY'S GEOGRAPHICAL POSI-TION.

Bombay city is the capital of Bombay presidency and is on an island, or, more properly speaking, a pentasula as it is connected with the mainland by a causeway, of which it occupies the southeastern part. It is a flat city in its principal portion, but Malabar Chinebpoogly and Parell Hills form th dwelling places of the Europeans living at Bombay, and are removed from the pest spots underneath, as far as breath ing the infected air is concerned. Be sides the usual number of Europeans gro , of Parsees, or follower of Zarnthustra, a clearly, modest monogamous race, shrowd in business, and said to be the only people in the world who do not use tobacco in any form. They are rich and socialistic, at least there is no such thing, and never has been, as a Parsec pauper. The race would consider such an individual a fasting disgrace. The Parsees, although subscribing largely for the relief of their distressed brethren, have nearly all fled from Bombay. it is said. They are supposed to num-

be, about 15,000. More than 69 per cent, of the whole population is Hindu, and 21 per cent. It is called Manikarnika, because once Mohammedan; the rest is made up of the natives of the Buddhist and Jain it to view his own personal charms, his religious, Europeans, Eurasians, or earring fell in, Manikarnika meaning hulf-castes, and a few native Christians. and a thousand or two beings indefin itely classed as "others," visitors in the city, perhans, for the census is a slinpery thing in India, and no easte people.

Bombay, like Calcutta, is subject to extremes of heat at one time of year with a cold weather, in its season, which resembles what we know of Paradise. A sea breeze modifies the heat in

Bombay in March and April (which it does not do in Calcutta), but May and October heats override even the tempering of the sea breeze. It is terrifically hot in those months.

DISCOMFORTS OF THE RAINY SEA-SON.

The rainy season may be graphically described as a combination of a steam bath, a warm poultice and blue mold. One's gates and fences sprout, and one's clothes would if they were left out of doors. One's boots mold over night. Silks and gloves are hermetically scaled in tin boxes before the coming of th monsoon-that is to say, in May-and not unscaled again until the recognized initiation of the cold weather, latter is not severe, by any means, the thermometer marking perhaps 65 degrees in the middle of the day, so that its rigors cannot be called extreme.

Yet, after complete debilitation by steady "100 in the shade" for weeks, and life in a poultice coming on top of the shriveling process, 49 degrees at night, which the glass often marks, seems arctic, and furs and warm wrans are A straugling fire is often lighted in the grate in the cold weather, too but that becomes oppressive in a very short time, and is not violently encour-

It is easy to see what disaster the non-coming of the rains in their turn would breed. Enough water is depended upon to fall between early June and early September to saturate the soil. and irrigate the crops for the remaining nine months of the year, six months out of those nine producing unmitigated heat, and the sun shining steadily through the whole sine. Famine follows fallure of the crops, and this year plague has followed famine. The famme has been almost universal, but the plague has pitched particularly upon Bombay. In all the searching for causes of the epidemic no one has yet distinctly accounted for this choice of locality. Bombay has been ranked repeatedly in official statements as first in sanitary advantages among the cities India. A writer last month in an Indian paper states that Bombay in normal years compares favorably with European cities in point of health. As Asiatic cities go, Bombay is certainly not extraordinarily dirty. All oriental communities are dirty if not watched, and all conceal their infectious sick

from boards of health. How, then, is it possible that Bombay should suddenly have risen to such an epidemiological height above her sister cities, and reduced her population and paralyzed her industries like lightning. while fouler capitals do not suffer?

CAUSES OF THE PLAGUE.

Benares is to Bombay, for example, as pitch is to snow. Benares, being the holy city, the Mecca of the Hindus, is packed with those unsanitary religion-More than 250,000 pilgrims are said to huddle on the bluff to "bathe"

every day in the swarming season. Benares is a city "given over to idolatry"-and dirt. To that class of idolatry known as Brahaminism, and to that class of dirt known as filth. I read



ST. VALENTINE'S DAY. -Life

of cleanliness: "The Hindu, no matter what his privations, must have his bath every day." But if you could see the bath! There is such a thing as bathing in very dirty water of the consistency of pea soup. Hindus often perofem their victuous ablutions in sticky black mud, impregnated with garbage and other pleasing ingredients. germs of course existing in cohorts and serried ranks. One of the sacred wells Into which devout Hindu pilgrims plunge on reaching Meeca in order to purge themselves of their sins is a foulsmelling and loathsome-looking morass. when Vishnu, the god, was looking into carring. He couldn't see himself in it

Another hely abyss in the Golden Temple at Benares-hely enough to be the residence of a submerged god indeed-is not only a viie stagnant pool. but it is also filled with the rotting resiand floods of rain at another, together | unum and exudes the fearful effluvium of the continuous floral tributes with which pious Brahmins pelt their hidden idol. Add to this the interesting adjanet of many "Brahmir" bulls prome nading at will through the temple, and you may imagine the hygienic condi-

The Monkey Temple, another horror, is actually inhabited by hallowed apes. One may picture the cleanliness of this sanctuary and the inducements it offers to epidemics. Of course, epidemic is a more or less violent form. The strests are hardly wide enough for an elephant, knee deep in mud and refuse. And the city is under British rule!

TWO KINDS OF ANIMALS.

kill a living creature, not even an in- uses? sect. The effect of this entomological shows, at any rute, the conditions unaccess and foothold,

Newspaper statistics from Bombay, Bombay presidency altogether Mohammedans had suffered most from the plague. They are, perhaps, dirtler than Hindus in their lower castes, for nothing is enjoined or forbidden these by religion, and the sweeper caste eats poisoned or decayed food with enjoyment. Low caste Hindus come next are naturally from generations of the to Mohammedans, and Windus of other castes next. The death rate among Brahmins was 41.07 in the thousand.

ORIGIN OF THE DISEASE.

Dr. James Cantlle, lately returned from Hong Kong, where he investigated the plague from beginning to end. has delivered a lecture on the subject before the Epidemiological society of London, in which he announces the conclusion that originally the disease must be imbibed first from the soil. In the stomachs of rats that have spread the infection and died of it there have been found after death glands, marked cerebral and vesicu-

sand and dirt. The inevitable deduction appears to se that soil, undrained for ages, becomes thoroughly permeated with the the human being, and the fact of dead decaying vegetable and animal matter rats being found about the house during decaying vegetable and animal matter thrown or left upon it, and is instant pollution. And according to Bombay authorities themselves the only troude with their "perfect system" of municipal drainage is that it is not finished! An Englishman who visited forward the fact that rats are ivaria-Bombay lately for the purpose of ex- bly affected. The most ignorant naamining carefully into the matter- tives will vacate their villages when a being a sanitary engineer-summed up rat mortality has become distinctly no-

"You have only to complete the drainige system according to the original plans and Bombay will have the best

drained city in the world," Considering that Bombay City passed to the British crown when the Infanta a month ago to all the people of Maidyi Catherina was married to Charles II., (the district in Bombay presidency and that in 1687 it was the brightest star of the East India company's pos-sessions; taking into account also the that the rats were dying in thousands trivial fact that it has been under all over the district. They were found English municipal rule since the death | dead and dying almost everywhere, of the East India company, and the establishment of English governors never found before." \* \* \* Then the under a governor general about 1757; writer makes this significant reflection: taking these minor facts into account, it seems as if the Bombay "perfect known recently, and yet what a voldrainage" system might have been fin- ume of information was it capable of ished before the end of 200 years of carrying if it was only rightly used. It possession.

DIFFICULTIES OF SANITATION. But it is true that the difficulties in he way-not only of establishing sewrage, but of having it used-are mormous and almost insuperable. We do not realize at all the deeply rooted cannot assume that every rat has a caste system which makes the gentle. stinacy when it comes to adopting pose that he imblies it as miasma in habits not prescribed in his ritual. A concentrated form or ingests it with are directly contrary to tradition, us- n few hours," age and "dustur" (custom), which In Calcutta a "Benign polyademitis" ought to be represented as one of the has spread, during which no rats have inexorable gods of India, with four died, and no, or few, human beings, present there always and inevitably in legs and four arms. It is one of the It is elaborately described in Dr. Cantworst of tyrants, and its decrees are he's lecture in the Lancet, and appears

It is this slavish adherence to custom that makes sanitary systems to hard to introduce. The enaradicable habits of orientals are directly opposed | Dr. Canthe considers the climate only Orthodox Hindus, besides the daily to drains, filters and plumbing of any partly to blame. In China the plague 'bath," are often lauded for their sort. The earth is given as a deposikindness to animais. No Hindu will tory for refuse; why circumvent her

Another obstacle is the fatalistic elephilanthropy upon the persons and ment of oriental religious. The Hindu beds of the humane may be imagined, is a firm believer in the inevitable af-An anecdote of a not altogether fas- fer death and the inevitable in life. tidious tenor may be cited to show the He holds life cheaply, as do the Mo-

judge in court asked him if he had no cannot make him take extraordinary means of support. He said he some- precautions to preserve what may not times carned 4 annus (12 cents) a day be precious to him, what he does not by sleeping in the daytime on the consider himself to own, and what he charpoys (twine beds) of Hindus, tipon is convinced he is to lose anyway. We seing asked to explain, he did so. He who live in a so-called "Christian" urnished food for the bed bugs which country, where hardly one in a milinfested the cot, so that its owner lion of those who believe in a joyful could sleep at night! And this is not resurrection and a happy home beyond Benares, but a Calcutta incident. It the stars does not cling to a miserable existence here on earth rather than der which orientals live, and explains | go to his reward-we cannot under the facility with which pestilence gains stand the naturally imbibed belief of both Hindu and Mohammedan to the effect that the future is as clear as the issued Jan. 19, showed that in the present, and that death is a mere translation to a more glorious sphere. VEGETARIANS SUFFERS FROM

FAMINE. grain eaters, that is to say vegetarians of India are the first nufferers from famine; and weak as they vegetable-fed, they soon become exhausted when the supply of grain is diminished. They will nearly starve before they cat the cattle, which are

helping to diminish their supply. Dr. Cantile notices the great mortal-Ity of rats as among the preliminaries of plague epidemic. The present plague, by the by, in Bombay, he ventures to name "malignant polyadenitis," and considers the title "bubonic fever" inaccurate. This plague he defines as "an acute febrile disease of an intensely fatal nature characterized by inflammation of the lymphatic lar disturbances, and by the presence of a specific bacillus." The rat seems to be infected, Dr. Cantile says, before the plague epidemic is a true warning that the inmates of the house will in all probability be affected. And in support of the theory that plague is a soilbred, a miasmatic disease, he brings in a recent article of the Hindu virtue his report thus to the commissioners; I ticeable, and in some districts the dis-

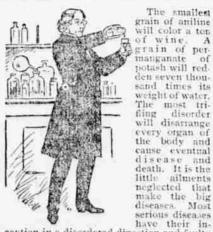
ease is fixed in mind as the sickness "when the rats die."

The Times of India in September. 1896, contained an article in which the writer said: "It was known more than where the plague broke out) and to al the municipal sweepers in the district is universal history that rat and plague mortality go together.'

RATS SPREAD THE PLAGUE. How is the rat infected? asked Dr. Cantile. He is susceptible if inoculation, experiment has proved; but two scratch or open wound by which it is servile Hindu a very demon of ob- infected." It is more natural to supwater tap, a waste pipe, a system of his food. And we are sure that it is plumbing, a disregard of nature's pro- not a chance inoculation, but a genislors, the filtering of water or cleans- eral infection, when thousands of rats ing it for bathing purposes-all these die, and scores in one house inside of

to differ from the malignant diseases only in the item of non-fatality

As for the causes of the outbreak and continued ravages of the plague, came at the end of a drought, and in Bombay also, But whether or not there is any actual connection between plague and drought he considers doubtful. The bacillus of plague flourishes best in a warm, moist atmosphere; dry, hot air kills it. In many marshy countries, however, the epidcleanliness of the Hindus. A poor hammedans, for that matter, man was arrested for a debt. The lf a man is to die he is to die. You moment the rain ceased and the dry



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will disarrange
every organ of
the body and cause eventual death. It is the little ailments neglected that make the big diseases. Most serious diseases

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season set in. \* \* \* The absence of rain means, of course, dirt in the houses, in the streets, and on the clothes and bodies of the inhabitants. \* In Hong Kong an accession of plague cases came with the rains, which it was thought would abute them. And yet Dr. Cantlle thinks that the meaning of that apparent pheno-menon may have been that the habits of the people changed with the wet weather. They began to crowd in-doors, so that the good effects of the flushing of the sewers may have been counteracted by the overcrowding it caused.

PLAGUE AND FAMINE AS ALLIES. Plague and famine are close allies. In time of scarcity of grain the grain is usually bad, musty, covered with mold, fermented. It is gathered before it is ripe, owing to the people's necessities; and unripe grain is unnourishing and indigestible.

As for sanitation, or lack of it, there are terrible anecdotes of Bombay's de-Haquencies in this respect.

So far as the progress of the plague is concerned, the reports are encouraging. It is a slow-traveling disease; "perhaps the slowest ever known." Dr. Cantlie says; "it may take months and even years to extend a few miles. Constant communication with patients he considers necessary to contagion, when the nurse, for instance, has not been subjected to the same condition of infection as the patient.

To impatient onlockers it seems as it England, represented by her Indian government, had been guilty of her usual policy of first ignoring facts and then hesitating to act upon them. The whitewashing, which put such a sudden and wonderful quietus on the Hong Kong bacillus, does not seem to have been begun vet in Bombay; segregation was merely "advised," instead of being enforced at the point of the bayonet. and emigration was allowed to proceed without check. If Europe suffers this time it will be the fault of stupid and sluggish administration. For no on certainly can accuse a government of wishing to spread a plague Mary Abbott.

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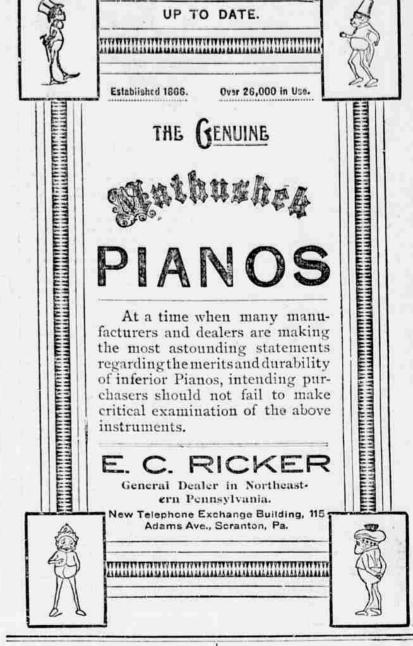


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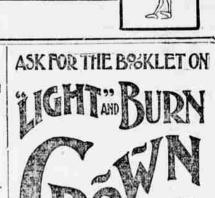
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