

An Epidemic of Enteric Fever.

THE town of Maidstone is suffering from a severe epidemic of enteric fever, the number of those attacked being not far short of one thousand persons. It is now commonly accepted that the cause of the outbreak is a polluted water supply, the authorities having received evidence that the Tutsham springs at Farleigh are polluted. The position of these springs, which are in a field close to the Medway, has been condemned by medical experts. On one side is a hop ground, which has been dressed with large quantities of fish manure year after year, and close to the springs also is an old fruit pickers' and hop pickers' encampment, from which it is probable that faecal matter has found its way into the water.

It is now proverbial that the encampments of hop pickers are a fruitful source of infection, and we think it is quite time that a system of regular supervision of these itinerants should be instituted and enforced.

With regard to the water supply, it has been found upon inquiry that in one instance where the delivery main, connected with the polluted springs, passed eight cottages, which drew water directly from it, diarrhoea had occurred in each of these houses. It is also stated that the hop pickers suffered severely from diarrhoea, and one child died. It is noticeable that the water from this spring, as well as from other sources at Farleigh, is supplied, in a separate reservoir, to Barming Heath County Asylum, and that eighty cases of enteric fever have occurred in this institution. The water supply from these polluted springs has now been cut off, so that it may be hoped that there will soon be an appreciable decrease in the number of cases notified. At present the returns show no signs of an abatement of the epidemic.

The Town Council is endeavouring to cope with the epidemic. Nurses have been, and are still being, engaged, and premises have been secured for temporary hospitals, which will provide accommodation for some sixty or seventy patients. The Assembly Rooms, and several shops, have been fitted up and opened as hospitals, and it is probable that the National Schools will be used for the same purpose. The nursing provision is in the hands of Councillor Urmston, and we feel sure that in this great pressure the services of competent nurses, who can afford to offer them gratuitously to the Town Council, for the benefit of the sick poor, would be gladly received. Any nurses who are in a position, and willing, to do this, should communicate with Councillor Urmston.

It is stated that the example of Maidstone may serve to prove to other Boards the necessity of a strict supervision and examination of the water supply. Formerly, the Maidstone water was

analysed once a fortnight, by the local medical officer, but when this gentleman's expenses had been permitted to accumulate for two years, and he presented a claim for £81 18s., considerable discussion ensued, followed by a decision that the analysis of the water supply should, for the future, be discontinued, except when ordered by the Board. It is to the credit of Mr. Anscomb, and Alderman Ellis, that they protested against this resolution at a subsequent meeting, but even they did not venture to ask for more than a quarterly analysis. Dr. Theodore Thompson, has, at the instance of the Local Government Board, gone down to Maidstone, to inquire into the matter, and it has been suggested by the local authorities that the inquiry shall be a public and not a private one, with the view of discovering who is to blame in the matter. It is noticeable that so far the poorest classes in the town have entirely escaped the epidemic, a large proportion of those affected being artisans.

It is interesting to learn that valuable assistance in dealing with the epidemic, is being rendered by Surgeon-Captain Oliver, M.D., son of the Mayor, and representatives of the local detachments of the Medical Staff Corps, in some of the temporary hospitals. Members of the Corps also visit some of the cottage homes every evening. Many of the households of the Town Council, as well as those of nearly all the medical men, are suffering from the outbreak. Mr. Charles Whitehead, the Technical Adviser of the Board of Agriculture, and six of his family have been attacked by the disease, and we regret to learn that one of his daughters, Miss Trixy Whitehead, succumbed to the attack last Saturday.

We learn that the demand for milk in Maidstone at the present time is so great that the supply not unfrequently runs short. The Maidstone Guardians have wisely authorised the nurses to procure milk for the cases under their care when necessary, without an order from the relieving officer.

The Sanitary Condition of Poona City.

REPORT BY SURGEON-MAJOR BARRY,
B.A., M.B., I.M.S.

THE official report of Surgeon-Major J. P. Barry, B.A., M.B., I.M.S., of the performance of his duties while on plague duty in Poona, and of the sanitary condition of the city, is an extraordinary record of official neglect and mismanagement. After reading it there can be, we think, no doubt, that the Poona Municipal Government must stand utterly condemned. It is as Surgeon-Major Barry asserts, "a paper Municipality"; its work is paper work; its men are men of paper except when they are men of talk. They can have no real wish to see good work done, for they are careful not to put in good men to do it. To make

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