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# PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS.

## UNITED STATES.

[Reports to the Surgeon-General, Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service.]

### *Report from San Francisco, Cal.—Bacteriological examination of fatal plague case.*

Surgeon Austin reports, May 26:

Confirming my telegram of this date as follows:

Patient from local steam tug admitted to hospital evening May 23 died suddenly this morning. Autopsy and microscopic examination very suspicious—plague. Long and Currie confirm this report.

The patient, O. T., age 24 years, nativity Norway, applied at the hospital May 23, bringing a master's certificate from the steam schooner *Wizard*, of Los Angeles, showing that he had been aboard said steamer from March 7 to May 23. His temperature was 36.2°, and he did not appear to be very ill. A bubo was found in the right femoral region. A gland about the size of a large filbert was removed and the wound was packed with gauze. The same evening his temperature was only 37.4, and he complained of no pain. He did not appear to be seriously ill until a few hours before his death, which came suddenly.

The autopsy, held at 10.30 a. m., revealed the following conditions: Body is that of an adult, fairly well nourished. Inspection shows nothing of interest except a swelling in right femoral region. Near the apex of Scarpa's triangle an incision had been made in most prominent part of swelling and had been packed with gauze. Rigor mortis fairly well marked; post-mortem lividity well marked, especially in the sterno-clavicular region, where it assumed the character of a deep blush, somewhat mottled. At lower end of abdominal incision a quantity of serous fluid exuded.

Lungs normal, except for an old tubercular focus in apex of right lung. Heart normal, no subserous hemorrhage to be seen. Liver normal. Intestines slightly injected. Kidneys slightly congested. Spleen markedly enlarged, very friable, purplish in color; pulp exudes on slight pressure.

Incision, extended from lower end of abdominal incision to and over femoral bubo, uncovers a collection of enlarged lymph glands; skin and subcutaneous tissue doughy and exuding serum; glands swollen and purplish red in color and quite friable; right iliac fossa contains lymph glands in same condition as above-mentioned glands; peritoneum injected around them; psoas muscles and abdominal muscles red and soft.

Brain normal, except for slight injection of vessels. Microscopic examination: Smears from spleen and affected lymph glands show large number of bipolar staining organisms; smears from serous exudate show bipolar staining organisms and involution forms. These organisms stain readily with ordinary aniline dyes and are decolorized by Gram's method.

The case being so exceedingly important, it was thought best to have two officers who have had experience in plague laboratories to make the examination. I immediately went over to Angel Island and brought Passed Assistant D. H. Currie over, and he examined the slides and also took some of the tissue to prepare cultures for confirmatory tests. He confirmed the opinion of Doctor Long and other officers at this station that the bacilli found were extremely like those of plague.

Every precaution against contagion at the hospital has been taken. The board of health were notified and examined the body. They also examined the slides which had been made, and confirmed our provisional diagnosis.

In tracing the antecedents of the patient, I learned this morning that a man called yesterday at the hospital to see the patient, and when told he was dead he said that the patient had been boarding at his house, in San Francisco, for the past three weeks. I have as yet been unable to verify his statement.

Passed Assistant Surgeon Hobdy, in command at Angel Island Quarantine, has been informed of the case and will take all measures required in the disinfection of the vessel. (See Public Health Reports, June 21, 1907, p. 825.)

*Report from Cleveland, Ohio—Corrections in article on prophylactic value of vaccination.*

The following is received from Passed Assistant Surgeon Mathewson at Cleveland, Ohio, under date of May 14:

The name of the boy upon whom Dr. Edward Jenner performed his first successful vaccination was James Phipps, instead of James Phillips. This misnomer in article on "The Prophylactic Value of Vaccination" published in the Public Health Reports, April 12, 1907, was due to a clerical error in the manuscript.

The statement that "from 1761 to 1800 there died in the city of London an average of 19,425 persons yearly from smallpox" was quoted from a descriptive article on smallpox which appeared in a foreign official sanitary journal, issued during 1906. Examination of the tables of burials within the London bills of mortality for the period mentioned (1761-1800) shows that these figures are approximately correct per decade and not per year, as the table gives an average of deaths from smallpox of 2,037 per year.

*Report from Laredo, Tex.—Case of beriberi at San Antonio.*

Acting Assistant Surgeon Hamilton reports, June 17:

The inspector in charge of immigration at San Antonio, Tex., informs me of a case of beriberi at San Antonio. The subject is an oriental immigrant who was admitted sometime past via Eagle Pass, Tex.

STATISTICAL REPORTS OF MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY, STATES AND CITIES  
OF THE UNITED STATES—UNTABULATED.

CALIFORNIA—*San Jose*.—Month of May, 1907. Estimated population, 30,000. Total number of deaths, 35, including 1 from measles.