

## NOTE B.

## RETURNS from HOSPITAL RECORDS, &amp;c., of Cases of CARBUNCULAR AFFECTION in MALTA.

The following Return, which I have framed from the registers of the civil hospital, shows the number of cases admitted, from 1821 to 1843 inclusive, under the terms of "anthrax," "carbuncle," "furunculus," and "boil," the various names apparently applied to the same disease by different surgeons. "Pustula," "tumor," and "tubercle" occur frequently in these registers, which I have excluded, though, judging from the time in hospital and number of deaths, they evidently embrace much acute disease of an eruptive character.

The cases under the former heads were in adults, many of them young, but the majority middle-aged and old. Several appear to have been slight, but the duration of the malady in the greater number bespeaks severe disease.

I have appended the number of males admitted under all diseases in the month of July of the several years. The relation in numbers between these and the admissions with "anthrax" is not remarkable. The fluctuation in the number of the latter deserves more attention, and I may remark, that unless anthrax was brought under some other head, the three years preceding 1821 seem to have been nearly exempt. The small number of other diseases these years is also remarkable, the admissions of males in July being 83, 130, and 99.

YEARS.	January.	February.	March.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.	Total.	Died.	Admission of Males into Civil Hospital in July of each Year.	Arrival of Ships with Plague.
1821	.	.	3	1	.	.	1	1	2	3	2	2	15	1	84	One.
1822	1	.	.	.	1	.	3	.	1	1	.	.	7	.	128	
1823	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	2	.	.	3	.	131	
1824	1	.	.	4	1	3	1	.	.	.	.	.	10	1	143	
1825	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	141	
1826	.	1	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	2	4	.	171	
1827	6	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	8	.	168	
1828	2	2	.	4	1	.	1	7	.	.	.	1	18	.	182	One.
1829	.	1	1	1	1	1	.	.	.	1	.	3	9	.	110	
1830	1	1	2	1	.	1	4	2	.	1	.	2	15	1	187	
1831	.	1	1	1	2	.	2	2	.	1	1	3	14	.	222	
1832	4	3	1	1	2	4	1	.	3	.	.	3	22	1	188	
1833	7	6	7	5	6	7	3	2	4	3	1	2	53	1	281	
1834	2	1	5	1	3	3	3	4	3	1	2	2	30	1	207	
1835	2	5	2	.	.	3	1	3	3	.	.	.	19	.	239	
1836	1	2	1	2	1	3	1	.	.	1	.	.	12	.	217	
1837	3	.	1	5	2	1	2	1	1	4	.	.	19	.	203	Three, and
1838	2	1	2	1	1	.	1	.	1	1	1	2	13	.	231	epidemic
1839	8	1	3	3	4	3	3	7	2	3	2	2	41	.	202	cholera.
1840	.	2	1	.	3	5	4	3	5	1	3	2	34	.	278	One.
1841	3	1	2	2	4	3	4	4	8	4	1	.	36	1	284	Four, and
1842	1	1	3	1	2	2	.	4	5	2	1	.	22	.	249	wide spread
1843	1	.	3	2	1	2	3	6	2	1	1	4	26	.	234	fever in all
Total	45	29	39	36	35	41	39	51	40	29	16	31	431	7	4,410	classes.
	149				166				116							

It will not escape notice that of the fifteen Plague ships which arrived in Malta since the English took possession, eleven arrived in well-marked epidemic years in the island, namely, three in 1813, three in 1837, one in 1840, and four in 1841. I have made most diligent search for the registers of the civil hospital for 1812 and first quarter of 1813, but without success. It is therefore probable that, like some of the valuable tapestry in the governor's palace, they were considered suspected, and destroyed.

RETURN of Cases of ANTHRAX in MALTA and GOZO, from 1st January 1850 to 31st August 1852, taken from the Records of Dispensary Practice.

MONTHS.	1850.		1851.		1852.		Total Number of		Showing the comparative prevalence in Winter, Summer and Autumn.
	No. of		No. of		No. of				
	Cases.	Deaths.	Cases.	Deaths.	Cases.	Deaths.	Cases.	Deaths.	
January . .	24	..	24	4	9	..	57	4	238
February . .	31	..	12	..	22	..	65	..	
March . .	24	1	24	..	21	..	69	1	
April . .	14	..	19	..	14	..	47	..	
May . .	23	..	23	..	20	1	66	1	316
June . . .	31	..	28	..	29	1	88	1	
July . . .	16	..	28	1	31	1	75	2	
August . .	21	1	28	2	38	1	87	4	
September .	24	1	26	..	..	..	50	..	149
October . .	4	..	27	..	..	..	31	..	
November .	7	..	17	..	..	..	24	..	
December .	16	..	9	1	..	..	25	1	
Total . .	235	3	265	8	184	4	684	15	

(Signed) J. B. H. COLLINS, M.D.,  
Inspector of Civil Charities and Prisons.

Dr. Calleja, physician to the police establishment, has furnished me with the following table and remarks, which are important, the cases having generally occurred in the reputed haunts of Plague:—

YEAR.	January.	February.	March.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.	Total.	Died.
1850	..	1	4	2	1	1	1	..	..	..	1	1	12	2
1851	2	2	..	1	..	5	5	3	1	1	1	..	21	2
1852	2	2	..	..	3	4	4	7	..	..	..	..	22	1
Total	4	5	4	3	4	10	10	10	1	1	2	1	55*	5
	16			34				5						

\* The majority of these are included in the preceding return.

"The cases of anthrax I observed in the district of Valetta, from the 1st of January 1850 to the end of August 1852, amounted to fifty-five, as shown in the above table. Twenty-two of these cases were serious, the others rather trifling. Of these serious cases I sent five to the Central Civil Hospital, of which three proved fatal.

"Cases of anthrax in Malta appear rather in summer than in winter, more in males than in females; in persons of low condition and of sickly appearance, dwelling in damp places, as the Mandraggio and Strada Pozzi.

"The cases in Valetta appeared to be caused by want of proper food, filth, and long sickness. Three cases under my care were followed by death, and two others were reported to me by other doctors.

"The first fatal case I observed was in a rather stout and robust man of sanguine temperament, aged 74, who lived in Strada Toro, together with many other persons. He had an anthrax of considerable extent on the right shoulder, and it affected a portion of the muscles of the vertebra. He died after fourteen days of sickness with symptoms of *encephalitis*.

"The second case occurred in the Mandraggio, in a man 36 years old, of delicate appearance. He presented an anthrax on the right side of the loins, which also affected a portion of the vertebra. He died under excruciating pains, on the 27th day of his illness.

"The third case was in a woman, aged 66, of lymphatic temperament, living in the Mandraggio. She had an anthrax on the nape of the neck, and expired on the 22d day of her illness, under nervous symptoms.

"Two other fatal cases were reported to me by other doctors. The first was in a consumptive man and the other in a butcher. They both died under nervous symptoms.

"The above fifty-five cases of anthrax appeared in the following streets:—

*Mandraggio	-	-	-	-	-	17
*Strada San Patriizo	-	-	-	-	-	2
*" " Marco	-	-	-	-	-	2
*Strada Reale, near St. John's Church	-	-	-	-	-	1
" " Stretta, under the Main Guard	-	-	-	-	-	2
" " Mercanti, near to the Castellania	-	-	-	-	-	1
*" " San Domenico	-	-	-	-	-	1
*" " Del Toro	-	-	-	-	-	2
*" " San Carlo	-	-	-	-	-	1
*" " Pozzi	-	-	-	-	-	3
*" " St. Ursula, near Strada Pozzi	-	-	-	-	-	2
*" " Federico	-	-	-	-	-	1
*" " San Guiseppe	-	-	-	-	-	2
*" " Fontana	-	-	-	-	-	2
Without any houses	-	-	-	-	-	8

viz., three in the police station, an English sailor, and the others mendicants.

"Of the others we have only their names and ages, not having appeared more than once at the public dispensary.

(Signed) "F. CALLEJA, M.D."

Dr. Portelli, Physician to the Civil Hospital, communicates to me the following:—

"The number of cases of carbuncle treated by me in my private and hospital practice during the last 20 years amounts,

\* All the streets marked with \* were notorious for numerous cases of Plague in 1813—See map 2.

as near as my memory serves, to 120. The majority of the individuals among whom this disease occurred were poor, and between the ages of 50 and 70, some of them habitually addicted to the abuse of intoxicating liquors, and the greater number living in low damp places. The situations of these tumors were generally the inferior part of the neck, between the shoulders and the loins, varying from the size of a pigeon's egg to a circumference of 8 inches, and preceded by rigors, headache, prostration of strength, nausea, and in some cases by vomiting and want of sleep. These symptoms were very soon succeeded by fever, by the eruption of carbuncle, slightly elevated typhoid symptoms, and in some cases with delirium and death. These symptoms were invariably protracted in their course.

"Carbuncle is not a common disease in this island, but mitigated forms of anthrax are commonly to be met with."

Dr. Bardon has furnished me with the following:—

DEAR SIR,

Malta, 27th August 1852.

WITH regard to cases of anthrax and carbuncle, I beg to reply to your questions as follows:—

From my registers I find that, in 1821, I treated in the Lazaretto of Malta, eight individuals under the above disease, and have transcribed their clinical history. From that you will perceive that the sufferers belonged generally to the poorer class and that five cases recovered and three died.

From the situation and symptoms it appeared that these cases were those of mild Plague.

Anthrax is a prevalent disease in Malta, particularly in summer, and when attacking weakly subjects is almost always fatal.

I am, &c.,

SALVAT BARDON, *M. Chirurgo.*

Case 1.—"Salvatore Spiteri, æt. 27, porter, of strong constitution; was attacked 25th March 1821, on getting out of bed, with severe pain of head, rigors, fever, white tongue, thirst, inclination to vomit, and general debility. 26th. Pain in the right groin and glandular swelling, prostration, and bilious vomiting. 27th. Restlessness and constipation, relieved by purgative, and followed by much diminution of fever and of the general symptoms, and at the end of 10 days was perfectly recovered.

*Case 2.*—"Saverio Zammit, æt. 30, tailor, of spare habit; attacked 28th March, on getting out of bed, with general debility, pain of head, vomiting, rigors, fever, and inflammatory irritation in the left ham, with pain in the corresponding groin. Purgative and cataplasm prescribed. On the 3rd day abatement of symptoms and irritation of ham disposed to suppurate. 4th day, tumour suppurated and opened, with subsidence of all the symptoms; and on the 12th day cicatrization of tumour and recovery.

*Case 3.*—"Lorenzo Attard, æt. 37, porter, of strong and robust constitution; attacked 29th March, on getting out of bed, with severe pain of head, general debility, fever, and delirium, with a carbuncle on the right shoulder. On the second day another carbuncle appeared on the upper part of right side of neck. 3rd day, rapid aggravation of symptoms, general prostration and coma, under which he died. Body livid and covered with petechiæ, particularly on the breast and lower part of abdomen.

*Case 4.*—"Michele Bartolo, æt. 32, boatman, of weak constitution; attacked 30th March, on getting out of bed, with severe pain of head, rigors, fever, and vomiting. 2nd day, aggravation of symptoms, bilious vomiting, severe pain of head and continued delirium. 3rd day, extreme debility, coma, total prostration of strength and death. Body livid, a few petechiæ scattered on the inferior extremities, and a quantity of white froth from mouth and nostrils before death.

*Case 5.*—"Vincenzo Capar, æt. 39, tailor, of strumous diathesis; was attacked 1st April, on getting out of bed, with pain of head, pallor of countenance, rigor, bubo in right groin, and incipient carbuncle on the left superior part of back. 2nd day, vomiting of greenish matter, delirium and extreme debility. 3rd day, carbuncle and bubo larger, but with aggravation of symptoms; vomiting of black matter and looseness of bowels; and on the 7th day, under a rapid increase of symptoms, and black petechiæ over the whole surface, he ceased to live. Body livid; contraction of the superior and inferior joints, and a gangrenous eschar over the surface of the carbuncle.

*Case 6.*—"Vincenzo Vella, æt. 30, shoemaker, of rather weakly condition; attacked on the evening of 5th April, with rigors, fever, thirst, and constipation. 2nd day, copious alvine evacuation of black and fetid matter, abatement of symptoms, and on the 7th day was perfectly recovered.

*Case 7.*—"Giuseppe Inguanos, æt. 18, porter of bilious temperament; attacked on 10th April, on getting out of bed, with rigors, fever, flushed countenance, and vomiting. 2nd day, bubo at the internal and superior part of right thigh. 3rd day,

bubo inflamed, painful, and more elevated. 4th day, abatement of symptoms, bubo matured, opened, and discharging abundant purulent matter. 6th day, progressing favourably. 10th day, remission of symptoms, bubo disposed to cicatrize, and on the 13th day was quite well.

*Case 8.*—"Fortunato Debona, æt. 27, porter, a strong constitution; attacked 12th April, on getting out of bed, with severe pain in the lumbar region, weakness of limbs, cold shivering, fever, paleness of countenance, white tongue and bubo in the left groin, advancing to suppuration. 2nd day, bubo suppurated and opened, followed by abundant discharge and relief. On the 10th day the bubo cicatrized, symptoms disappeared, and the patient perfectly recovered."

Dr. Bardon states that the above were from "Alexandria." They were all natives of Malta. These cases are interesting as showing the wide range of symptoms. They are authentic, and valuable as being connected with one of the Plague-ships, and showing a similarity to undoubted Plague.

Dr. Bardon freely handled the above cases, considering himself protected by his attack in 1813.

Sufficient has been adduced, I think, to show a decided disposition in the inhabitants of Malta to carbuncular disease and eruptions of a similar kind, ranging from the common furunculus of the young, or those healthily placed, to the aggravated carbuncle of the old and sickly, or those living in filth and misery.

How many of the above cases were sporadic cases of Plague, or closely allied in their nature to that disease, I will not stop to inquire. But there is sufficient, I think, to support the belief that the climate and subjects that can in ordinary years produce carbuncle to the extent here shown, will be capable under abnormal conditions to multiply indefinitely its numbers and virulence. Whether the disease in its exalted form acquires new attributes, or claims a different name, I leave for others to determine; but being still chiefly found in the same classes and localities, in the same seasons, and marked by a similar febrile action, it is here probably necessary to guard against the common error of mistaking degree for radical differences—the occasional aggravation of indigenous disease for a new and imported one.

Carbuncle would appear to be nearly constantly present as an endemic disease in Malta.

The periods between 1847 and 1850 inclusive, particularly in the three last years, the disposition to cholera was marked and decided. With the military there were 38 deaths in 1848, 8 in 1849, and 135 in 1850; and in the latter year 1,764 deaths from the same disease occurred among the civil population.



In the autumn of 1847 a severe and wide-spread influenza in all classes carried off 81 civilians; and in the autumn of 1849 a destructive epizooty appeared among the oxen, destroying 750 head.

Carbuncular disease, though still appearing in these years, seems to have its own appropriate conditions, and the great mortality from that and fever in 1846 would appear to indicate, to some extent, a common cause. 1846 was also remarkable for a more than usually complicated and fatal fever among the troops.

From 1848 to 1850 the number of cases among the troops under the general head of "Phlegmon" was remarkable, namely, 1,357; the three preceding years only yielding 427.\* Dr. Gulia, of Cospicua, a poor and densely crowded district, informs me that from 1846 to 1850 inclusive, he treated 89 cases of carbuncle, six of which proved fatal, and by far the greatest number of them were in the same streets that were chiefly infested by plague in 1813. In 1851-2, years most remarkable for the absence of epidemic disease, he met with 35 cases, but all of a benign character.

In ordinary years, according to Dr. Calleja, malignant fever is not so much found among the subjects of carbuncle as in those under somewhat better circumstances.

Fever is never absent among the military in summer. It varies considerably in the number of cases in different years, but little in character, except in particular seasons, when it rises into a very malignant remittent, with no tendency to the intermittent, which is almost unknown as an indigenous disease.

In the several invasions of the Plague in Malta, it will be observed that, like carbuncle, it has prevailed at all seasons, but more especially in summer. In 1655, when only 20 persons died, it commenced, and terminated in the last quarter of the year. In 1675-76 and 1813—severe visitations of plague—it commenced in the former in December, in the latter in March, attained its height, in both, in the hottest months, and declined in autumn. So far plague and the ordinary carbuncle of Malta resemble each other, and the cases furnished by Drs.

\* Dr Calvert states that in 1813, in the 14th Regiment, every whitlow festered and every scratch became an ugly sore; a tight shoe was sufficient to produce a livid boil, and the military hospitals were crowded with them. From this it would appear that the 14th Regiment, though free from decided Plague, was not exempt from some assimilating influence: thus pointing to the conclusion that Plague, like other pestilences, has probably smaller and more equivocal beginnings than we are generally inclined to admit.

Calleja and Gulia can leave no doubt of both diseases being found in the same localities and among the same class of subjects.

YEARS.	Deaths from Anthrax.	Deaths from Fever.
1846	22*	121
1847	3	112
1848	4	65
1849	1	86
1850	3	51
1851	8	50

\* Two more than died in the Plague of 1665, but probably being more scattered attracted less attention.