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RICH AND BERI-BERI.

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RICH AND BERI-BERI.

THE vexed question of the causation of beri-beri by the consumption of bad rice is thus handled by for Traders in the Medical Report on Selangor for 1902. A comparison between the Tai Wa Ward and Leper Asylum, on the one hand, and the Pudooh Gaol on the other, affords a very convincing proof against the theory of the causation of beri-beri by a toxin contained in Rangoon rice. On 31st October, 1902, there were 51 Chinese in the Tai Wa Ward, 84.5% of whom had been there for over seven months.

In the Leper Asylum there were 131 patients of which 129 were Chinese: 88.8% of these had been continuously residing in the Asylum for over seven months. Now these two institutions and the Pudooh Gaol are supplied with Rangoon rice by the same Chinese contractor. It is purchased from a merchant in Penang and is taken delivery of at the Kuala Lumpur Railway Station. It is thence removed to a store in the town. This store is light, clean and well ventilated, the rice is kept on a platform raised off the ground, from which it is distributed to the various hospitals as required. At no time is more than three weeks' supply kept in the store, and the bags of rice are taken out and sent to the various institutions without selection of any kind. In the Pudooh Gaol, Tai Wa Ward, and Leper Asylum, we have three institutions, the inhabitants of which are of the same nationality. The Rangoon rice consumed by them is supplied from the same source. It would be reasonable to suppose that if the disastrous outbreak of beri-beri that occurred in one of them, the Pudooh Gaol, during the year, were conveyed by the Rangoon rice, the patients in the Tai Wa Ward and Leper Asylum should suffer from beri-beri in the same way as the prisoners. This has, however, not been the case; and whereas from 1st January to 31st October, 1902, 291 fresh cases of beri-beri occurred in the Pudooh Gaol, not a single patient was attacked with the disease in either the Tai Wa Ward or Leper Asylum.

Information



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