

[Report 1895] / Medical Officer of Health, Penzance U.D.C. / Borough.

Contributors

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1895.



Penzance,
25 Feb. 1896.

Dear Sir,

I am sorry that I have
nothing better to send you than
the inclosed newspaper slip of
my Annual Report for 1895. It
is not a full copy of the actual
report, but may perhaps be
efficient for your purpose.

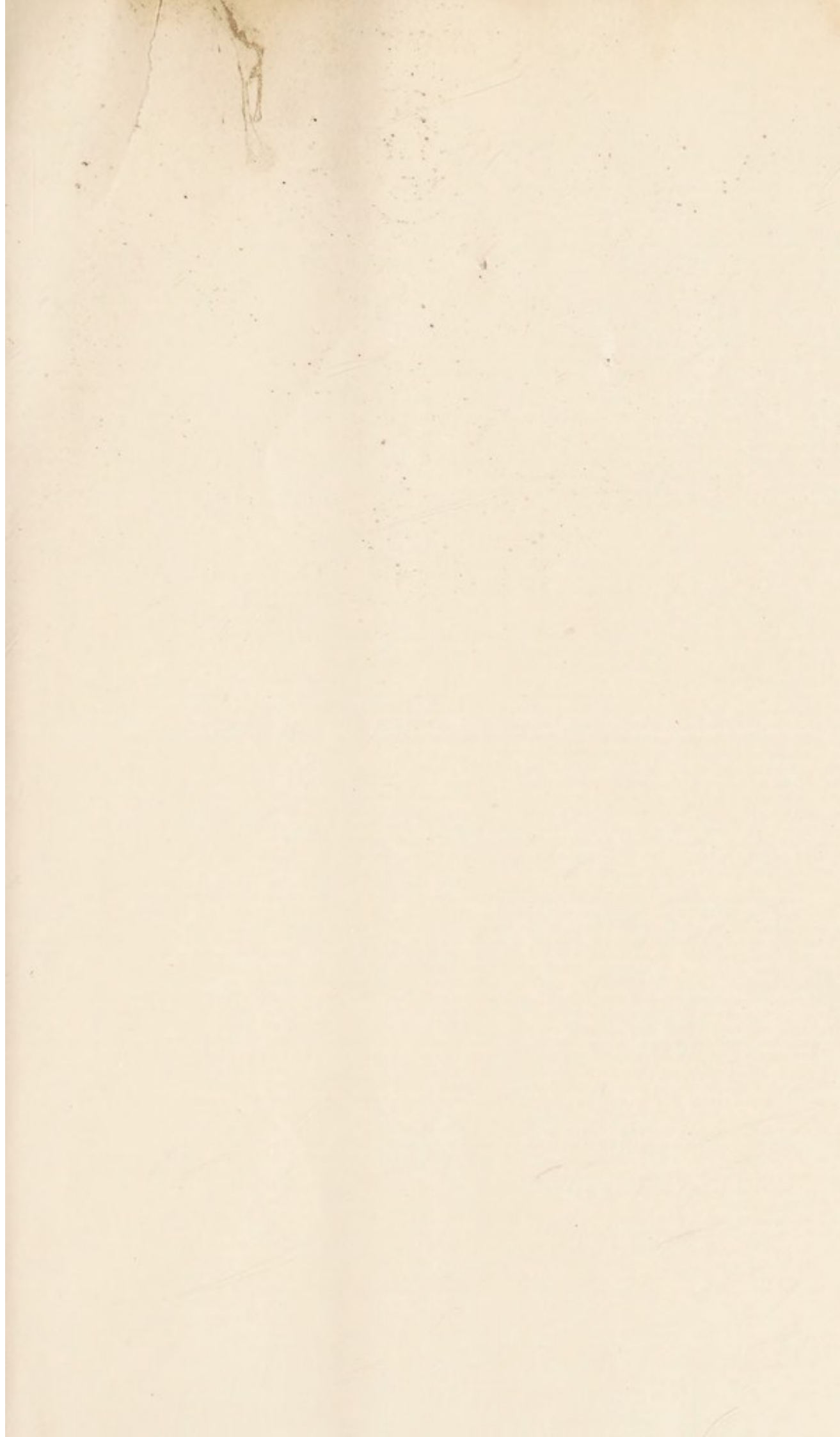
I am, Dear Sir,

Yours faithfully

George Bowen Millett.

The Librarian,
British Medical Association.







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THE HEALTH OF PENZANCE.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORTS.

The following is the annual report of the Medical Officer (Mr G. B. Millett), presented at the meeting of the Town Council on Wednesday:—

The total number of births registered in Penzance during 1895 is 341. The actual number of deaths occurring in the district is 256, but the number registered is 259, included in which is one of a person who died suddenly in the train on his way hither: one of a sailor who died at sea, at least 60 miles away, and the remaining case is that of a mutilated body in an advanced state of decomposition which was found floating on the sea 27 miles off the Land's End, about which nothing is known. It was, however, brought to Penzance for inquest and burial. Both births and deaths are in excess of those of the previous year, when they were 333 and 217. The average birth rate per thousand is 24.2, and the death rate, whether taken from the actual or registered number of deaths, would be 19.8 or 19.9 respectively, 13 deaths of persons not belonging to the district are included in the total, and allowing for these, the natural increase would be 91. Ages at death range from one hour to 90 years. Two deaths are recorded above the age of 90 years: 17 above 85, and 59 above 70. Births were most numerous in February, September and October, when they were 38, 49 and 43, and deaths in March, April, and September, when they were 23, 29, and 28 respectively. More than half of the total number of deaths are due to pulmonary disease, and of these there are 31 from bronchitis and pneumonia, 16 from phthisis, whilst whooping cough amongst infants and influenza amongst adults claim their victims to the number of 7 each. Deaths from all other diseases classified in the tables accompanying the report are comparatively few. The highest mortality is from infantile diarrhoea, there being eighteen deaths registered. In 1894 there were no deaths from this disease nor have there been so many since 1881. With one exception, which was complicated with abscess and occurred in March, they all took place in August, September, and October. The general conditions affecting infant life would appear to have been much the same in 1895 as in 1894. The occurrence of notifiable infectious diseases shows a marked decrease in 1895 as compared with 1894 the number of cases (including those from the Port Sanitary District) being 79 just half the total recorded in the previous year. Scarlet fever was the most numerous reported, but was mostly of a very mild type. In 41 cases two deaths occurred, in each instance from after effects, and in one of these the disease was neither suspected nor certified till death. Typhoid fever occurred in 15 cases (or including one from the port 16) from which one death resulted. There were also five cases of diphtheria, with one death. In addition to these there were notified 10 cases of erysipelas; 2 of puerperal fever; 4 of measles (besides a case of small pox belonging to the port 16) from which one death resulted. There were also five cases of diptheria, with one death. The total number of deaths from notifiable infectious diseases is therefore 4. Among the very poor this class of disease seems to be, as heretofore, almost entirely unknown there being but one case, out of a total of some 93 cases of sickness, recorded during the year in the fortnightly Union returns. Once again it may be mentioned that the law with regard to vaccination is more or less ignored. A complete house to house inspection has been carried out during 1895, all the houses and premises in the district having been visited. Twenty were found to be defective, under the Public Health Act of 1875, it have been reported; one closed and five reported to be unfit for human habitation over await the decision of the magistrates on the subject. Overcrowding was found in five cases, and in each instance remedied as promptly as possible. In these and other cases relating to choked drains, the keeping of animals contrary to the bye-laws and dilapidations of various kinds, all coming under the head of nuisances, action has been taken, usually with the ready co-operation of all concerned, and thus nuisances have been abated to the total number of 174. Some 600 sanitary notices were issued with regard to the repair of water fittings, and in carrying out the objects of the Notification and Infectious Diseases Act, besides which 5000 hand-bills relative to sanitation were distributed from house to house. There is but one registered common lodging house in the town, and that is fairly well kept. The advisability of getting some others placed on the list is now being considered. There are within the borough 18 slaughter houses, which are in as good condition as can be expected, under the circumstances. Some of them are ill-constructed and also from their position more or less unsuited to the purpose for which they are used. The establishment of abattoirs apart from the vicinity of streets and dwelling houses or outside the borough if practicable would be a very desirable improvement. There are 19 bakehouses and 33 milkshops, all well kept, and the latter registered. No samples of food stuffs, drugs or water have been subjected to analysis for some time past. The appointment of a Borough Analyst is still under consideration and until that matter is satisfactorily settled, little can be done in this direction. Both fish and fruit have been sold and destroyed as being unfit for human consumption. Bunking still goes steadily on. 44 dwelling houses have been completed during the year, and were certified as being fit for occupation, whilst 54 plans have been submitted and passed besides 21 for various other buildings as well as for alterations and additions. The sewerage and water-mains have been proportionately extended. There has been a constant water supply at high pressure throughout the year except from 23rd September to 6th October; when in anticipation of continued drought it was turned off at night. The reservoirs have been lately cleaned and schemes for increased storage are now occupying the attention of the Council. Disinfection in various forms has been carried on wherever it has been thought necessary or expedient and with perfectly satisfactory results as heretofore. Further 184 poor persons were gratuitously supplied with three-penny-worth of lime each and were also lent brushes. The Isolation Hospital has been used for both typhoid and scarlet fever patients during the year and would have been used often except for the fact that it is too small to allow of more than one kind of infectious disease being admitted at a time. In consequence of the recent Local Government Board inquiry (re Port Sanitary Authority) the procedure with regard to the proposed new Isolation Hospital has been suspended seeing that the result of that inquiry may very materially alter the position of affairs as far as Penzance is concerned.

Mr Millett's report as Medical Officer to the Port Sanitary Authority was as follows:—

In all about 950 vessels of all kinds have entered the harbour and dock during 1895, about 500 and 450 in each respectively. Happily, there has been less danger of cholera, &c., and to vessels have come from infected ports. Foreign vessels form but a small proportion of those visiting the harbour, and only 13 laden with ice, timber, and grain have put in here. 23 of these were inspected and nothing requiring special notice from a sanitary point of view was found. The coastwise traffic is steadily increasing, and is chiefly carried on by steamships, but these are high-class boats, and have always been found to be in good condition sanitarily. Fishing boats taken altogether—foreign, Lowestoft, Brixham, Dartmouth, Plymouth, and local—in point of number are far in excess of all other shipping. These have been frequently inspected, and have on various occasions required cleansing. Five French fishing boats also visited Newlyn which is within the district of the Port of Penzance, which extends from Cuddas Point on the east, to Lamorna Cove on the west, with a coast line of not less than 12 miles. The entire Port of Penzance has a very much longer coast line of nearly 35 miles, extending from the Lizard Point round the Land's End to Chapel-an-Gotha, in the parish of Perranarabute, the limit extending three miles seaward from low water mark all along that line. There are about 160 first and second class fishing boats in Mouse's Bay, conveying about 900 men. Seldom does a year pass without the occurrence of typhoid fever, amongst Lowestoft fishermen especially. Again a Lowestoft fisherman was landed here and treated for that disease. A French fisherman, suffering from influenza, as well as other fishermen from the port with various complaints not of an infectious nature were also received and treated at the West Cornwall Infirmary. The most important case for the year as affecting the Port Sanitary Authority was one of a French fisherman who upon being visited in his boat in Mouse's Bay, about two miles from the shore, was found to be suffering from small-pox. He had come from Brest, the

