

CORRESPONDENCE

This department is provided for the publication of informal communications which are of interest, whether because they are informative or are suggestive and stimulating; to serve as an open forum for discussions of matters of interest; and for questions and answers by members of the editorial staff and others.

A HISTORY OF LEPROSY

A QUESTIONNAIRE

To the EDITOR :

At the present time I am assembling material for a *History of Leprosy*. I shall be especially thankful to any readers of the JOURNAL who will be so good as to reply to the following questions relative to leprosy in the countries where they live.

1. What are the texts, historical, legislative or other, mentioning leprosy in that country? So far as possible quote the texts themselves if they are in Greek, Latin, English, German, Spanish or Italian or, of course, French; translate them if they are in another language; in all cases give the bibliographic references.

2. Describe the examinations or tests to which the lepers were submitted before their internment. Give models or copies of the documents used in certifying the existence of leprosy in the patients, and concerning their isolation.

3. Before the leper was separated from the world was there held a religious ceremony or Office analogous to the Office of the Dead? If so, quote the most characteristic passages of that Office.

4. Quote the principal regulations to which the lepers were subjected, and indicate their dates.

5. What was the costume of the lepers? What objects did they usually carry with them—basket, box, etc.? With what furniture were the houses of the lepers provided?

6. What distinctive signs were placed on the clothing or on the houses of the lepers? Did they carry "cliquettes" or rattles to advise passers-by of their proximity?

7. Mode of construction and disposition of the cottages—whether isolated or grouped in an inclosure; plans of leprosaria, site, internal distribution, cultivable land, revenues.

8. Approximate number of the leprosaria and of lepers at the time when the disease was at its maximum.

9. Juridical condition of the lepers. Were they considered as “civilly dead” and deprived of their rights? What were their means of subsistence? Had they the right to go to the town to beg?

10. In what race did leprosy make its greatest ravages?

11. At what time did it enter its decline? Date of closure of the leprosaria?

It is hoped that the writer will have the kindness to add any other useful information, and to furnish me indications of the principal works dealing with the matter, to which one may refer. Photographs of ancient leprosaria, or copies of old pictures dealing with leprosy will be very useful. In case the reader cannot reply to this questionnaire himself, I shall be greatly obliged if he will communicate it to someone who can do so. The sources of responses utilized in the book will be acknowledged.