

LEPROSARIA IN MEDIAEVAL WEST POMERANIA

TO THE EDITOR:

With this letter I submit for publication a translation of a paper on mediaeval leprosy in a district of Germany which I happen to know very well, as I studied there (in Greifswald) for two years. This translation was made in 1937, while I was at the Uzuakali Leper Colony in Nigeria, and the last part of it was kindly made by Mrs. Russell, of that institution. The literature is not included as it was almost impossible to translate.

The district that is dealt with is not heavily populated even today, there being not more than 150,000 people there; and for mediaeval times I would say that 80,000 would be a high estimate. From the paper it would seem that there must have been some 400 lepers in the 19 leprosaria, which would give a rate of 5 per thousand. It is astonishing that in spite of so high an incidence it was possible, even with the limited means of those times, to stop the spread of the disease within some fifty years. I can only explain this fact by supposing that most of the lepers must have been easily recognizable lepromatous-type cases, so that it was possible to remove them early.

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