

ness. Since my return I seem to have had almost more to do, as there is so much to arrange here. I am just going to give up my most valuable helpmeet, who is to go to the Plague Hospital, and I must fill her place as best I can. Then, most of our servants have run away, including the cook, and we, and most of our friends, have to manage either with no servants or else with raw recruits. Five out of six of the shops are shut, so that with granaries well stored the price of food is very high, as it is all locked up and the owners gone. Is not this a sad picture? but it is true. . . . Provisions are frightfully expensive. We used to get bread at sixteen loaves the rupee, and now we can only get six or seven. . . . This morning's account is very bad of the plague, and I see more tradespeople have closed their shops and run away. The police inspector told us he did not think Bombay could go on another month at this rate, and that it would be a deserted city. Our compound is so far healthy, and all the native servants of the hospital here, except two who died of the plague, have kept well. . . . Two little children here, when they heard I was going to the Plague Hospital, of their own accord when they said their prayers, composed another—'Please God, take care of our sister, and bring her back safe.' I was so glad to tell them God had heard their prayers."

The tenor of these letters will prove that the condition of things in Bombay is far more serious than the official reports would lead us to suppose. Lack of courage and prompt action upon the part of the Municipal Government of Bombay is no doubt answerable for the fact that the plague-stricken natives have through flight carried the disease far afield, and we are told by an eye-witness, in the *Daily Mail*, that the plague is "Spreading, spreading, spreading." When isolation became more and more urgent it was "funked" lest the Mohammedans might rise, "The Eastern man loathes hospitals." The same witness says:—"It seems incredible to an Englishman that the ordinary measures for isolation have not been taken already. Why not, it is asked, again and again, make hospitals of churches, mosques, warehouses? There are enough warehouses in Bombay to-day in all truth. . . . The courage of the English in Bombay to-day is splendid. . . . doctors and nurses, soldiers, business men, and lawyers, are at their posts as regularly as at any other time. The end of the plague is not yet. On or about June 10th the rains will break, and the people will—must, indeed—flock back to their hideous 'chawls' for shelter. Then it is feared will come a worse time than that which is passing."

Is it not time that we British nurses roused ourselves, and offered our services to the nation? There is little doubt that it would have been well for the plague-stricken in our Eastern Empire had those services been requisitioned months ago.

## Answers to Prize Questions.

THE best answers to this month's Prize Questions have been sent in by Miss A. V. Stewart, of the County Hospital, York, who has therefore gained the highest number of marks. We also commend the answers of Miss Lilian Menzies Jackson, of the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street.

I.—How can the Nurse *à la mode* be abolished?

The Nurse *à la mode* cannot be entirely "abolished" by Act of Parliament. There will always be tares among the wheat, and infinite trouble and pains are constantly necessary to remove a false growth. A great responsibility lies with the superintendents of our training schools to weed out unsuitable candidates, and properly organised registration of nurses would do a great deal to remove the evil; but the gist of the matter lies in the fact that women who have been unable to satisfy the requirements of the training schools into which they have gained an entrance are employed by associations, whose aim is not to supply a genuine article at a fair price, but simply and solely the making of money at the expense of a confiding unprofessional public, and also of many a hardly-driven genuine nurse.

It is the old story over again of the cheap and nasty shoddy goods being foisted on the would-be purchaser of reliable articles.

The solution of the difficulty lies to a great extent in the hands of the employers of nursing labour. Let them insist on the nurses being drawn from reliable sources. The Nurse *à la mode* will thus become a drug in the market, "a consummation devoutly to be wished" by all genuine true-hearted members of a noble sisterhood.

II.—Describe the most palatable method of administering a dose of castor oil.

The most palatable method of taking castor oil probably varies with the idiosyncrasy of each patient, but it will usually be found that it is taken with the least distaste when given in a small cup of good, strong hot coffee.

Where brandy is permissible, the drug may be given in a small quantity of the spirit, and allowed to stand, when the oil will collect into a globule, which is easily swallowed.

The juice (strained) of a lemon is preferred to the brandy by some patients. A piece of dry bread well chewed after the dose will effectually remove any tendency to nausea.

If given in milk the quantity of milk should be small. Milk ʒi, then the castor oil ʒi, and ʒi milk poured on the top. Let the milk be as hot as it can be drunk.

A. V. STEWART.

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