

## Our Foreign Letter.

## THE QUARANTINE CAMP FOR MECCA PILGRIMS.



of the Government Camp for the segregation of pilgrims may interest your readers. It is a most wonderful camp, organised by the Quarantine Board of Egypt, for the prevention of the introduction of Plague and Cholera to Europe, on the return of the pilgrims from Mecca.

As the pilgrim boats arrive at El-Tor from Jeddah and Yumbo, the pilgrims are quickly disembarked in barges strung six or eight together and tugged to the pier by a small launch. They are then passed through the disinfecting station, and all their clothes and baggage sterilised, while they are enjoying the privilege of a good bath. The Baths are beautifully arranged and supplied with hot and cold water, and douching appliances, all the fixtures being quite modern.

There are three sterilizing stations, so that three vessels may disembark at the same time. An English Nursing Sister is in charge of each, on the female side, whilst the doctors take the male. If not well looked after, half the number of pilgrims would evade the bath, and therefore their personal clothes would not be sterile; whilst waiting for their own clothes the Government supply the Turkish full drawers and a long kind of night shirt called a galabieh.

After disinfection they walk across the desert to the tents which are arranged in long rows, and fenced in with high wire netting, and there the boat-load of pilgrims are locked in with their doctor, canteen, and café for ten days, or for whatever term the Quarantine Board may appoint. No one is admitted except the high officials who inspect them, and the lady doctor or nurse who has to examine the female pilgrims. Pilgrims who fall ill during the time are removed at once to the Hospital Camp.

The doctor examines the pilgrims daily, assisted by native guardians, who are responsible for the cleanliness and order of the section, which is always most beautifully kept, the sand being raked over down the gangways between the tents, and all rubbish buried.

There is always a battalion of native soldiers down there, and they have their own camp; they

Dear Editor,  
—As the season at El-Tor, on the Red Sea, will soon now commence, some account of the organisation

are stationed round the sections to prevent the pilgrims climbing over the fence or escaping any other way, but they scarcely ever attempt this.

As many as six and eight sections may be filled at once, according to the number of boats in the harbour. Still farther inland, towards Mount Sinai, is the Hospital Camp, from which a small railway runs down to the pier; so that all cases can be conveyed to it on stretchers if necessary straight from the vessels. Again, beyond the Hospital Tents are the tents for suspected cases, and infectious cases. The Pharmacy is a stone building, close to the Hospital. Each Hospital Tent contains two patients, and they are tended by native orderlies and nurses, who have been trained in the Government Hospitals in Cairo and Alexandria.

The doctors are principally Europeans, but generally an Englishman has charge of the Hospital Camp.

A great deal of patience and tact are required in the examination of the pilgrims; though generally they are very docile, occasionally one may object and hide him or herself in a corner of a tent, but when the *relatives* are informed that until the examination has taken place, the whole section will remain in quarantine, they generally bring persuasion to bear, no force ever being necessary or indeed of any use.

A Register has to be kept by the doctors for the male, and by the nurse for the female pilgrims, in which the name, age, nationality, and destination of each pilgrim is noted, and that is almost the most difficult duty, as so many different languages are spoken. A knowledge of Arabic is absolutely essential, and any other language comes in useful.

The village of El-Tor is about a mile from the camp, and communication between the two is not allowed, except with permission of the Director of the Camp. The climate is very healthy, and one notices how all the employes improve in health during the three months' quarantine work. The same thing is noticed even with the donkeys, which are imported from Suez for the use of the officials in getting about the camp, as the distances are great and the heavy sand makes walking very difficult and tiring.

I hope this brief account of Quarantine Camp work may interest nurses engaged in other branches of work.

I am, Dear Madam,  
Yours faithfully,

A QUARANTINE CAMP INSPECTOR.

El-Tor is a port situated in the peninsula of Sinai, on the Gulf of Suez, an arm of the Red Sea. It is constantly passed by those travelling over this highway to the East.

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