

A CITY OF UNRELIEVED SUFFERING.

During these days of warfare and its dire effect on the manhood of our British Empire, we are, perhaps, apt to forget that "a nation never rises higher than its womanhood," and to so concentrate our attention on the relief of our wounded soldiers and sailors as to leave little time or thought for the *un-relieved* sufferings of thousands of Indian women. May we pay a brief visit to Multan Hospital, and there see what is being done, and perhaps realize still more vividly what has to be left undone, when one Zenana Mission Hospital of 100 beds, staffed by two English and one Indian doctor, with only two sisters, a dispenser, and twelve Indian Christian nurses, is the *only* provision made for the purdah women of a population equal to that of the whole of Ireland!

Multan city, to the average Englishman, stands for beautiful blue pottery, for mosques and tombs, for memories of the gallant defence of its fort, and for heat, which is indescribable. To those who work behind the high walls of the Mission Hospital, it stands for all these, but, above all, for "a city of unrelieved suffering." Before the day dawns, purdah women, dressed in *burgās*, begin to arrive at the hospital gates, some walking and accompanied by servants and children, others brought in closed *garis*; and still others, who have spent days or even weeks on their journey, on camels.

Passing through the central gateway, and wending their way through the maze of walls within (to protect the inmates from even the gaze of men!) they find Indian nurses ready to take them to the *bari* doctor, Miss Sahiba; or to see that they are carried straight to bed in one of the airy and comfortable wards. "Well, Mai, and where is the pain?" says a bright-eyed keen probationer, all alert to try her willing but untrained skill on her new patient. "Pain—why, Bibi-ji, it is just all over me! I began to have 'burnings' and to feel the evil spirits working about four years ago, but I only heard of this Zenana Hospital in my village six weeks ago, and it has taken nearly a month for my men folk to carry me here!" The doctor's diagnosis pronounces the verdict—unoperable malignant abdominal tumour! Oh! could she have been seen three years ago, *what* suffering might have been relieved.

From dawn till nearly 9 a.m., such women continue to arrive; whilst the nurses attend to the many in-patients already under their charge,

and the English sisters prepare for operations and superintend the morning work in fifteen or sixteen wards. Then a bell calls the attention of all to the central "backbone" of the work. The patients are gathered into groups, according to caste, and missionary doctors and sisters, the Indian doctor and nurses in separate wards, seek to draw these suffering ones to the knowledge of the Great Physician of souls and bodies; and as the patients themselves express it, the next half-hour is "the asking God's blessing time." After prayers, comes a busy morning—one day the Hindu wards being specially visited—the next, the Mahomedans—and almost daily, there will be operations—Cæsarian sections, hernias, abdominal sections, being the most frequent, with a large proportion of eye cases. Here, in this private ward, we find a high-caste Hindu woman, rendered septic by a native *dai's* dirty hands! Her first conscious words are, "Miss Sahiba, *what* is this beautiful place? I have never left my one room for seven-

teen years; I have heard of beautiful places beyond, but *where* am I now?" Her faithful sister, waiting on her by night and day, rejoices at this sign of consciousness, and doctor and nurse rejoice that one more life has been brought back from the very jaws of death.

In the afternoons, bazaars and distant villages may be visited, strictly purdah Mohammedan doors are thrown gladly open to receive "the doctor missionary," and over and over again the call comes, "If *such* a need exists, and such a welcome

awaits each doctor and nurse, where are the hundreds to go out to these suffering women, who never *can* be reached unless we go to them?"

To nurse the wounded, some thousands of English women have gladly given themselves; to nurse and teach and comfort these millions of Indian women how few, how miserably few are the workers. And yet their cry sounds loud above the din of battle, "Come over and help us"—we women of India call to the women of England."

ISABEL FRODSHAM.



MISS ISABEL FRODSHAM.

TO ALL OUR "BRAVES."

The little Pussy Willows
Come bravely creeping out,
Wrapped in their silvery fur-lets
While the weather's still in doubt.
No other thing could cheer me
As these Pussy Willows do,
With their message of the spring-time,
Except—a glimpse of you.

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