

seldom reside in the house of their master, but mingle freely with their friends and relatives in infected areas, where they go in and out for their meals, and where they sleep at night."

"The whole secret of preventing and stamping out the plague is to be found in the word segregation, both personal and regional. Until the most strenuous and absolutely inflexible law of segregation is mercilessly and religiously imposed, the plague will not cease."

Mr. James Cantlie's "Remarks on the Treatment of Bubonic Plague" in last week's *British Medical Journal*, is an article of great interest at the present crisis. "Once for all," he writes, "let it be understood that in no disease does one get such immediate results from careful and prompt medical treatment, and as a direct outcome of watchful nursing, as in plague," and perhaps one ought to add to that "in the case of Europeans."

NURSING.

In a hospital ward, during the first five days of illness, practically two patients require an attendant to themselves if the utmost good possible is to be done. A nurse must never let her patient out of sight for a moment, be the patient asleep or awake. She cannot leave the ward or room, without posting a deputy, for any purpose whatever. No nurse should be on duty for more than eight hours at a time; still better is it to follow the four hours' "watches" kept at sea.

The number of nurses required may seem outrageous, but we have in many illnesses a day and night nurse for private patients, and no more is demanded in this the most fatal illness known. Of course plague comes in epidemics, and the number of nurses is limited, no doubt; but we must not lose sight of what is necessary in considering what is expedient. Shortly, it may be put that a liberal supply of doctors and nurses is essential if the lives of the plague-stricken, be they native or European, are to be saved.

Enough has been said as to the rapidity of the onset, the development, and the fatality of plague to make the importance of early treatment in the disease and of the requisite promptness in its administration understood. The symptoms and signs change so rapidly, and in such varying succession, that no stereotyped line of treatment can be followed. Now it is delirium which calls for relief, now cardiac distress, or vomiting may supervene; or an unexpected loss of pulse, or a collapse totally without warning, may carry off the patient before any help is obtainable. The much-despised legend, "Treat symptoms as they arise," is the maxim in plague, and if the word "promptly" were added, the summary of plague

treatment is before us. The disease is caused by a bacillus (discovered by a Japanese physician, Dr. Kitasato), the toxic effects of which upon the blood give rise to functional derangements of possibly all organs, but most markedly of the nervous system, central and peripheral. The poison is so acute that, with the exception of the glandular inflammation, but little structural change is met with in the more vital organs. The cardiac trouble, which is so marked an accompaniment of the disease, is evidently a functional one, and the result of derangement of the nervous supply of the heart. This has constantly to be borne in mind when the subject of drugs is dealt with.

GENERAL TREATMENT.

The essentials are:—free ventilation, a cool room (60° to 70° F. where such is possible), a plentiful supply of hot and cold water, ice, a sufficiency of servants, and, of course, all the appliances of a modern hospital. Deaths are so frequent and so sudden that when the hospital is large it is necessary to have men employed whose duty it is to remove, to disinfect and to dispose of the dead.

Nothing should be allowed to leave the ward but to be disinfected. Crockery and glass should be scalded. Fæces should be sprinkled with quicklime; bed and bedding if not burnt are to be disinfected by heat; the steam disinfector is well nigh essential. Scrupulous cleanliness of the floor and bedsteads, obtained by washing with a disinfectant solution, are of primary importance, and all doorways should be curtained by a sheet wet with carbolic acid Jeyes' fluid, or other reliable antiseptics.

The patient should not be allowed to get out of bed for any purpose, but the use of the bedpan and urine bottle should be insisted on. So many times has it occurred, that the patient has tumbled over dead whilst getting up to stool, &c., that this is an imperative measure to insist upon.

NURSES FOR THE PLAGUE.

A representative of the *NURSING RECORD* called at the India Office with the object of finding out the facts as to the rumour that Nurses are about to proceed to Bombay under Government authority. She was informed that so far there has been no demand from the authorities for Nurses, and that the report is without foundation. We cannot but think, in view of the statement made by Mr. James Cantlie in last week's *British Medical Journal* that "a liberal supply of doctors and nurses is essential if the lives of the plague-stricken are to be saved," that it would be well if the India Office took the initiative in this matter.

(To be continued.)

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