

The Plague.

THE India Office has selected the following nurses for temporary duty in India, all of whom left London on Friday in the ss. *Oceana* for Bombay:—Miss J. Reynolds, Miss J. Oram, and Miss M. E. Katsch, trained and certificated at St. Bartholomew's Hospital; Miss G. Franklin, trained at St. Thomas' Hospital; Miss M. M. B. Kendall, trained and certificated at King's College Hospital; and Miss S. Morey, M.R.B.N.A., trained and certificated at the Hobart Hospital, Tasmania. Congratulations and warm good wishes go with them from their fellow-nurses at home.

In an interesting letter to the *Times* the following information is given concerning the plague in Bombay:



MISS JANE E. WHEATLEY, M.R.B.N.A.



MISS MARION HALE, M.R.B.N.A.

"The native city presents in many parts a most deserted aspect, where it is no rare case to see 30 or 40 deserted shops and houses in line. Many of these bear the ominous red mark in chalk, showing that a grisly and unwelcome guest has been within, sometimes clutching in its deadly hands whole families. This red mark is not confined to the native town alone; you will meet with it in the European business quarter, and as you wend your way up the beautiful suburb of Malabar Hill you will see the same lurid mark stand out on the gateways of the bungalows of the rich; in fact it is everywhere. When first the disease appeared it confined its ravages to houses near the harbour shore and principally among Hindus. Then it abated, to reappear in different parts of the city, when it spared neither Parsee, Mussulman, nor Hindu. Segregation could not be enforced, owing to caste, and owing to this prejudice the municipality have been heavily handicapped in their work of whitewashing and cleansing the narrow streets and gullies, full of houses in which the so-called rooms are veritable dungeons so far as light and air are concerned.

We have two eminent bacteriologists in our midst, one of whom has discovered a prophylactic lymph (Dr. Haffkine) with which he has inoculated many Europeans and natives. To be thoroughly successful the inoculation should be repeated three times, each dose being stronger than its predecessor. As a rule, it produces fever, headache more or less, and in some cases vomiting. Of course it is early yet to speak as to its efficacy. Dr. Yersin is shortly expected, and, as the lymph he employs is curative, his appearance is looked for with great eagerness.

I regret to say that the attacks among our European community from this loathsome complaint are on the increase. Seventeen or so are at present in the hospital, and there have been several deaths; up to now it would seem, as a rule, that happily the sturdy English constitution can resist the germs better than that of the ill-fed and feebler Asiatic.

The disease has lately assumed a more epidemic form, but as Bombay has never been so clean before, and after some of the miserable tenements of the poorer classes have been burnt down, also with the approach of the hot season (for it is said the bacilli cannot exist in a temperature of 90 to 95 degrees) we may look for a change for the better. As I write in my verandah I already hear the monotonous 'Tack, tack,' the note of the coppersmith bird in the garden below, sure harbinger of the heat; and let us trust with its advent, not only for the commercial interests of the country, but also for the sake of the Englishmen who cannot leave it, and the Englishwomen, who, woman-like, will not leave them, further horrors may be spared us, and our health horizon clear, never to be so clouded again."

We are informed that one of the municipal officers in Bombay, in the discharge of his duty, personally removed the bodies of 304 persons, who had died of plague, from the houses in which they had been concealed by their relatives. After this he himself developed the disease, and died.

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