

Sisters when first entering the wards of a plague Hospital. Here they found a medley of delirious men and women, placed indiscriminately in the same ward, with no attempt at privacy or decency; these poor creatures in their delirium were exposed and helpless. The first thing to be done was to attempt to introduce some vestige of decency by the division of the sexes, and by the erection of screens, so that nursing offices might be performed with some degree of privacy.

Sister had charge at one time of fourteen delirious patients, most of them enormous Persian men, strong and violent in their delirium, and the proportion of deaths was so great, that it was difficult to remove the corpses in time to admit the numbers of poor creatures brought to the hospital. In many instances she found patients suffering from the plague very difficult to feed, owing to the tetanus-like clenching of the jaws, which condition compelled the nurse to watch her opportunity, so that food and stimulant could be administered; little gaps between the teeth were utilised through which the patients were fed, the staple diet being fresh hot buffalo milk; an ample supply of buffaloes being kept in the compound for the purpose of feeding the sick. No very satisfactory results in the treatment of the patients were attained by the administration of the various drugs employed, recovery seemingly depending almost entirely on the unremitting care of the nurse, in feeding and stimulating the system, during the acute stage of the disease.

Upon the reception of plague patients at the Infectious Diseases Hospital, known as the Arthur Road Hospital, Sister again undertook the pioneer work of organisation.

We were under the impression that the Arthur Road Hospital was an emergency building, hastily erected for the reception of plague patients, and even under these conditions the construction of the hospital was open to considerable criticism, but when it is understood that this hospital is the only provision made for the reception of infectious cases at all times, it will be obvious that the letters addressed to the *Times of India*, upon the subject of its unsanitary condition, were not one whit too strong. The condition of a permanent hospital in which the floors are of mud, saturated with the evacuations and expectoration of patients suffering with infectious disease is better imagined than described.

When the Sisters took charge of the hospital as a plague hospital, their first efforts were directed towards introducing some organisation. The nursing at night, of delirious patients, some of whom were divested of all clothing, is graphically described in the report of a native

night nurse—"Me not like it, too much out of bed, bodies all open!" (exposed).

Medicines were administered under difficulties, when the only means of indicating the patients for whom they were intended were directions such as "give such and such a thing to that man in the purple blanket." The purple blanket was apt to change hands and complications ensued, especially when the patients were so delirious that they were to be found in all parts of the ward. On one occasion two men had to be separated who were fighting for one bed.

It will be understood that nursing under these conditions taxed the staff to the uttermost. Very often the hours on duty were long, from seven in the morning to perhaps half-past nine at night. We are told that plague, in common with other diseases, has a distinct smell of its own, and that after being in the ward all day, the clothes and person of the nurse seem impregnated with the odour. It will be obvious, therefore, that the first essential upon going off duty, is a bath and clean clothes, before food can be even touched, much less relished. The difficulties of providing appetising food for the nurses was great, but the Sisters managed to overcome this difficulty amongst others, and ultimately the meals were served comfortably away from the hospital.

Prior to the admission of plague in the Arthur Road Hospital, and when the Sisters of All Saints were requested to organise the nursing, we find that no provision, beyond the very inadequate attention given by "ward boys"—that is, native servants—was made for the care of the patients, and unless some new arrangement is made, we presume that once the plague epidemic is over in Bombay, the invaluable services of the Sisters will be dispensed with. Surely the medical authorities are somewhat to blame, that no effort has been made in the past to establish a system of trained nursing in this and other municipal hospitals, and we earnestly hope that some effort will be made by them in the future, to provide efficient nursing for the patients admitted into the institutions under their control. Is it astonishing that the natives look with distrust upon the treatment experience has taught them to expect, in hospitals nursed by "ward boys"? We are of opinion that they show discrimination in their well-founded prejudice to such nursing. We are informed that those patients suffering from plague, showed submissive appreciation, and gratitude, for the gentle care of trained and experienced Sisters, and that even in their delirium it was possible for the Sisters to influence them, by tact and sympathy, to submit to the necessary nursing treatment, to which many of the sufferers owed their recovery.

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