

The Plague.*(Continued from page 293.)*

THE pulse varies from 120 to 140, and is sometimes as much as 180. At first it is of good volume, but is always, in Dr. Viegas' experience, wanting in tone to an extreme degree. By the second or third day it becomes small and more frequent. In all cases the poison acts on the nervous system, and, therefore, it must act on the circulatory, respiratory, and digestive centres in the medulla oblongata.

The respirations on the first day are generally about 30, but sometimes are as high as 40 to 50. They then rise to 40 or 50, and occasionally as high as 66 to 78 without serious lung trouble.

Dr. Viegas has observed *petechiæ* in four cases, and in all of these from twenty to sixteen hours before death. They were from the size of a mustard seed to that of a split pea, and they occurred almost all over the body, and gave a dark livid appearance to it. It was the general occurrence of these *petechiæ* that gave to the epidemic of the fourteenth century its name of Black Death.

In speaking of this epidemic Dr. Viegas says that the old records state that "it was particularly characterised by a gangrenous inflammation of the respiratory organs, violent fixed pains in the chest, vomiting and spitting of blood, and a horribly offensive and pestiferous breath which could be perceived at a considerable distance from the patient."

In the present epidemic he has not noticed any offensive smell from the breath of the patients, not even in the closest proximity, nor has he met with any gangrenous inflammation of the respiratory organs, but he has seen vomiting and spitting of blood, as well as fixed pains in the chest. *Petechiæ* only appeared in his practice in severe cases, and the patients were in more or less insanitary houses.

Hæmorrhages.—Hæmaturia has been observed in some cases. Blood has also been passed, per rectum, independently of the stools, and hæmoptysis has occurred occasionally.

Digestive system.—The tongue is generally furred, except the tip and the edges, which are generally red. In some cases the red papillæ are also prominently seen at the edges and the tip. It is generally dry.

Constipation.—In about 10 per cent. of his cases Dr. Viegas says there was obstinate constipation, and

Annotations.**WORKHOUSE INFIRMARY NURSING ASSOCIATION.**

WE have received the annual report of this most useful association, and are glad to notice that its work, though necessarily difficult and laborious, still continues. That the nurses supplied by the association have brought honour to it, and gained for their association the confidence of the authorities, is evidenced by the fact that some years since the Local Government Board stated that they were "prepared to sanction, without further inquiry, the appointment of nurses recommended by the Workhouse Infirmary Nursing Association."

The Executive Committee has passed the following resolution:—

"That in view of the very considerable expense incurred by the committee for training nurses, Boards of Guardians are expected to subscribe to the funds of the association, in the proportion of one guinea annually, per nurse's place kept filled by the association."

As the association bears all the expense of training the nurses, this regulation is only reasonable. With the views of the association, as to the efficient control of the nursing department, we are also entirely in sympathy. One of the fundamental principles of the association is—

"That the appointment of a hospital-trained lady superintendent, to be at the head of each staff of trained nurses, is essential to the efficiency of the system."

The report also states that:—

"If country unions are to have a proper supply of trained nurses, the conditions under which they work should be made more in harmony with other departments of nursing. There are, we know, many women—wisely enthusiastic, well disciplined, and highly trained—who are anxious to use their knowledge for the benefit of the sick poor in workhouse wards, but in order to secure the services of such nurses, it is quite necessary that their position should be more clearly defined. It will, we think, be found that, should this change be effected, official friction will decrease, nurses will continue longer in the work, and that generally a better tone will prevail."

We are well aware that this view is absolutely correct, and we are of opinion that the time is not now far distant when reforms in the nursing departments of our workhouse infirmaries, and re-organisation on modern lines, must necessarily be carried out.

The report of Miss Fynes-Clinton, who has during the past year visited many of the infirmaries in which the nursing is under the care of the association, rings the same note. She says:—

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