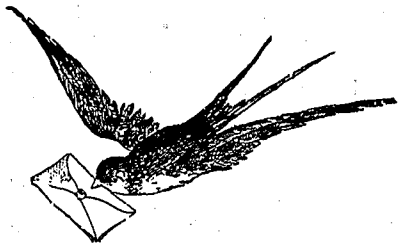


**Our Foreign Letter.**

PLAGUE NURSING IN INDIA.  
No. 7.—"LIFE IN A NATIVE STATE."  
(Continued from page 137.)



EARLY in the New Year of '98, Miss H. and I were sent to Moondra, distant from Mandvi some thirty-five miles. This city being on the coast

further south in the Gulf of Cutch, we did the journey pleasantly in a steam launch, with its capable Mahomedan skipper, Amoo, and black crew of seedy boys.

The City of Moondra is some two miles from the coast, and our compound being a mile further off, we drove through the picturesque old town, with its high walls, strong towers and gateways, the heavy iron-spiked doors of which take two men to open, noting as we went whole streets deserted, the doors being closed and padlocked. Here we had our usual experience when going to a new place, much discomfort from lack of furniture, no baths, bed-linen, only one tent, etc.; but in a few days we got settled with all necessary things, and one of the two tents, at any rate, was all that a tent should be—roomy, double, a wide corridor all round, bathroom, and entrance on every side, and comparatively new and fresh. Fortunately for us, in the beginning of last year, the Rao of Cutch had one of his daughters married in great state, and new tents as well as carriages and horses were procured for the numerous guests who could not be accommodated in the palace. We now reap the benefit of those purchases.

The Hindu hospital, which was to be our chief care, was about a mile distant, outside the city, a caravanserai adapted for the time. Having spent a week here some months before, when the hospital was opened, I was prepared to find much to be done. Our hospital staff consisted of two hospital assistants, one Bombay Ayah, two old women from Moondra, who required much looking after to keep the floors clean, and five orderlies, not military sepoy, accustomed to discipline, but good-natured, irresponsible creatures, whose one aim was to get the extra money for plague work, and do as little as possible for it. We found over thirty patients in the hospital in a somewhat neglected state, and generally surrounded by their household goods. After turning out all unnecessary things, getting the place and people clean, and putting on clean clothes we soon got interested in the sick people themselves, who presented the usual varied forms of plague.

Moondra city did not get plague as Mandvi had done, but though there were fewer cases, it took just as long to eradicate. Then the villages round about got it, and within six miles they sent their cases to our hospital. Presently the regular searching of villages fell to us, so that there was no lack of work.

The Wahiwatdar over the Moondra Taluka was one of our difficulties; he was very stingy, and it was with the greatest difficulty that we could get enough food, and bed linen (this means two lengths of rather wide

unbleached calico, called "sheets," and allowed for each cot), let alone blankets—for it was winter and the nights were cold—for our patients.

By experience we found that constantly dosing plague patients with medicine had the contrary to a good effect, as they usually got nausea, and could not take nourishment, so we accordingly dropped the two, three, or four-hourly medicines to twice a day, except in cases of collapse, or very high temperature. Another innovation at this time was quarantine for the friends of the patients. All the people in a house from which a case had been removed, were brought up to the outer compound of the hospital, where, at first, they were lodged for four days, this time soon being increased to ten days; all the clothes and bedding meanwhile being disinfected. This was done by boiling them for ten minutes in a huge caldron of perchloride of mercury solution, and drying in the sun.

Dr. M. also determined to give Yersin's serum a full and fair trial. A large box full of the little  $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz. bottles, containing 10 c.c. of a new and stronger solution, having just arrived. As a curative agent we found it still a failure. But as a prophylactic the results were most encouraging, one subcutaneous injection of 10 c.c.—always given over the abdomen—being sufficient for an adult; half the quantity for a child. To give the people confidence in this method, the "contacts" were allowed to return to their homes, without doing the ten days' quarantine, as soon as their clothes were disinfected, if they would be inoculated.

The small village of Barara, five miles distant, had had plague severely for a long time, and the now popular method of turning all the people out on the maidan, to live in chapras made of palm-leaf mats tied to bamboo poles, while all the houses were white-washed and tiles stripped off, had been tried in vain; cases were constantly cropping up. Serum was now to have a chance. One afternoon we went down, a strong and picturesque force—Miss H., Dr. M., myself, and some others—on camels, and sowars on horses. The men of Barara were all gathered together, and Dr. M. explained to them the advantages he hoped would accrue by the inoculation, and invited all the men to come and volunteer at once to have it done. After a little hesitation they did so, and we had an hour and a half's good work, most of them being done. They then wanted the "memsahibs" to inoculate their women; but the serum ran short, and we were very tired. If statistics were of any value, the fact that there was not another new case from that village ought to count, although it would have been more conclusive had the women been done as well.

When we had been in Moondra a fortnight, we received orders to go searching in the district round every day, a good camel being set apart for our use. We then took our turns of one day in the hospital and one in the district.

One village Behraja, thirteen miles distant, I got much interested in, as I went there often. Here report said plague had broken out among the Tharkores, the distant relatives of the Rao. They enjoyed special privileges, living in the Gudh, or fortified part of the town, which like all other Gudhs in Cutch, was surrounded by a high strong wall, with towers at frequent intervals, the entrance being through a massive gateway, which was, as well as many of the houses inside, covered with rich architectural ornament. On my first visit, there was much delay, a Brahmin priest was sent round to gather all the women into one house,

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