

we could see how dry and bare all the surroundings were. Perhaps it was the dryness that made me so thirsty, for I began to feel I must have some chota hazri, and I kept enquiring from the Brahm driver where we could get water. He said water was not far off and at last we reached it, but to our dismay it was a big pond by some native huts and at one end two men were washing their feet in it! However, I was so thirsty that I felt I must have some tea and I was much relieved when the really sensible driver pointed out that the water came into the pond at the far end from the men and at that spot it certainly looked much cleaner than elsewhere, so we made our tea from the water there. While our water was boiling up, I noticed that our warlike escort had dismounted and were taking this opportunity of saying the regulation Mohammadan prayers by the roadside, this being the fixed hour of prayer.

We went on our way refreshed by our tea, though rather unhappy still as to the origin of the water. The road seemed a little less bumpy and dusty, but our progress was slow, and we seemed to have been many hours on the journey. We were still some miles from our destination when a third sowar came galloping to meet us. He had been sent out to see why we were so long arriving, and before long two more figures were seen galloping towards us. This was the patient's husband with his sais. When I asked after the patient the husband answered "We are feeling more anxious about you than about her." We had taken twice as long as they anticipated, so no wonder they thought some accident had befallen us. We spent about five hours in the village of G—, and I saw to the patient and provided her with medicines and prescriptions to meet all emergencies; then at midday we had to set off on our return journey. This time we only drove to the railway station six miles away, but this also was a slow and toilsome undertaking, as the road was bad in many places, and deep with sand. As we were passing a group of houses a Pathan woman suddenly rushed out and stopped the tum-tum, and I recognised an old patient who had been in my hospital some time before. She had seen me on my drive to G—, and was waiting to catch me on my return, not to ask for treatment but to have a little friendly conversation in mixed Pashtu and Brahin. Then she pressed into my hands a handkerchief of eggs and a little tightly tied bundle of faded poppies. We went our way very hot and getting more and more sleepy, and were glad of a short rest before the train came in. The station is made like a little fort, for at times it may be needed for refuge against marauders. The waiting-room had heavy iron windows and door loopholed for shooting, and the courtyard was occupied by the armed police. In one gateway was a little prison, and in this we saw a murderer waiting for trial. He had been walking with his young wife along the railway embankment, and had suddenly hurled her down into the culvert below, killing her

instantaneously. He would probably be tried by tribal law, not by British, as the murder was not in British territory, and he would get off on payment of blood money and perhaps some cattle and a girl or two to the dead wife's relations. Our return in the slow train felt very prosaic after the midnight drive, but all the same we were glad to be going through the hills in a tunnel rather than over them in the heat-glare of a hot summer day.

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OUTSIDE THE GATES.

WOMEN.

The Women Writers' Suffrage League is organising a most interesting meeting, which takes place in the rooms of the Medical Society, 11, Chandos Street, W., on Thursday, March 26th, at 3.30. The Right Rev. the Bishop of Kensington will take the chair. Dr. Flora Murray is to give an address on the White Slave Traffic. Amongst the other speakers are Mrs. M. W. Nevinson, Mrs. Rentoul Esler and Miss Elizabeth Robins, whose novel, "Where are you going to?" deals in such a masterly way with this subject. Although her health prevents her from appearing often in public, Miss Robins has consented to speak on this occasion for this cause which she has so much at heart. Miss Beatrice Harraden will be the hostess. Admittance is by invitation only.

The Fabian Committee of Enquiry into the working of the National Insurance Act has issued an interim report in the *New Statesman*, and is a very valuable document. The report which is incomplete, is wholly confined to England, and is restricted to drawing attention to parts of the scheme which do not appear to be working smoothly, and to defects which experience is revealing.

EXCESS OF EXPENDITURE IN THE WOMEN'S SOCIETIES.

The financial aspect of the Act is dealt with as comprehensively as the data to hand will permit, the information gathered indicates that taking the scheme as a whole, men and women together, the aggregate amount paid in England for sickness and maternity benefit is little, if anything, in excess of what was expected. The excess is in the women's societies. The report states:—

We have reason to fear that practically all the societies having any large proportion of women members have exceeded the estimate perhaps by as much as 25 per cent.; some of them, indeed, by 50 and even 100 per cent. They are disbursing in sickness benefit quarter after quarter 2½d., 3d. or 4d. per week per insured person, when the amount provided appears to be less than 2d. per week. It requires no detailed actuarial calculations to realise that such societies are exhausting their initial half-year's accumulations, and in some cases actually eating up the "reserve values" provided for the future—that they are, in fact, rapidly approaching an insolvency which is daily becoming more aggravated. We hazard the guess that the sick-

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