



Hospital Experiences.

"From plague, pestilence and famine; from battle and murder, Good Lord, deliver us."

Every word of this ancient petition has rung in my ears during the last month: the result of plague is the loss of the breadwinner, and the loss of the breadwinner means famine. Plague—that grim terror that used to sweep over Europe, that has lately stricken down some sixty thousand people in Manchuria, and which in the month of March alone killed one hundred and thirty-one thousand people in India—plague is with us. All day long funerals have been taking place, and as the number of deaths increased, the usual rites and ceremonies of a funeral were cut short. Bodies were no longer washed prior to burial and, instead of being carried to the grave on a bier, were bundled



FUNERAL OF A PLAGUE VICTIM.

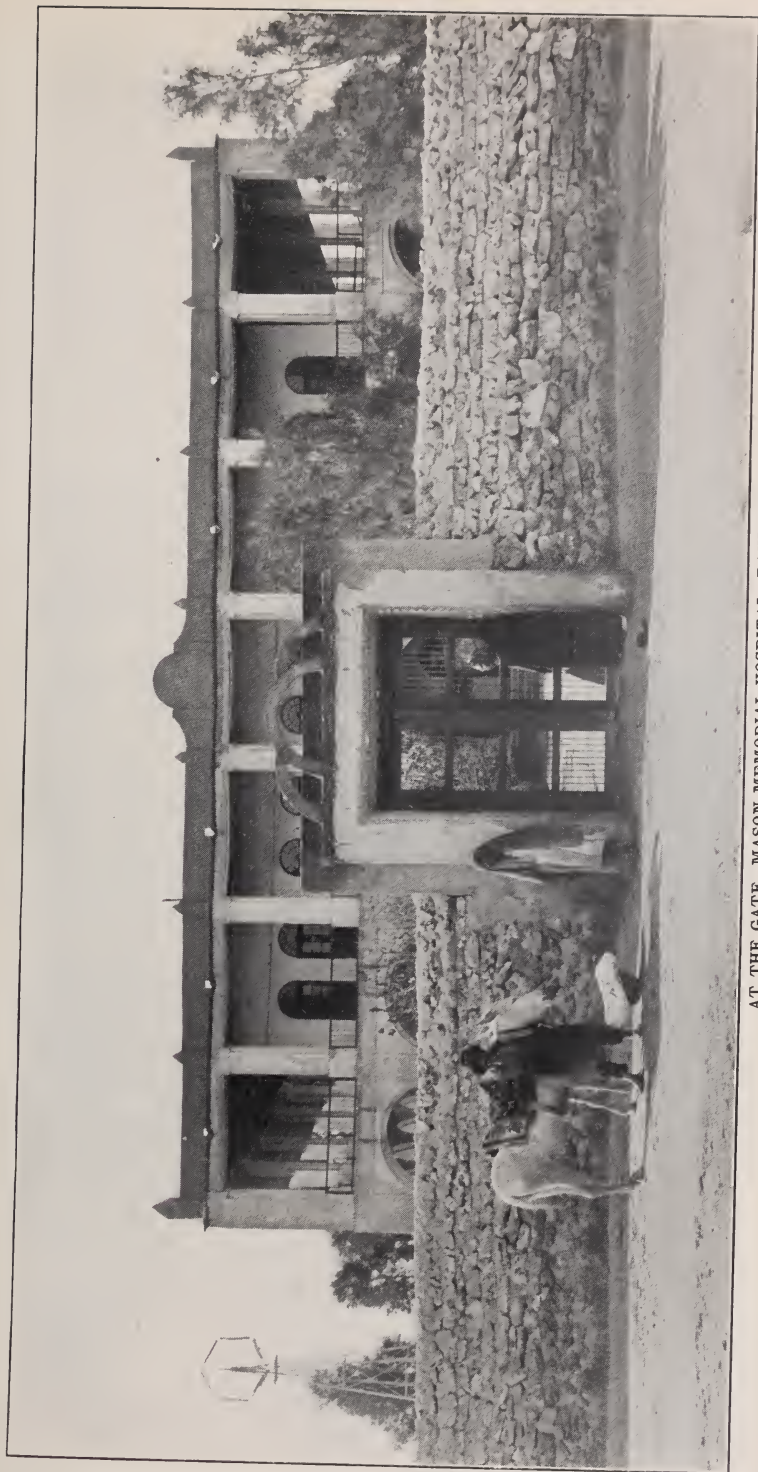
along to their last resting-place with scant respect. By daylight and by moonlight and, as in the burial of Sir John Moore, by the light "of the lantern dimly burning," the sad business of interring the dead goes on. They do not dig their graves deep enough, and on damp, hot nights when the wind is from the cemetery, the stench chokes us as we try to sleep. Already some five hundred people have died; not a very large number when considered in the aggregate, but large in proportion to the population of the district—about twelve thousand. And now the Mohammedan, fatalist as he is, feels his helplessness, feels in the presence of this awful scourge that he must seek aid from Someone, and so he prays. At midnight we are awakened by the cry, "Allah is great; there is no God but Allah. I testify that Mohammed is the apostle of God. Come to prayer, come to salvation. There is no God but Allah." The cry goes from house to house, and in a few moments the air is filled with the sound of the familiar prayer call,

uttered at an unusual time, and called forth not only from the mosque but from the private house. One call blends or clashes with another, and the whole effect, toned down as it is by the quiet and darkness of the midnight hours, is that of a Gregorian choir chanting an anthem in a minor key in a vast cathedral. For about an hour the cry goes up, the exceeding bitter cry of the soul of man driven to look to God in his extremity.

The next day I met a man in the bazaar, a patient of mine, and I asked him what they were doing the night before. "We were praying to God," he answered, "if haply He will take away from us the plague. Our hearts are heavy. I, myself, have lost mother, wife, brother and uncle, and hardly a house but has lost some one." "But," I said, "you believe that what is written will happen, so where is the good of your praying?" He replied, "What can we do?" Ah! How true! What *can* they do? Our hearts go out to them. Only a few of them call in the doctor, who, indeed, can do but little. I have seen about seventy cases of almost all classes and ranks. The Arab sheikh, the Jewish merchant, the Persian trader, the Indian pearl dealer, the artisan, the coolie—all have paid their tribute. As yet no Christians have been stricken with the disease. This is no doubt partly due to the fact that most of us are always inoculated, and also to the fact that most of us have better ideas of cleanliness. One thinks of the words of the Psalmist, "Thou shalt not be afraid for the pestilence that walketh in darkness."

"From battle and murder, Good Lord, deliver us."

The other morning I was disturbed at my *chota hazri* by the ringing of the telephone bell—there is telephonic communication between the hospital and my house—and on going to see what was wanted, I was informed by one of the orderlies, "They have just brought over ten wounded men from Katif." "What kind of wounds are they?" said I. "Gunshot," was the reply. When I reached the hospital, the wounded men and their friends seemed to fill the whole house. It appeared that there had been one of the periodic raids which are the curse of Arabia. The Bedouins around Katif, a province on the mainland, having found out that certain Katifis had got together a considerable sum of money for the diving season, promptly came down upon them and attacked them; killed thirty-two and wounded ten more, and apparently got away with their loot. The Bedouins also lost heavily, I believe, but no one seems to have any particulars, since they carried away all the dead and wounded with them. The big sheikh of the place immediately gave orders that all the wounded men were to be put into a boat and sent over to us.



AT THE GATE, MASON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, BAHREIN.

In a very short time Mrs. Zwemer was at work getting them ready for the operating room. Their ideas of first aid to the wounded are meagre, to say the least, and from appearances one felt that they had picked out the very dirtiest rags they could find for dressing compound fractures and gaping gunshot injuries. One wound at least was swarming with maggots, although the fight had occurred only three days before. After a while every one was at work—Dr Iverson at the chloroform bottle and Mrs. Zwemer as chief assistant—unfortunately my chief native helper was ill. For five hours straight we worked and finally sat down to breakfast at the rather late hour of 2:30 P. M. One man had his left collarbone shattered in the center, the ball finally lodging in the muscles of the shoulder, from whence it was removed by incision. As his antagonist had discharged his rifle at a distance of about six feet, all the neighborhood of the wound was charred. In addition, he had received a nasty stab wound in the chest. Another man had his right hand badly smashed. We removed a lot of bone, and he will, we hope, quite recover, but I am afraid he will never again have a strong right hand. Another man was shot through both hips; from him we also removed a bullet, as well as a felt wad, but as he was an elderly man and had sustained tremendous shock, he died on the fifth day. Another was shot through the back, and received internal injuries, and now lies in a critical condition. Another had his leg smashed, and we were obliged to take out some half-dozen large pieces of bone. Still another had his left elbow joint shattered, and there was nothing to do but to reset practically the entire joint. This was one of the wounds that had maggots in it. This patient was also hit in the back, and so on and so on. Out of the ten we hope to save eight.

And so this senseless folly goes on in Arabia all the time, "his hand against every man and every man's hand against him." Dr. Zwemer has utilized to the utmost the opportunities to speak to them of the Prince of Peace, but at the same time, we have not been able to speak to the aggressors, the Bedouins who began the fight. Our patients were merely defending their rights.

"When comes the promised sign
That war shall be no more,
And lust, oppression, crime,
Shall flee Thy face before."

C. STANLEY G. MYLREA.

