

mality, the female soldier, does in the fighting-line. From M. Alesson's book we learn that many of the seven decorations accorded to women for services on the field were granted to nuns. Of this total of thirty-four that had been awarded to women when his book was written eleven years ago, no fewer than twenty were given to Sisters of Charity, who, like the noted Sister Martha in 1815, had rendered noble services to the wounded in the military hospitals and to the plague-stricken poor in their homes.

THE BUBONIC PLAGUE.

SOME five years ago a clever Anglican clergyman in Melbourne wrote a weird and creepy tale bearing the title of *The Germ Growers*. The scene of the story was placed in a secluded valley in the wild and barren heart of Australia, walled round about by an unclimbable barrier of mountains—a sort of devilish duplicate of the valley of Amhara. Well, the valley of the Australian story was inhabited, not by a mooning Risselas who pined to see the world, but by a colony of diabolical sprites who cultivated a choice collection of virulent germs and sent them out from time to time on invisible wings to spread disease and suffering and death among the children of Adam all over the earth. The bubonic plague would seem to be one of the latest and most fearsome variety of human ill devised by this interesting collection of demon bacteriologists. The 'black death' and the 'sweating sickness' were tolerably sure man-slayers in their way, but the bacillus of the bubonic plague—it is always a bacillus—seems to be to them all pretty nearly what a lyddite shell is to the variety known as 'common.' The literature on this kind of microbes is scanty; for, although the microscopic destroyer has been separated and identified and pigeon-holed and labelled, its habits and behaviour have not been as yet sufficiently investigated. Last year Dr. Heydon, of Warrnambool (Victoria), received an interesting 'cultivation' of these bacilli from India, in a hermetically sealed tube, with a view to investigating their ways. But the Colony went into hysterics, the newspapers shouted so loudly that they woke up the Health Department, and the Health Department, after it had done yawning, sent down a bacteriologist and two policemen with a writ of *habeas corpus* for the unwelcome guests from India. And the upshot of it all was this: a strong furnace was lighted and the tube of dreaded bacilli was thrown into the hottest part thereof. They have not been heard from since. But a fresh lot of their *confères* have made their way into several parts of Australia within the past two weeks—this time in the unsealed and more dangerous medium of sundry human bodies from Noumea. And medical men at 't'other side' are beginning to think that, after all, the cremating of Dr. Heydon's parcel of bacilli was not the wisest course that could have been adopted. It probably killed the microbes 'fatally dead,' as Artemus Ward says, but it also destroyed the opportunity of a local scientific investigation of the dreaded disease, and has left the medical faculty across the water no choice but to learn from experiment on human subjects what might have been learned long since by experiments on guinea-pigs and grey rabbits. Short of stringent precautions at the ports, we are now face to face with the possibilities of an early visit of the bubonic plague to the shores of New Zealand.

Dr. Molyneux—who saw and treated the plague in Hong-kong—has a lengthy article on the subject in a recent issue of the *Australasian Medical Gazette*. He defines it as follows. 'The bubonic plague is a specific bacillary infectious disease, characterised by the presence of a definite bacillus, by inflammatory affections of the lymphatic system, severe nervous symptoms, and necessarily epidemic in nature.' From his description of the cases treated by him it appears that, as the disease progresses, the tongue becomes dry and sore, the lips hard and cracked, the skin burns, the temperature ranges from 103 to 105 degrees, and remains so until the seventh day, and the bubo or inflamed swelling of the lymphatic glands (from which it takes its name), is always present. 'The predisposing causes to its development,' he says, 'are overcrowding, dirt, and probably a moist and increasingly warm atmosphere. Ventilation and sunlight are inimical to its development; but none of the predisposing causes will generate the bacillus *de novo*. It must be introduced into a medium of culture from without.' Dr. Molyneux gives us the comforting assurance that while the plague was overwhelming the undertakers with business in Hong-kong, no attendant in the European hospitals was attacked by it. This immunity he attributes to scrupulous cleanliness, a plentiful supply of fresh air, and a bountiful use of disinfectants. For the country, as for the individual, that is in a good sanitary condition, the bubonic plague need have no terrors. But what does this imply? Well, it implies many conditions that are not present in every part of New Zealand. Dr. Molyneux describes a sanitary country by saying 'that it must essentially have good water supply, good drainage, good food supply, and sanitary dwellings. If these conditions are not present, then quarantine must be employed to keep the disease out.' Vessels from an infected port should be detained for an observation period

'which ought to extend over 12 days.' It appears that, as mosquitos convey malaria, so rats are the chief agents in the spread of the bubonic plague. It is not stated, however, how the ship-rats are to be settled with. But the Doctor is clear on the point that the landing of cargo of any kind coming from tainted ports should be the subject of strict precautions. 'Passengers, upon landing, even after a period of at least 12 days, should be disinfected, and their luggage as well,' and 'should any disease have been observed, of course the period of detention ought to indefinitely extended.'

Dr. Molyneux would resort to heroic measures where the danger of infection is present: rigorous isolation; the proclamation and walling-in of infected areas, disinfecting parties to attack houses, clothing, furniture, drains; the destruction of wooden floors and infected clothing by fire; and the cremation of the bodies of the dead. In Hong kong, he tells us, search parties went around, acting with the police. Plague-stricken houses were entered and disinfected, houses certified as unfit for habitation were cleared of everything movable. A big bubonic bonfire was made of its contents, and the house itself was disinfected, barred, and securely nailed up. The bubonic plague is evidently not to be trifled with.

THE WIDOW AND THE ORPHAN.

You will find few who are more opposed to war than, say, the Quakers and the Sisters of Mercy or Charity. At the same time you will find few that are prepared to make greater sacrifices for the sake of the victims of armed international strife than the Friends with their honest hearts and open purses, and the Sisters with gentle hand and happy face and the cheerful yielding up of life itself, if necessary, to bring surcease of pain to the wounded and fever-stricken soldier on the battle-field, or in the camp, or in the military hospital. Wellington himself, soldier though he was, was, in Scripture words, 'a man averse from war.' And, just because he saw war and knew its ways and its results, he declared that he would leave nothing within the bounds of human possibility done to make sure that his country should not be, even for one short week, the theatre of armed strife. It is this feeling of the horrors of war, and chiefly the thought of the tears of the widows and orphans at home that have united all political parties—even the great body of English and other Liberals who did not and do not believe that the present campaign in South Africa was either politic or necessary—in contributing to the Fund which is being raised for the innocent victims of the present struggle between the Briton and the Boer. Mr. Labouchere, in *Truth* of November 30, thus deals with an English provincial Conservative paper which endeavoured to make political capital out of the success of the Fund: 'An ordinary mortal might have supposed that the more men and women disapproved of war in general, or of this war in particular, the more eager would they be to do what was in their power to mitigate its horrors, and to save innocent persons from its consequences. But, according to the *Birmingham Post*, this is impossible. Every one who, by the ordinary impulses of humanity, is prompted to come to the succour of the sufferers thereby conveys that the war and all that has led to it commends itself to his conscience. In the same way, presumably, the contributors to the Indian Famine Relief Fund signified their approval of famines, or those who subscribed to the *Victoria* Relief Fund their approval of the old r of the Admiral when brought about the catastrophe. The argument would be ridiculous if the insult to the motives of every subscriber to the War Relief Funds, Tory and Radical, jingo and Little Englander, were not so abominably offensive.'

SPREAD THE LIGHT ON THE SEATIERYS!

THE Rev. S. Blagden, of Washington, D.C., is a model of the fair minded and intellectual Protestant clergyman. As a result, he has no patience with King adventurers like the Slutterys who career over the surface of this planet setting the workers of one creed against the workers of another creed, and profiting by it—as in Melbourne—to the tune of £800 in three weeks: a tolerably good dividend from a capital which is represented by a re-hash of old calumnies and—plenty of brass. 'As I labour for Christian unity,' said Rev. Mr. Blagden, 'I have for years taken pains to ferret out the truth or falseness of such charges.' And he tells us that in every solitary instance he 'found them to be wholly and absolutely false. Now,' he continues, 'this is a crying shame, and unspeakable disgrace to people calling themselves Christians, to be thus diabolically attacking, maligning, traducing, and bearing false witness against our fellow-Christians; and it is time that it be stopped, and for Christ's dear sake.' Undoubtedly. It is high time. Catholics, in Beaconsfield's words, have waited for this 'with that patience which insulted beings can alone endure.' We have been too long content to bear in silence the worst calumnies that itinerant professional slanderers and gaol-birds have, for money, flung against the virtue of our priests and the honour of our women. The policy of unresisting silence has had just this result: (1) We can testify from a personal experience of