

than 300 years the germs had lain quiescent. Why did they become active now and spread among men and animals over so large a part of the world? These and many other questions relating to the plague are still unanswered.

Now Seistan was having its turn. As far as was known, and there was every reason to believe it to be true, the first case occurred in November 1904. Then the epidemic spread during the winter with such virulence that the Indian Government despatched a doctor with Hindu assistants to Seistan, partly to observe the disease on the spot, partly also, and more especially, to do all that was possible to prevent it spreading westwards. For if from Seistan it got a firm hold of Persia, Europe also would be in danger.

The physician chosen was Captain Surgeon Kelly, who had been shortly before General Macdonald's staff surgeon on Younghusband's memorable expedition to Lhasa. During my stay in the English Consulate I had then an inexhaustible subject of conversation with Captain Kelly. He gave me much interesting information about Tibet, and much advice which was afterwards of great service to me. But what, under the present circumstances, was more interesting to me than anything else was to listen to his experiences of the plague in Seistan.

The belt of reeds round the Hamun is called Nesar. In that part of it which lies north-west of Nasretabad lives the Seiyat tribe, the members of which do not marry outside their tribe. It was among them, in November of the preceding year, that the first case of plague occurred, in the village Deh-Seiyat-gur, where a cowherd, Meshedi Hussein, sickened and died.

Captain Kelly had marked down all the villages where cases of plague occurred on a large-scale map, and had also put down their dates. By collecting notices from all directions and corners he had been able to follow the geographical distribution of the plague, and he called the village just mentioned its primary focus. From this it spread in three directions,—east-north-east, south-east, and south-south-west.

Two Belgian gentlemen, in the Persian service, were