

who then raise the prices to many times the value. The scarcity now prevailing was due in great measure to the failure of the crops in Kain, and large quantities of grain had been sent thither from Seistan, so that the country itself came at last to want. All the poor people, that is, the majority of the population, must either starve to death or support life with soft reed shoots and other plants, and had thus to struggle for life for six weeks more, till the new harvest was ready.

As the unscrupulous rich speculators were deprived of their profits, they stirred up the people against the Belgians, and circulated false reports about them. They asserted that they burned the Koran, and that they burned clothes and dressed the people in new ones, in order to get hold of nicely dressed women, that they did everything to spread disease, exterminate the people, and render it easier for Europeans to take the country.

Then there were the *mushtehids* and mollahs, the literates and priests who also backed up the movement, and fanned the discontent and distrust. They were afraid lest the people should bestow their confidence on Europeans and unbelievers, and they themselves should lose their influence over the masses. We Europeans were justified in hoping that one or two high ecclesiastics would be attacked by the plague, so that the work for the benefit of the people might proceed unhindered.

Meanwhile these wretches succeeded so well in their wicked purpose that the mob, prompted by hatred and ill-will, made an attack, on March 27, on the Belgian hospital, which was burned down. Then nearly 500 fanatics rushed to the English Consulate, where they behaved in a barbarous and extravagant fashion. Captains Macpherson and Kelly went out to pacify them, but were received with a shower of clods and stones. Then the dispensary was broken into, and all the vessels containing medicine were broken, as well as everything in the shape of furniture, tables, doors, and cupboards. Fortunately, as it happened, the serum tubes were kept in another place. One fellow climbed up on the roof to stir up and incite the rest, and the peace-breakers did not withdraw till some revolver