

"But the risk is just as great for yourself," I returned.

"Yes, of course; but I am only doing my bounden duty in visiting the sick."

"I can accompany you as a temporary assistant."

"No; I will not take the responsibility for your life. When a man dies of plague his vermin emigrate, and those who happen to be near are very likely to catch them, and take the plague with them."

Large quantities of plague serum had been sent from Bombay for Captain Kelly's use. The microbes to be used for cultivations are taken from the bubo of a sick man, and the operation is very dangerous. The operator must be quite sure that he has not the least scratch on his hands, and be careful not to wound himself with the point of the small syringe with which the deadly fluid is extracted. On such an occasion one of Dr. Kelly's assistants had failed to notice a small prick in his finger. He died within thirteen hours.

The yellow serum is preserved in small annealed glass tubes, each containing 5 cubic centimetres, or enough for a single injection. The doctor must make sure that the tube is absolutely perfect and hermetically closed before he breaks off the end and fills the hypodermic syringe, after it has been cleaned and his hands washed in carbolic acid. In Bombay it once happened that there was an insignificant crack in a large glass tube, but sufficient to pollute the fluid. The seventeen persons who were inoculated with serum from this tube all died, an accident the more to be deplored because it naturally shook the people's faith in the doctors.

At first the people in Seistan could not be persuaded to allow themselves to be inoculated, and the priests actually forbade believers to submit themselves to such an experiment. But when the plague spread, and fear and anxiety drove the unfortunates to try any remedy at hand, they came, bared their left arms, let the assistant wash them with carbolic acid, and the doctor run the small fine needle of the syringe under the skin. Most of them did not believe that this extraordinary process could save them the plague, but they saw at any rate that they suffered no