Kuwait Women's Medical Work

Changed conditions bring new opportunities \( \_ \_ \_ \) and now we are witnessing a change in Kuwait as the Women's Hospital which has served for many years is being torn down. Men and donkeys are performing this labor of carrying away the old plaster and cement and as the donkeys bring in the new supplies, the men are laying the foundations for the new building under the supervision of Mr. Barry. As this new building rises - the loving tribute of a family who are putting into concrete form, their wish to fulfill the Master's command "Heal the sick", we who are to use its facilities look forward to new opportunities. We are also hoping for new equipment such as an operating table, new surgical instruments, an X-ray machine, bassinetts for the babies to come, fans, beds, chairs, stands and other things which have completely worn out by long use in the old hospital. We have been working with very meager equipment. The marvel is that so much has been done by it.

Except for the week-end, the clinic is a daily institution. Here come the mothers, children and babies - pitiful indeed with their many needs. They endure their illnesses stoically and even cheerfully. It is not unusual for a woman to have three aching teeth extracted and say nothing more than "Thank you". The patience shown is marvelous. The women willing come to the hospital soon after dawn and sit with two or three children waiting their turn - sometimes as long as three to four hours with one to two hundred others. The average is seldom less than a hundred and occasionally it may run up to two hundred.

The clinic opens with prayer and a Bible story usually about our Lord. Since Mrs. Mylrea left, Mrs. Thomas in her sweet unassuming way has taken her place. It has been a very great pleasure to have our Iraqi nurse also take her turn in conducting the morning prayers. The women listen very intently to these talks and usually thank the speaker heartily.

After prayers, the in-patients are seen, their daily treatment prescribed, and the clinic begins. Each woman takes her turn to tell her troubles and her children's to the doctor who must take time to look up her history or make a new one, examine the patient and decide on the treatment which is then written on her card. With some instructions of how to use the medicine and when to come again the patient passes to the next room. Here Jemeela, the faithful Iraqi nurse and two Persian women helpers give the treatment for the ordinary eye cases, dressings, giving hypodermic injections and compounding drugs, while the doctor attends personally to the more complicated treatments. The Iraqi nurse though not trained according to modern hospital methods is a most valuable assistant. With growing clinics, our most urgent need is for another like her. The problem is to find one and provide a home for her. Since Kuwait is a trading port, it has a large Persian population which also forms a large percent of the clinic and brings in the complication of a second foreign language.

Often the clinic is interrupted by an urgent call from a wealthy house or family of the Sheikhs who insist that the doctor must see them in their homes or some urgent need requires that the doctor go off in the Mission car to an accident, bed-ridden woman or delivery
case at home which cannot be brought to the hospital. Thus we have an opportunity to see the women in their homes so different from our western homes. The patient lies on the floor and all treatments as well as home baby cases must be done on the floor with the doctor on her knees. The neighbors and children whose curiosity overcomes their shyness crowd in too and have to be shooed off every now and then as the room fills up.

In the afternoon, the time is used to keep records, write and send bills, perform operations and other special treatments, see private patients and make professional calls while the assistants replenish the supplies and keep the hospital clean. It is also necessary to make social calls to cultivate the many Arab friends of the mission who are a great asset in promoting an understanding of our Christian ideals and aims. Here often to the distress of our stomachs we must "eat and drink to the glory of God".

While the old hospital is being demolished and the new one built, temporary quarters had to be found. An Arab house in the vicinity of the mission compound has been rented and repaired. This is arranged like all Arab houses with eight rooms around an open court. The rooms have been prepared to provide a clinic and operating room, a treatment room, two wards for patients and rooms for the nurse and one doctor. The moving and arrangement was done under the capable management of Miss Van Felt during the week before Christmas and since then the clinic has continued as before.

We are very grateful to Miss Van Felt for her efficient supervision of the stores and supplies, many of which come from the Gilli boxes so generously supplied by the societies at home. These boxes are indispensable because for most of these things, there is no other source of supply. Here we go for bandages, dressings, cotton, banding, towels, warm garments for women, children and babies, gifts and dolls to use at Christmas and other times to spread joy and carry the message of "Good-will to men".

The majority of cases treated in the clinic come because of eye-trouble - mostly Trachoma, acute and chronic with its various complications - Trichiasis, Pannus, Iritis and Corneal Ulcer. The majority of eye operations were performed for Trichiasis by the limbal graft method which on the whole gave very satisfactory results. The greatest incidence of acute conjunctivitis comes in September and October when the flies are most numerous. There is also a large demand for treatment for intestinal worms. Two cases simulating toxemia of pregnancy with marked edema and ascites cleared up after evacuation of these parasites. Dysentery is prevalent at the end of the hot summer and among babies and elderly women, is frequent and serious. There is a great increase in the incidence of the Common Cold, Conjunctivitis, Bronchitis, and Pneumonia during December, January and February. During the hottest months of August and September, there is a noticeable grouping of the cases of infected hands and feet. There is a consistent demand for Small Pox vaccination for all children. There have been a few requests for birth control information but there is a much greater demand for the treatment of sterility. Two other obscure complaints
often made are "Chebd" translated "liver" which apparently covers indigestion or any vague intestinal trouble and palpitation of the heart with no observable heart lesion. The chief children's diseases are acutely infected eyes and ears. There has not been a case of Diphtheria, Scarlet Fever, Measles, Mumps, Infantile Paralysis or Rickets diagnosed. A large number of skin lesions and complaints about vague pains in the joints and bones clear up under intramuscular injections of Bismuth in glycerine. There is need for more laboratory work especially Kahn tests and smears. Cancer apparently is rare although one case of cancer of the breast with metastases was diagnosed. Pulmonary Tuberculosis is fairly common and usually fatal in women and children. There was no case of Appendicitis noted. Sulfanilamide was found to give excellent results whenever used in cases of Puerperal Fever and Phlebitis after child-birth - the fever and disability disappearing rapidly. The two outstanding cases of medical interest were, first, a woman who after a normal delivery became paralyzed from her waist to her feet. It did not abate with treatment and after three months, she died of an eroding bed-sore. The other was a case of a Bedouin woman with one enormously hypertrophied breast containing 100 ounces of fresh milk on tapping. It gradually cleared after several paracenteses and the application of a tight binder. Grateful appreciation is made to Dr. Hylreia, Dr. Harrison, and Dr. Thorns who cooperated so generously in many ways in the women's work.

The new hospital and the great opportunities for service offer a thrilling challenge to any one touched by the spirit that taught us to love all people as our brothers and sisters. It is a sphere in which every talent no matter how small it may be, can be developed in helping someone else. The need is inexhaustible. The rewards are great, - an exalted place in the community, affection, and esteem of a noble people - far above the worthiness of any human being, an opportunity to take an active part in introducing and explaining to an ancient eastern civilization with its subjection of women, its fatalism, its lack of ambition, its love of simplicity, and its profound reverence for God, to the modern western civilization that brings freedom and equality for women, ambition for material progress, complexity of life and often a forgetting of the Father-God who gave us all these things and summed them up for us in his greatest gift - the life and death and spirit of the Lord Jesus. It is a great challenge to be one to introduce these two to each other and try to give the best of each to the other and be oneself enriched in the process.
KUWAIT MEDICAL STATISTICS FOR 1937

OUT-PATIENT DAILY DISPENSARY

<table>
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<th>New Cases</th>
<th>Total Treat.</th>
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<td>5,652</td>
<td>31,879</td>
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Injections
Bismuth 654 634 176 64 33 60 113
Quinine 3-Mal. Sulfonamid All others

Vaccinations 1,103

CUT-CALLS 220

IN-PATIENTS 118

118 patients spent a total of 1,692 days in the hospital

Obstetrics 37

- Normal deliveries 15
- Twins 1
- Triplets 1
- Instrumental deliveries 12
- Deformed fetus 1
- Breach presentation 2
- Death of mother and fetus 1
- Toxemia 1
- Stab wound 1
- Miscarriages 3

Total 37

Obstetrics cases complicated by toxemia
- Previous use of salt vaginally 4

Total 1,692 days

Pretan mortality including miscarriage and one triplet 12

Surgery 323

Major 13
- Laporotomy for tumor 3
- Ovarian tumor 1
- Mastoid 1
- Amputation-toe 1
- Debridement 1
- TB joints 2
- Perinephritic Abscess 3
- Tumor of scalp 1
- Fractures 4
- Meningocele 1
- Hemorrhoidectomy 1
- Circumcision 1
- Amputation-breast 1

Minor 173
- Paracentesis 13
- Flaster casts 5
- Breast abscess 1
- Liver abscess 3
- Tonsillar abscess 4
- Rectal abscess 1
- Other abscesses 127
- Miscellaneous 14

Gynecological 22
- Retained Placenta 4
- Curettage 7
- Miscellaneous 11
- Eye 115
- Trichiasis-lids 109
- Iridecomies 2
- Cataract 1
- Miscellaneous 3

Respectfully,

Mary Baldwin

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