

500. The number of doctors there is 11, there is 1 senior assistant-surgeon and 9 assistant-surgeons and ward orderlies. The nursing staff totals 50. It was first used for Indian Troops but after for British.

The Victoria War Hospital was opened on May 2nd, 1916, and has 600 beds. It has a medical staff of 6 doctors and 10 ward officers. The nursing staff consists of a matron, 38 sisters and nurses, and 26 R.A.M.C. orderlies. It was used for British Troops and then for Turkish sick and wounded.

The Alexandra War Hospital was opened on June 23rd, 1916, with 230 beds and No. 2 Shed, which is under the same medical and nursing staff, was opened on July 26th, 1916, with 350 beds. There are 10 medical officers, 26 nursing sisters, a sergeant-major and 28 orderlies. These hospitals are for British Troops.

The Marine Lines War Hospital for Indian troops was opened in November, 1914 with 600 beds. There are 12 medical officers, a matron and 13 sisters and 48 ward orderlies.

Cumballa Hill War Hospital was opened in July, 1916. There are 14 medical officers, 27 sisters and 110 R.A.M.C. orderlies. There are 500 beds.

The Maharajah Gaekwad's Officers Hospital was opened in April, 1917. There are four medical officers, 30 men of the R.A.M.C. and the nursing staff consists of thirty.

CONTRIBUTED ARTICLES.

THE DAY'S WORK OF THE SANTAL WOMAN.

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SOME of the readers of this Journal may be interested in a brief account of how their sisters in the jungle spend their time. There may be an idea that where there are no dishes to wash and no beds to be made and practically nothing to be done in the way of sewing or darning, life must be a very simple affair; but the Santal woman, at least, does not seem to find it so. She is at work, as a rule, from dawn, or before it, till dark, and it is remarkable how much she finds to do in connection with a domestic establishment that consists of a hut built of mud and thatched with grass and not big enough to hold a civilised bedstead. Her work, it has been said, begins before it is light. If you are spending a night in a Santal village, the first sound that greets your ears, perhaps along with cock-crow and more likely before than after it, is that of the husking of the rice, which is the first item of the daily programme. Sometimes the paddy is pounded in a mortar which has been made out of a tree trunk with a big wooden pestle that has an iron nose to it. In other cases the *dhinki* is used, a beam which moves on an axle and is furnished with a pin that projects from one end. The woman works it by a treadle movement from the other end, pounding the grain which is in a small hole in the ground by means of the pin. She is usually assisted by a girl who sweeps

the grain into the hole again as it is forced out by the descent of the pin. One of the differences between a hospital in the Indian jungles and one in the homeland is the comparatively small number of injuries from machinery that are seen at the former; but occasionally a little girl is brought in whose finger tip has been caught by the pin of the *dhinki*. New to the job, she had not been expert.

The next duty is to smear the courtyard in front of the house with cow-dung. This is done religiously every morning. It would be considered a very uncleanly thing not to do it. Another sentiment which is much more in harmony with our own ideas of hygiene is the desirability of having a supply of fresh drinking water. Ages before the connection of stagnant water with mosquitoes and of mosquitoes with malaria had been dreamt of, the Santals had come to the conclusion that it was an undesirable thing to keep water standing in the pots. So, however scarce the water may be or however far it may have to be carried, the Santal woman empties out her waterpots twice daily and replenishes them from the spring or river. The people attach the utmost importance to a good supply of water, of good water. If they seek a change for the sake of health, it is not a "change of air" but a "change of water" that is needed. One of their marriage customs illustrates the prominence which the water-supply has in their thoughts. When a young bride is brought home to a village, she is taken to the well or spring from which the people draw their water and there goes through a form of marriage to the demon that is supposed to preside over it. This helps to keep him in good humour, and there is less fear of the water causing disease and death. The first water-drawing is done in the early morning, and by the women. The girls very quickly learn to balance on their heads waterpots almost as big as themselves and to carry them home without spilling a drop. One of the primary distinctions between the sexes among the Santals, it may be mentioned, is that the men carry their burdens on the shoulder, suspended if possible from the ends of a bamboo pole, while the women carry theirs on the head. The Santals call a newly born baby a "new friend", and the regular way to announce the event is to say that a new friend who carries on the shoulder, or a new friend who carries on the head, has come, according to whether the infant is a boy or a girl.

At this stage it is customary for the mother to serve out some cold food, cooked rice or even the water in which the rice has been cooked, which has been kept over from the previous evening's meal. The rule always is that the wife first feeds her husband and then takes what he has left over as her own share. It is an unheard of thing for a husband and wife to share a meal together. As a rule the mother feeds the children, too, before she thinks of herself. It is now about time to prepare for the midday meal, which is the great event of the day. The fire is kindled, or the smouldering embers of yesterday's fire are fanned into flame in the mud-built fireplace, the earthen pot is put on to boil, and while the rice or other grain,—Indian corn and millet are used to a larger extent than rice by the poor,—and the lentils or other *dal* are being cooked, the dolt fingers of the housewife are busy preparing the plates

and drinking vessels. These are made from the leaves, large and smooth, of the sal tree, pinned together by thorns or small twigs. These plates and cups are prepared fresh for every meal. When the Santals pronounce the sentence of outlawry on one of their community for some very serious breach of the law of the tribe, they take a leaf-plate that has been used and stick it on a pole outside his house as a sign of ostracism.

The afternoon, from the midday meal to the second water drawing at four o'clock or thereabouts, is the time for odd jobs. Probably the men sleep, but the women, as a rule, find something to do. The Santals often grow a little cotton as a garden crop, and make it into cloth for their own use. The women first put the cotton through a simple machine to clear it of the seeds, then card it with a bow, make it up into little rolls and then spin it on the wheel. It is then wound and ready for weaving, and this is done by the men. Or in the afternoon the women may go off to the jungle to gather firewood and the leaves for plates and also the pot-herbs that go far to eke out the scanty supply of food.

Having fetched the second supply of water from the well, the woman sets to prepare the evening meal, which is usually a repetition of the morning repast. About two hours after sunset is considered the correct time for it. Occasionally as a treat some meat is served with the grain, and the Santals are expert cooks and make the most of what they have. They have a wide and accurate knowledge of the jungle products that can be used as spices, and they can make a very appetising meal out of most unpromising material. One of their rules is to waste nothing. Nature has not yet invented an element of the living organism which the Santal cannot utilise for dietary purposes. Turmeric is largely used in cooking and so are garlic or onions, if they are to be had, and salt. Anise seed is also a favourite spice. Ghee is too expensive a luxury for common use, but several cheap country oils are used as substitutes. Perhaps the oil that is most largely used for cooking is that which is expressed from the fruit of the *mahua* tree, and which is also very useful medicinally as a basis for ointments. The Santals will eat almost anything, but they draw the line at frogs. It is not easy to say why this is so, for they eat many things that are more loathsome.

Special seasons, of course, have their special duties. It is the women who transplant the rice seedlings and who hoe the Indian corn, and who, when the harvest time comes round reap the crops. In most things she takes a share with the men in the work of agriculture. But there are some things the woman has nothing to do with, and religion is one of them. She is entirely left out of account in everything in the way of worship. There is a family godlet attached to every Santal family, whose name is kept a secret through the fear of exciting the jealousy of other gods if it were known that this godlet was on terms of special intimacy with the family. Not even the wife is allowed to know the name of this demon, but the father, when he is about to die, whispers it into the ear of his eldest son. The Santal woman, however, although excluded from sacrificial ceremonies and other strictly religious rites, is very much in evidence in the dancing that accompanies most of the festi-

vals. The drinking of rice beer is another accompaniment of worship, but this the women, as a rule, wisely leave to the men. It is a rare thing to see a Santal woman the worse of drink, even on the big occasions when for the time the ordinary moral restrictions are removed and the old people promise to stuff cotton into their ears and to close their eyes till the feast is finished. Dancing is the favourite amusement, but the men and women do not dance together. The women link themselves together arm in arm, in a line, and move backwards and forwards as they sing, with a swaying motion of the body, while the men, playing their drums and flutes, caper about in front of them.

The Santal mother, of course, has sometimes to add nursing to her other duties, but her ideas on this subject are very crude. Illness is attributed either to the malevolence of the demons or to witchcraft, and in either case it is not a matter in which a woman can be of much use. The demons must be propitiated by sacrifices, or a witch doctor must be called in to find out by occult means who has cast an evil eye on the child. But there is one art in which the Santal women, in common with many of their sisters in India and with many of the other sex as well, are adepts, and that is massage or shampooing. When a man is seriously ill, no matter what may be the nature of the ailment, there is nothing he finds so comforting as to be rubbed down by his wife, or preferably his mother. The broad muscles of the back and those of the calf of the leg are the favourite sites for manipulation. It is not only in actual illness, but in fatigue as well, and also in times of mental trouble and distress that relief is sought in this way.

It is strange that the women of an agricultural tribe should be as ignorant of obstetrics as the Santal women seem to be. They are quite helpless in an emergency, and it is their general custom to employ as *dais* the *dom* women, who are about the dirtiest in the country. Obstetrics, in fact, is looked upon as sweepers' work. As might be expected, cases of puerperal fever are by no means rare.

The life of the Santal woman may appear to be a very simple one from the point of view of modern and Western civilisation; but according to the old folks it used to be much simpler. There was a time, they tell us, when the only ornaments worn by the women were flowers, and when the mother provided the family with nearly everything it needed. She even got the salt they needed from the soil (the excise authorities would not allow her to do that now), and she expressed oil from the seed, and spun all the cotton which was required to clothe her brood. In those days, too, women were kept in their place. Now it is they and the children who rule the household. Still there are even Santals who admit that the changes which time has brought have not been altogether evil, and it is remarkable to find among them an apparently spontaneous confession that their women have not yet received the position they deserve and that customs regarding property and inheritance that affect them injuriously ought to be changed.