

almost universal in the East. At one time it is a god or goddess (usually the latter) who introduces the disease, whatever it may be, into the body, while at another the goddess or spirit (they are one and the same) actually *is* the disease and herself dwells in the person affected.

Where a belief of this kind exists, it is quite certain that eye-witness evidence will be forthcoming when called for. Recently when the plague was raging so terribly in Bombay, both Hindoos and Mahometans believed it to be due to a hostile spirit—the Plague goddess, and as one might have anticipated, a witness soon appeared in the form of an old Mahometan woman whose eyes had been cleared by a visit to the sacred city of Mecca. This old lady swore that she saw the plague spirit in the form of a gaunt female, with bloody fangs and fleshless sinewy arms, sheeted in white, stalking through the streets of the city. Similarly, during an outbreak of small-pox in Calcutta, in February, 1897, it was believed that the goddess Sitala (the deity presiding over small-pox) was seen at dead of night, this time by a native policeman, stalking along one of the public thoroughfares. In consequence, the people flocked to the shrine of this goddess and offered up prayers and gifts. The epidemic just then began to decline (owing doubtless to the excellent work of the health officer of the city), and the people, of course, believed that the goddess was appeased. The policeman, by the way, said that he went boldly up to her and was about to lay hands on her when he was prevented by an unseen agency—probably the goddess of *Fear*! The irate spirit pronounced sentence of death upon him at the same hour on the following night and then vanished into the air. Sure enough, he expired on the following night after telling his story. His death was probably due to pure fright and showed how truly he believed the story which he told.

The priests have the power of persuading the spirits of disease to strike erring human beings sometimes, and a good example of this belief existed in the town in which we lived in India. Near an old bungalow, used occasionally by Government officials, was an unnamed grave, which by the weather-beaten appearance of its arched brick covering, had evidently been there for many years. The story was that the man buried there was a European engineer who lived in the district about fifty years ago. His last piece of work was a bridge over a large river-bed nearby. A priest who lived near the bridge which was being built did not approve of the work, and after threatening the engineer several times he gave notice that if the work did not stop on a given day he would publicly curse the defiant European, and would call on the spirits to strike him dead. The day arrived and from early dawn the people for miles around kept gathering on the banks of the waterway to watch the performance. The engineer was there, angry