

# EPIDEMICS



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HOW

# TO MEET THEM



**EPIDEMICS**  
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**HOW TO MEET THEM**

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“Every person should have a knowledge of nature’s remedial agencies and how to apply them. Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power,—these are the true remedies.”

—Ellen G. White, in *Ministry of Healing*, p. 127.

## FOREWORD

SEVERAL years ago, while travelling by car in a rural part of southern India, I came around a small mountain almost directly on to what appeared to be a fairly large and populous village. Coming nearer, however, I observed that it was deserted. Even the large well-built houses stood empty. No children played in the streets. No cattle or other evidence of life appeared. The place was totally deserted.

Driving through the village and out through the fields beyond, I stopped to inquire of a cultivator the cause of this desolation. He stated that formerly he himself had been a resident of the place. Confidentially he explained, however, that the evil spirit of cholera had struck the village some months previously, and because so many people had died from its ravages, the survivors fled and were now living in temporary houses a mile distant.

Those with any acquaintance of Indian archeology and history know of old town sites now under cultivation. Acres of pottery and brick-strewn land, occasional old foundations, wells, and temple sites indicate the extent of some of these ruins. Tradition and history of the local community often tell of some great plague which swept away the people of the town, leaving this desolation as the only evidence of its former existence.

Records of early Indian history tell us of the extent of the havoc wrought by epidemics of various diseases, their victims running into millions. Coupled with frequent wars between rival states, the death-toll was so great that the population of India, estimated at one hundred million in the time of Akbar, was still at this figure at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

## FOREWORD

It was about this time that attention was first given to public health. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the establishment of medical and public health services, along with the ordered political condition of the country, resulted in an immediate rise in the population. By 1850 it had risen to 150 million, by 1880 to 250 million, by 1900 to 300 million, and by 1931 to 350 million. Since then, with the rising standard of living, the extension of education, and the consequent improvement of health conditions, the population increase rate has been still further accelerated.

It may well be hoped that, with the spread of health education and the improvement of sanitation, India may ultimately be able to make these devastating epidemic diseases as rare as they now are in Europe and America.

T. R. F.

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