

## THE SAD STORY OF NURSE ALBINE PECHA A PARABLE FOR TODAY

The inscription on the picture-side of this privately-illustrated postal-stationery card reads: "*Analenken der Wienerin Pestträgerin, die Wärterin Albina Pecha, 1898.*" (In memory of the Viennese plague-victim, nurse Albine Pecha, 1898).

Albine Pecha (4 May 1877 to 31 October 1898) worked as a nurse at the Kaiser Franz Joseph Hospital in Vienna where she assisted the scientist Hermann Nothnagel. A member of his staff, Franz Barisch, contracted what was thought to be pneumonia but turned out to be plague. Nurse Pecha and a colleague, who were assigned to his treatment, both caught the plague and were hermetically isolated within the hospital, where they both died. Nurse Albine Pecha was the last person to die of the plague in Vienna.

The 2 kreuzer stationery-card was mailed from Vienna to nearby Mödling three days before her death. The story of the pretty young nurse suffering a lingering death had featured in the newspapers for several days, and had captured the public imagination. The postcard had been published in sympathy for her plight. (Scan of reverse below).

