

PALLADIUM SHORT STORY PAGE

How SCIENCE MASKS ITSELF AGAINST THE BLACK PLAGUE.

HERE is every indication that the pneumonic plague now raging in China will prove to be the most disastrous in history. In the Black Death of the middle ages, the worst pest hitherto recorded, seventy-five millions perished. The death list in the present plague may be over two hundred millions!

Every effort is being made to check the disease before its arrival in the flea season, when it may amount to but two days, in which event fully half of China's four hundred millions will succumb.

The present plague is of the same type as that of the middle ages, that is to say, it is of the pneumonic as distinguished from the bubonic form.

It is communicated through the medium of the air. The germs are inhaled. It is almost impossible to escape infection upon coming in contact with a person afflicted with the disease unless the utmost precautions are taken.

For this reason the doctors who have volunteered to fight the pest, wear the gravest dress. Many of them have already succumbed. A person once infected cannot recover. Death follows within two or three days, or at most six, after taking the disease.

To protect themselves against infection as far as possible, the doctors and sanitary officials, who are on duty in the plague-stricken district, breathe when on their grueling tasks, through pads of lint soaked in carbolic acid, which kills the bacilli of the pest before they can enter



How Plague Doctors in China Protect Themselves.



A Pile of Coffins, Containing Victims of the Plague Being Burned After a Thorough Soaking in Oil, and (On the Left) a Doctor, Fully Guarded



A Remarkable Photograph of a Plague Victim, Deserted by Friends, Waiting for the Medical Cart.

mouth or nose.

In addition to this, the doctors mask themselves from head to foot. A full working kit consists of the pad of lint, soaked in carbolic acid; a linen mask and goggles, which make it impossible for the bacilli to reach the face; gloves and a linen gown, which can be boiled and disinfected easily, and covers the wearer to the shins.

Some idea of the situation in the plague-stricken area may be gathered from a letter just received from Dr. Charles Lewis, the physician in charge of the Taylor Memorial Hospital, at Paotung Fu, China.

"We are in the midst of a siege of plague," says Dr. Lewis.

"This plague started in Harbin, Manchuria, late in November, or early in December, last year. The Chinese were very slow to take hold of it, and so it got a big start. Then other nations (Russia and Japan) said something must be done or they must interfere to stop its ravages.

China, fearing loss, these nations should get a greater foothold than they now have asked for volunteers in our Union Medical College in Peking. Four men came forward to help. The Chinese also used the medical staff and the students in their two medical colleges in Tientsin. A professor from one of these colleges, Dr. Mesny, a Frenchman, went up, took plague and died, as did also one of his students.

The Chinese have been doing what they can to stop it in the original

focus and in other places whence it has spread, but up to the present very little progress has been made in checking the epidemic. The medical missionary force has taken a leading part in the work everywhere,

and one physician has died in Mukden. Dr. Johnson of the Scotch Presbyterian Mission. He seems to have taken every precaution, wore a respirator and covered himself well. He was a young man, very careful and

conscientious, but his work of disinfestation and segregation took him into crowded places.

"This epidemic is not the bubonic form of plague but the pneumonic. It has been found that the greatest danger is air-borne infection; respirators are very necessary, therefore, when one comes in contact with infected individuals. Rats have been examined and no infection found in them. The government was very slow in stopping the trains, and the disease was carried into China proper, and now it is present at many places in this province and in Shantung. Many workmen from these two provinces work in Manchuria, and when the plague broke out there they left their homes. If the government had stopped the train service early, it could have prevented spread of the disease south of the government wall.

"I do not know when we will ever be able to do medical work, that is to open our hospital here. Of course,

if we got plague into it, we would be in a bad way, for it is said that burning is the only safe way to disinfest a building. I am afraid North China is in for a serious time for many years, and that our mission work will suffer much for this. It will be almost impossible to go to the country to work, as one would be constantly running into plague, and if this virulent form persists it means sure death to any one who makes the disease; as I have said, no one recovers. One can hardly dare to imagine the future of poor China for the next few years. The pest may stop the disease in a few months or so, or it may appear in bubonic form, when the flea season comes, and kill half the population; no one can tell. I wish America would show her friendship for this needy land now, and send out fifty sanitary engineers to cope with this awful pest, and thus save millions of lives that are worth saving. Can't you stir up President Taft or some big man to do this?"

A MODEL UNAWARES

"SORRY I can't ask you to stay to supper, but I'm going out," Dick Carwardine said to his chum, Ronald Foster. The color rose in his cheeks at the lie.

"But Foster knew it for a lie, and lied too."

"Glad to hear it, old man. Anyway, I should have had to go, for the master's expecting me to-night. Well, ta-ta, old man!" For an instant he hesitated as he twirled his hat in his hand. Then he was off again. "Look here, old man, I suppose you don't want the use of a steamer for a bit? I had a stroke of luck last week and—"

The color rose again in Dick's thin cheeks.

"Glad to hear it, Ron. I thought we had had this out for good and all. Understand, whenever you offer to lend me money on the strength of 'stroke of luck' I always know you are thinking of me," he said, with a smile.

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