

in their flight, from gaining an entrance.

The International Commission, for the appointment of which Russian pressure on the Chinese Government is largely responsible, will therefore advise China what to do and how to act. A sanitary service has to be built up in China, as it has been in India. Hospitals and stations for dealing with the plague will have to be organized, and it will be the duty of the Commission to show China how the organization is to be built up, with efficient staffs of doctors and nurses.

A system will also have to be organized for inoculating the population in infected districts; a staff will be needed to disinfect houses and clothing; and a special sanitary staff must be appointed to prevent the accumulation of dirt and to preach the laws of health.

At present the plague is being fostered by the foul air and the filth of the hovels of the people. There is no system of ventilation in these poor dwellings, and there are no open windows in these months of winter to let in fresh air. Nor is there any system of medicine, the only medicine the majority of the coolies have any faith in being in the form of beating gongs and letting off fireworks to keep away the evil spirits.

So the Commission will have to do its best to set aside the superstitions of the people as well as to show the way to the organization of the staffs and services we have mentioned. They will also have to deal with the spread of the infection by rats, mice, and other rodents, and by the fleas of these rodents that bite human beings, and so inoculate them with the disease.

Plague is a word which, by reason of its very vagueness, causes alarm. One thinks of the plague of Athens, or the plague of London, when it is reported that thousands of people are dying day by day in Manchuria, and that modern science and missionary enterprise have up till now been able to do little to arrest the progress of a ravaging disease that must burn itself out. Harbin, the dividing line between Russian and Japanese ambitions, the point at which their "spheres of influence" in Manchuria are by treaty determined, appears to be the main centre of an epidemic which is claiming a terrible toll of victims. It is not the plague in Harbin which spe-

cially concerns the world at large. It is the danger that in these days of railway communication it may spread south into China, or north into Russia. Both Governments are deeply concerned over the problem, and are taking steps—tardy as it may seem—to limit the area of the ravages of the existent epidemic. Plague, which may be taken to mean the specific malignant and infectious disease caused by the *bacillus pestis* of Yersin, feeds upon the uncleanness which is traditional in Eastern people. It came to Bombay in 1896 and wrought a terrible disaster. It carried off thousands of victims in India, simply because the people did not know or would not follow the ordinary laws of sanitation. The London Lancet thus summarizes the situation:—

"Every circumstance unfortunately seems in favor of the spread of plague, especially if introduced in the pneumonic form. Like other countries, China has more than its share of rats and other rodents, so that there is a distinct probability if plague penetrates into the interior of China, that it will make a long stay and leave its mark on that country for years to come. . . . We have grave fears that if the epidemic goes on increasing at its present rate we may have to witness in China a sacrifice of human life compared with which even the Indian experiences may sink into comparative insignificance."

The plague in Manchuria has taken the form of malignant pneumonia. When the bubonic plague invaded Bombay the pestilence spread through the whole Presidency. In four years, 1896 to 1899, it carried off 200,000 people, representing 75 per cent. of the subjects submitted to medical treatment. The present Manchurian plague is pulmonary, rather than bubonic. We read, of Harbin, that "one hundred bodies are picked up in the street every day." "Thousands," it is added, "are fleeing from the stricken centres." Dr. Graham Ashland, of the Church of England Mission, has sent to a leading New York newspaper a story of what is going on:

"The virulence of the disease is simply incredible. Men walk about and declare themselves to be in perfect health. Suddenly they develop a temperature as high as 40 deg. Cent., and in two or three hours are dead. The fatalities in the native city average 150 a day despite the decimated