

and to prepare to receive a possible enemy. I make this my excuse for this paper.

The bubonic plague is a disease hoary with antiquity. There are only two specific diseases (leprosy and ? syphilis) to which I can find any previous references. For the plague is no doubt the disease, mentioned in I. Samuel 5th and 6th chapters, which attacked the Philistines after the battle at Ebenezer where they obtained possession of the Ark, and which broke out in all parts of the country to which the Ark was sent, and which on the return of the Ark to the Israelites destroyed fifty thousand three score and ten of them. This conclusion was brought home to me in 1895, when after reading a description of the general features of the disease as it occurred in Hong Kong, I shortly after heard a scripture lesson from these chapters of the book of Samuel. I was pleased to see my conclusions backed up in an article by Prof. Adami a few months after (Montreal Medical Journal, June 1896), and according to whom the most recent biblical lexicographers draw the same conclusion. Dr. Simpson in B. M. Journal, Sept. 1898, also comes to the same conclusion so that I think we may take it for granted that this is our first reference to the disease. The statements in the book of Samuel are certainly very curious in that they record not only one of the most important clinical features of the disease, viz., the appearance of emerods (*i.e.* a tumor or bubo) in the secret parts (*i.e.* the inguino-femoral region); but also states that the Philistines in returning the Ark sent it back with an offering of golden emerods and golden mice. Why the mice? Must it not have been that the Philistines had noted the fact, now absolutely authenticated, that preceding and accompanying an epidemic of plague, rodents are attacked by the same disease and die in thousands and constitute without doubt, one of the most important factors in disseminating the disease.

Coming down to more strictly historic times, one can pass over numerous references to what may or may not have been plague, including however, the undoubted epidemic of plague in the reign of Justinian in the sixth century, until we come to the 14th century where under the name of the Black Death we have plague in its most malignant form, carrying off by repeated recurrences more than one-fourth of the population of Europe.