

VI, 23 millions. India was depopulated. Even the inhabitants of the most northern countries, Greenland and Iceland did not escape. To them it was brought from Denmark, Sweden and Norway. In Germany, which was apparently more spared by the plagues than other countries, only (!) 1,244,434 died. In the city of Erfurt, after the cemeteries had been filled, corpses were thrown by the thousands into tremendous pits. The same practice was followed in other cities, or bodies were thrown into the rivers. Hecker states that, without exaggeration, the number of deaths in Europe was about 25,000,000. It is safe to assume that Europe lost near to one-half of its entire population.

When towns were stricken by the disease, panic followed; fear, consternation ruled; all order broke down. Citizens committed suicide in order to escape the disease. Morals deteriorated, laws disappeared and strife and conquest added to the existing disorder. This, shortly, is the picture of the "Great Mortality" from 1347 to 1350, but not ended in that year, for recurrences were frequent to the end of the 14th century which, although not so severe or general, but in combination with other misfortunes, perpetuated the demoralization.

It is interesting to recall in this connection two important associated phenomena which have profoundly influenced subsequent history:—One is the increasing wealth and power of the church through the acquisition of donations in treasures and land. Individuals in fear of death gave freely for penance and protection. The other is a most extraordinary fecundity of the women. Marriages became prolific so that the waste of human life was more rapidly replaced than the psychic effects of ruinous influences were worn out.

The first spreading psychic results of these unhappy times are evident in the extending movements of the Flaggelants or Cross bearers. Flagellation, as religious penance, had been practised long before and been witnessed in various parts of Europe, but with the plague it rose to much greater importance and exaggeration.

From Hungary, in 1349, there marched a few hundred Flaggelants in strange ecclesiastic procession across Germany. By the time they reached Strassburg their number was over a thousand; at Speyer it became a general movement in which the whole city participated. It gained greater momentum with wider distribution. Degenerate practices, crimes and other outgrowths were associated with Flaggelant exhibitions and influences, outlaws and adventurers joined them, until the Sorbonne at Paris and the Emperor Charles both appealed to the Holy See against them, and indeed the Flaggelant movement threatened the authority of priests and church.

But now the heated, unbalanced public mind turned to another outlet of its emotions in a direction which since the time of Tucidides