

mysterious phenomena, the sweep of whose orbit we have not yet measured. Geologists tell us of epochs when there must have been a wholesale destruction of certain types, possibly by disease. More than once within historic days it must have seemed as if the very existence of the race was threatened, so vast and overpowering had been an epidemic invasion. No disease had so shaken the foundations of human society as the plague, which in the second century and again in the thirteenth had shown a capacity for wholesale destruction not shared by any other. In reading Abbé Gasquet's picture of the effects of the great pandemic of the thirteenth century, one gets the impression of the loosening of an irresistible cosmic force which swept like a tornado over the earth, leaving it desolate and almost uninhabited. We have traced the orbits of the planets, and the advent again of Halley's comet shows us how fully we understand the stars in their courses, but these are mechanical things, the laws of which are plain and legible in comparison with the many and as yet insoluble problems of life. One of these relates particularly to the extraordinary reappearance or recrudescence of certain epidemic diseases. Twenty years ago when one spoke of the plague, memories were recalled of the history of Athens in the days of Pericles, of Rome in the days of Marcus Aurelius, of the great pandemics of the Middle Ages, and then of the dwindling smaller epidemics of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. But to the profession and to the world at large the plague was a closed book. A few knew that it lingered in certain centres, but none dreamed that it would again burst like the comet into our orbit. There was a certain fitness that it should have started on a world mission of destruction at Hong-Kong, the port which boasts the largest and most world-wide tonnage. When one considers the dynamic energy of the plague, its powers of resistance, its terrible killing capacity, exceeding all known vital forces, who

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