

From this period on till the 17th century, with intervening epidemic periods, the plague remained endemic in England and Europe. With the great plague of London in 1666 and the few years following, the disease seems to have gone out from England altogether. We can still trace it however in Europe, particularly along the shores of the Mediterranean (Levantine plague) till 1841, when as is well expressed in Allbutt's System of Medicine, plague left Europe by its eastern gate, Constantinople. It, however, only receded eastward to its endemic centres in Persia, Mesopotamia, and Thibet and southward to the Uganda district of British East Central Africa. These are the homes of the plague. The present epidemic seems to have come from Thibet eastward to the Province of Yunnan in China, thence to Canton and Hong Kong as described.

Plague is caused by a bacillus, discovered by Kitasato and independently by Yersin during the Hong Kong epidemic in 1894, making this epidemic an epoch marking period in the history of this disease. I will not describe its morphological or biological characters as I think it is of more importance to know how it is transferred and gives rise to infection. As plague is due to a bacillus, this question apart from the predisposing factors, resolves itself into the means of carriage of this microbe. But we have a factor to deal with in the plague that we have not in other acute infective diseases, viz. :—that plague attacks not only man but rodents (rats, mice, bandicoots, marmots, etc.,) and consequently we must take these animals as well as infected individuals, into account in considering the spread of infection.

Let us examine first the spread of infection from an infected region to one previously unattacked. Here we have as a factor of first importance the propagation of the disease along lines of travel by individuals either in the incubation stage (2-7 days) of the disease, or by patients suffering from that mild type of the disease known as *Pestis minor*. This latter form of the disease no doubt serves as a connecting link between epidemics of more severe type but they are occasionally combined. Besides the individual transference we may have the carriage by fomites as in rags. As owing to the short vitality of the plague bacillus under ordinary condition of exposure to air drying and sunlight, these with the exception of rags could not be of great importance in the