

in China was 95 per cent. Investigation points to a specific micro-organism as the exciting cause, while all writers are one in the opinion that the most predisposing causes are the common concomitants of extreme poverty; namely, overcrowding, filth, bad air, poor food and intemperance. Our knowledge of this historic pestilence dates from about the end of the first century of the Christian Era. Its home for centuries was Northern Africa. During, and for a period after the Middle Ages, it was more or less prevalent in epidemic form in Asia Minor, China, India, Egypt, Italy, Germany and France. Beginning in 542 in Egypt, it passed the following year to Constantinople, where 10,000 people are said to have died from it in a single day. During the remaining half of this century it spread pretty generally over the whole of the Roman world. During the fourteenth century it again appeared, and is said to have caused the death of twenty-five millions of people. We have the history of its appearance about this time in Oxford, in England. It has arisen so uniformly in unclean places that filth is generally regarded as the most potent factor in favor of its origin and spread. Almost, without exception, plague centers have been characterized by a soil polluted with decomposing animal matters, and by overcrowding of destitute, dirty and poorly nourished people. An interesting and important fact that points to the soil as the location of the plague virus is the fact that, during and often preceding the appearance of the disease among human beings, there is an epidemic of plague among rats, mice and swine.

The most important safeguards against the generation and spread of the plague are personal cleanliness, the removal of organic waste from about the dwellings, good drainage of the soil and the prevention of overcrowding. When the disease makes its appearance in a house, the sick should at once be removed to a hospital and there isolated. The healthy members of the household ought to be quarantined for from two to three weeks. In the meantime, the house should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. While attending upon those attacked, it ought to be borne in mind that the discharges from the suppurating glands and possibly the