

# The Plague in Literature

By THOMAS E. KEYS

---

---

"This day, much against my will, I did in Drury Lane see two or three houses marked with a red cross upon the doors, and 'Lord have mercy upon us' writ there; which was a sad sight to me, being the first of the kind that, to my remembrance, I ever saw." Samuel Pepys, *Diary*, June 7, 1665.

STORIES of medicine as related in the literary annals of the world have sometimes more of the flavor of reality to them than have the more expert descriptions of learned physicians. Rarely does the physician himself have the literary skill to record his observations in such a way as to make them live for posterity.

Men of letters have many advantages over physicians. They can embroider their stories to make the final result more interesting. They know their language constructions and have a wider and more flexible vocabulary. They can also make their descriptions dramatic. For instance, they may time their descriptions at crucial moments. A good example is found in Thucydides in his description of the "Pestilence at Athens,"<sup>1</sup>\* a part of his *History of the Peloponnesian War*.

After the superb "Funeral Oration" of Pericles in which Thucydides tells of the many glories of Athens and speaks in general of its development, he proceeds at once to the plague which took place during the second year of the war (430 B.C.). The contrast is overwhelming. Here the author turns from a description of a pleasant picture to a frightful picture. The result is one of the most remarkable descriptions of the plague<sup>2</sup> on record. Indeed, Ralph Major<sup>3</sup> says: "The account of the plague of Athens written by Thucydides is one of the most vivid and terrible pieces of writing in all literature." Many years later Lucretius (c.98-55 B.C.) converted the record of Thucydides into Latin hexameter verse in his great poem, "On the Nature of Things."<sup>4</sup> And it is safe to say that all later accounts of the plague of Athens are built around the story of Thucydides.

Good literary descriptions of medical subjects should also be clear

\* A. J. Brock suggests that the Athens plague probably was not bubonic but typhus. According to Ralph Major (ref. 3, p. 16) Francis Adams believed this plague was bubonic and Heinrich Haeser believed it to be typhus. Major compromises and says that it probably was both bubonic and typhus.

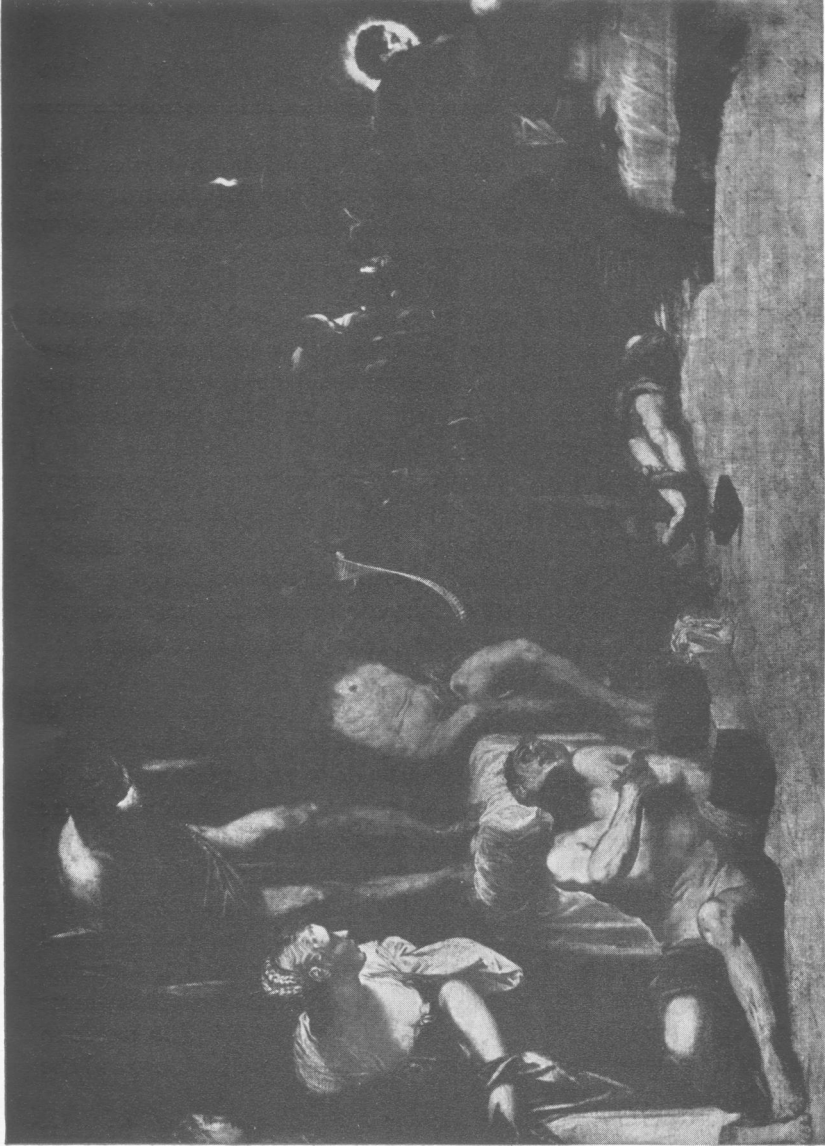


FIG. 1. Detail from Tintoretto's "St. Roch healing the plague stricken."  
In the Church of San Rocco, Venice.

in their meaning. As compared to a physician's description, a literary artist's rendering is analogous to that of a great painter. During the Great Plague of London (1665) the Royal College of Physicians issued at the King's command a book of *Directions for the Care of the Plague*.<sup>5</sup> In this very instructive book is found the means for the diagnosis of people suffering from the Plague of that year. This is in the form of *Directions for the Searchers* as follows:

1. They are to take notice whether there be any Swellings, Risings, or Botch under the Ear, about the Neck, on either Side, or under the Arm-pits of either Side, or the Groins, and of its hardness, and whether broken or unbroken.

2. Whether there be any Blains which may rise in any part of the Body in the form of a Blister, much bigger than the Small Pox, of a Straw-colour or livid colour, which latter is the worse; either of them hath a reddish Circuit, something swollen round about it, which Circuit remains after the Blister is broken, encompassing the Sore.

3. Whether there be any Carbuncle, which is something like the Blain, but more fiery and corrosive, easily eating deep into the flesh, and sometimes having a black Crust upon it, but always compassed about with a very fiery red (or livid) flat and hard Tumour, about a finger-breadth more or less: this and the Blain may appear in any part of the Body.

4. Whether there be any Tokens, which are spots arising upon the skin, chiefly about the Breast and Back, but sometimes also in other parts; their colour is something various, sometimes more reddish, sometimes inclining a little toward a faint blue, and sometimes brownish mixt with blue; the red ones have often a purple Circle about them; the brownish, a reddish.

5. Whether the Neck and other Limbs are rigid or stiff, or more flexible and limber than in other dead Bodies.

A careful examination of Tintoretto's famous plague painting,<sup>6</sup> possibly seventy-five years before the London epidemic (fig. 1), will show all of these diagnostic signs, but with a transcending art matched only by the greatest writers.

What follows is an examination of a few of the outstanding literary descriptions of the plague from the standpoint of composition, background, the setting of the plague in the story the author is telling. Just as Tintoretto and other famous artists have perpetuated for all time in their art the visual picture of the Plague—so too have important literary figures left us with vivid descriptions and these descriptions tell us more about the plague and its social implications than do the several accounts by physicians.

Before proceeding further let us prepare ourselves by a brief glimpse into the history and significance of the plague, especially the bubonic plague.

Apparently the first historical notice of the bubonic plague is con-

tained in a surviving fragment of the works of Rufus of Ephesus<sup>7</sup> and he was the first to call attention to buboes. Rufus practiced about A.D. 98-117 and some of his works have been preserved in a collection by Oribasius, who was physician to the Emperor Julian two and a half centuries later. According to Rufus: "The buboes called pestilential are most fatal and acute, especially those that are seen occurring about Libya, Egypt, and Syria . . . Dioscorides and Posidonius make much mention of them in the plague, which occurred in their time in Libya, Egypt, and Syria. They say that it was accompanied by acute fever, pain and prostration of the whole body, delirium and the appearance of large and hard buboes . . ."<sup>8</sup>

Procopius<sup>9</sup> (A.D. 490-560) described the plague of Justinian which apparently originated in Pelusium and which spread through Egypt in one direction and to Palestine in another, and attacked the whole civilized world. Procopius said that according to the physicians the source of contagion lay in the buboes. This great plague passed through Constantinople. It appeared in Gaul in 546. It had reached Italy in 543, but returned in 565 and so depopulated the country that the Lombards made their conquest with little opposition. According to Creighton this is the plague which brought on the dark ages. "No single thing stands out more clearly as the stroke of fate in bringing the ancient civilization to an end than the vast depopulation and solitude made by the plague which came with the corn ships from Egypt to Byzantium in 543."<sup>10</sup> Maycock<sup>11</sup> also notices the importance of this plague when he compares the later disruption of medieval Europe by the Black Death with the earlier decline of the Roman Empire in that in both cases there was (1) the vigorous influence of Greek thought making for a change in the philosophy and religious conceptions, (2) the Teutons were the aggressors, and (3) a deadly pestilence came in from the East.

Between the plague of Justinian and the Black Death there occurred several pandemics. As mentioned by Garrison<sup>12</sup> these included leprosy, St. Anthony's fire (erysipelas, 857), scurvy (1218), epidemic chorea, and sweating sickness.

Of all the pandemics in the history of the world, however, none has influenced the fate of civilization as that of the Black Death, a great cycle of epidemics. According to Castiglioni<sup>13</sup> this pestilence began in the interior of Asia about 1333. According to Payne<sup>7</sup> one eyewitness, Gabriel de Mussis, an Italian lawyer, accompanied the march of the plague from the Crimea to Genoa, where with a few survivors he landed at the end of 1347. The plague spread through Italy and in 1348 Florence alone lost more than 100,000 people.<sup>14</sup> This dreadful disease after apparently subsiding in a few years broke out anew at intervals until the end of the seventeenth century. Even in the eighteenth century

occurred great destruction and in 1720 the Plague broke out in Marseilles and killed from 40,000 to 60,000 persons. The loss of life attributed to the bubonic plague was overwhelming. Tobey<sup>15</sup> writes: "The Black Death was bubonic plague and it was about three times as severe in actual mortality as was the frightful influenza epidemic of the World War period. The influenza of 1918 is estimated to have caused 20,000,000 deaths whereas the Black Death from 1348 to 1720 removed more than 50,000,000 people." According to Nohl<sup>16</sup> Pope Clement VI made statistical investigation of the number of fatalities from the plague and found the number of deaths for the whole world to be 42,836,486.

It should be kept in mind, that although no epidemic of bubonic plague is current on any of the fighting fronts at present, plague is still with us. The last bubonic plague epidemic of global significance, as mentioned by Strong<sup>17</sup> was supposed to have originated in China in 1894. It reached India in 1896. From India it spread to Singapore, the Philippines, Arabia, Persia, Turkey, Egypt and West Africa, later to Russia and through parts of Europe to the coasts of North and South America, Central America, the West Indies and Mexico and from these to our gulf coast. In 1900 San Francisco was visited, and in 1907 Seattle became infected and plague rats are still found there. Plague is now chiefly a disease of squirrels but infected animals are spreading over many Western states.

During recent years outbreaks of the bubonic plague have been observed in the United States in California, Louisiana, Texas, and Florida. Even though the causes of plague and its methods of spreading are well known, it still is a devastating disease. India is still a great epidemic region for the plague and as reported by Strong during the last 20 years there have been about 10,000,000 deaths. Because of the taking of proper health measures the mortality has dropped considerably. Thus while from 1934-1935, 52,000 died of the plague, by 1938 the mortality had fallen under 7,000 in India.

But to return to our literary descriptions of the plague. This paper will, for the most part, limit its discussion to the Black Death, also called oriental plague or pest.

Bubonic plague<sup>17</sup> may be defined as an "acute, febrile, infectious disease characterized by inflammation of the lymphatics, with the production of buboes, septicaemia, primary or secondary pneumonia, petechial and diffuse haemorrhages, and a high mortality." Bubonic plague is caused by a bacterium of the hemorrhagic septicemia group, *Pasteurella pestis*, and is most commonly transmitted to man through the agency of fleas, rat or human.

Fracastorius<sup>18</sup> in 1546 defined this disease as a "fever which contains in itself the germs of death dealing contagion." He believed that putre-

faction was not an essential characteristic of the plague and that plague was spread, not by a tainted condition of the air but by actual passing of the contagion from one person to another. In this he noted that the plague attacked the populace more than the nobility. The nobility on account of their wealth could take greater precautions against contagion.

Guy de Chauliac was an eyewitness to the plague in 1348 and his description, an exception to most accounts by physicians, is good not only for its accurate account of the symptomatology of the disease but also for his portrayal of its futility of conquest and the despair that accompanied it. The following is a translation of Guy de Chauliac's description by Anna M. Campbell.<sup>19</sup> Miss Campbell condensed some of Guy's verbosity, yet preserved the author's phraseology.

The great mortality appeared at Avignon in January, 1348, when I was in the service of Pope Clement VI. It was of two kinds. The first lasted two months, with continued fever and spitting of blood, and people died of it in three days. The second was all the rest of the time, also with continuous fever, and with tumors in the external parts, chiefly the armpits and groin; and people died in five days. It was so contagious, especially that accompanied by spitting of blood, that not only by staying together, but even by looking at one another, people caught it, with the result that men died without attendants and were buried without priests. The father did not visit his son, nor the son his father. Charity was dead and hope crushed.

I call it great, because it covered the whole world, or lacked little of doing so. For it began in the East, and thus casting its darts against the world, passed through our region toward the West. It was so great that it left scarcely a fourth part of the people. And I say that it was such that its like has never been heard tell of before; of the pestilences in the past that we read of, none was so great as this. For those covered only one region, this the whole world; those could be treated in some way, this in none.

For this reason it was useless and shameful for the doctors, the more so as they dared not visit the sick, for fear of being infected. And when they did visit them, they did hardly anything for them, and were paid nothing; for all the sick died, except some few at the last who escaped, the buboes being ripened.

Many were in doubt about the cause of this great mortality. In some places, they thought that the Jews had poisoned the world: and so they killed them. In others, that it was the poor deformed: and they drove them out. In others, that it was the nobles: and they feared to go abroad. Finally they reached the point where they kept guards in the cities and villages, and permitted the entry of no one who was not well known. And if powders or unguents were found on anyone the owners, for fear that they were poisons, were forced to swallow them. [Here follow a discussion of what the author considers the true causes, and a résumé of methods of prevention and cure that were employed.]

And I, to avoid infamy, dared not absent myself, but with continual fear preserved myself as best I could by means of the above-mentioned remedies. Notwithstanding this, toward the end of the mortality I fell into a continuous

fever, with a tumor in the groin. I was ill for nearly six weeks, and was in such great danger that all my associates thought that I would die; but the tumor being ripened, and treated as I have said, I escaped by the will of God.

It is to Boccaccio, however, that we owe the greatest homage, for his description of the plague is masterful. This was the pandemic which as has already been mentioned took the lives of more than 100,000 Florentines by the spring of 1348. And the year 1348 according to Maycock<sup>11</sup> marks the nearest approach to a definite break in the continuity of history that has ever occurred. As Creighton has shown<sup>10</sup> nothing marks so definitely the emergence of Europe from the Middle Ages as the depopulation and social upheaval made by the plague.

Major<sup>20</sup> presents evidence to show that Boccaccio was not an eyewitness to the plague at Florence (since he lived in Naples in 1348) and that his description is based on hearsay. This may be true—yet Boccaccio must have known a lot about the plague and his father is said to have died from it.<sup>15</sup> Probably as mentioned earlier the literary powers of this author made for a more vivid description than one based on fact alone. The ghastliness of the plague which, as we shall see, prefaces his *Decameron*, is a great contrast to his delightful stories. This ability to deal in contrasts was also effectively used by Thucydides as mentioned earlier in this paper. Manzoni followed this technique in his romance, *I Promessi Sposi*, and Edgar Allen Poe in his well known story of the plague, *The Masque of the Red Death*,<sup>21</sup> employs the same tactics.

It is beside the point of this brief article to comment much more on the reality of fiction as applied to descriptions of the plague. However, John P. Marquand in his introduction to *The Late George Apley*<sup>22</sup> says: "The truth is, if fiction is to give a sense of reality, the writer must create characters and circumstances which would assume unbelievable distortions if they appeared outside the covers of a book. In short, it is my humble opinion that fiction, to give an illusion of fact, can never employ fact successfully."

There is another reason, perhaps, which contributes to make Boccaccio an effective narrator of the plague. This was because Boccaccio suffered from scabies or as he put it "scabies sicca."<sup>23</sup> Other physicians believed that Boccaccio was not ill with scabies but that he probably suffered from diabetes<sup>24</sup> or, perhaps, inflammation of the liver.<sup>25</sup> No matter which of the above diseases Boccaccio suffered, it made his power of narration of the plague more acute.

*Boccaccio's Description of the Plague at Florence (1348)*<sup>26</sup>

As often, most gracious ladies, as, taking thought in myself, I mind me how very pitiful you are all by nature, so often do I recognize that this present work will, to your thinking, have a grievous and a weariful beginning, inasmuch as the dolorous remembrance of the late pestiferous mortality, which it

beareth on its forefront, is universally irksome to all who saw or otherwise knew it. But I would not therefore have this affright you from reading further, as if in the reading you were still to fare among sighs and tears. Let this grisly beginning be none other to you than is to wayfarers a rugged and steep mountain, beyond which is situate a most fair and delightful plain, which latter cometh so much the pleasanter to them as the greater was the hardship of the ascent and the descent; for, like as dolor occupieth the extreme of gladness, even so are miseries determined by imminent joyance. This brief annoy (I say brief, inasmuch as it is contained in few pages) is straightway succeeded by the pleasance and delight which I have already promised you and which, belike, were it not foresaid, might not be looked for from such a beginning. And in truth, could I fairly have availed to bring you to my desire otherwise than by so rugged a path as this will be, I had gladly done it; but being in a manner constrained thereto, for that, without this reminiscence of our past miseries, it might not be shown what was the occasion of the coming about of the things that will hereafter be read, I have brought myself to write them.

I say, then, that the years [of the era] of the fruitful Incarnation of the Son of God had attained to the number of one thousand three hundred and forty-eight, when into the notable city of Florence, fair over every other of Italy, there came the death-dealing pestilence, which, through the operation of the heavenly bodies or of our own iniquitous dealings, being sent down upon mankind for our correction by the just wrath of God, had some years before appeared in the parts of the East and after having bereft these latter of an innumerable number of inhabitants, extending without cease from one place to another, had now unhappily spread towards the West. And thereagainst no wisdom availing nor human foresight (whereby the city was purged of many impurities by officers deputed to that end and it was forbidden unto any sick person to enter therein and many were the counsels given for the preservation of health) not yet humble supplications, not once but many times both in ordered processions and on other wise made unto God by devout persons,—about the coming in of the Spring of the aforesaid year, it began on horrible and miraculous wise to show forth its dolorous effects. Yet not as it had done in the East, where, if any bled at the nose, it was a manifest sign of inevitable death; nay, but in men and women alike there appeared at the beginning of the malady, certain swellings, either on the groin or under the armpits, whereof some waxed of the bigness of a common apple, others like unto an egg, some more and some less, and these the vulgar named plague-boils. From these two parts the aforesaid death-bearing plague-boils proceeded, in brief space, to appear and come indifferently in every part of the body; wherefrom, after awhile, the fashion of the contagion began to change into black or livid blotches, which showed themselves in many [first] on the arms and about the thighs and [after spread to] every part of the person, in some large and sparse and in others small and thick-sown; and like as the plague-boils had been first (and yet were) a very certain token of coming death, even so were these for every one to whom they came.

To the cure of these maladies nor counsel of physician nor virtue of any



medicine appeared to avail or profit aught; on the contrary,—whether it was that the nature of the infection suffered it not or that the ignorance of the physicians (of whom, over and above the men of art, the number, both men and women, who had never had any teaching of medicine, was become exceeding great,) availed not to know whence it arose and consequently took not due measures thereagainst,—not only did few recover thereof, but well nigh all died within the third day from the appearance of the aforesaid signs, this sooner and that later, and for the most part without fever or other accident. And this pestilence was the more virulent for that, by communication with those who were sick thereof, it gat hold upon the sound, no otherwise than fire upon things dry or greasy, whenas they are brought very near thereunto. Nay, the mischief was yet greater; for that not only did converse and consortion with the sick give to the sound infection or cause of common death, but the mere touching of the clothes or of whatsoever other thing had been touched or used of the sick appeared of itself to communicate the malady to the toucher. A marvellous thing to hear is that which I have to tell and one which, had it not been seen of many men's eyes and of mine own, I had scarce dared credit, much less set down in writing, though I had heard it from one worthy of belief. I say, then, that of such effieience was the nature of the pestilence in question in communicating itself from one to another, that, not only did it pass from man to man, but this, which is much more, it many times visibly did;—to wit, a thing which had pertained to a man sick or dead of the aforesaid sickness, being touched by an animal foreign to the human species, not only infected this latter with the plague; but in a very brief space of time killed it. Of this mine own eyes (as hath a little before been said) had one day, among others, experience on this wise; to wit, that the rags of a poor man, who had died of the plague, being cast out into the public way, two hogs came up to them and having first, after their wont, rooted amain among them with their snouts, took them in their mouths and tossed them about their jaws; then, in a little while, after turning round and round, they both, as if they had taken poison, fell down dead upon the rags with which they had in an ill hour intermeddled.

From these things and many others like unto them or yet stranger divers fears and conceits were begotten in those who abode alive, which well nigh all tended to a very barbarous conclusion, namely, to shun and flee from the sick and all that pertained to them, and thus doing, each thought to secure immunity for himself. Some there were who conceived that to live moderately and keep one's self from all excess was the best defence against such a danger; wherefore, making up their company, they lived removed from every other and shut themselves up in those houses where none had been sick and where living was best; and there, using very temperately of the most delicate viands and the finest wines and eschewing all incontinence, they abode with music and such other diversions as they might have, never suffering themselves to speak with any nor choosing to hear any news from without of death or sick folk. Others, inclining to the contrary opinion, maintained that to carouse and make merry and go about singing

and frolicking and satisfy the appetite in everything possible and laugh and scoff at whatsoever befell was a very certain remedy for such an ill. That which they said they put in practice as best they might, going about day and night, now to this tavern, now to that, drinking without stint or measure; and on this wise they did yet more freely in other folk's houses, so but they scented there aught that liked or tempted them, as they might lightly do, for that every one—as he were to live no longer—had abandoned all care of his possessions, as of himself, wherefore the most part of the houses were become common good and strangers used them, whenas they happened upon them, like as the very owner might have done; and with all this bestial preoccupation, they still shunned the sick to the best of their power.

In this sore affliction and misery of our city, the reverend authority of the laws, both human and divine, was all in a manner dissolved and fallen into decay, for [lack of] the ministers and executors thereof, who, like other men, were all either dead or sick or else left so destitute of followers that they were unable to exercise any office, wherefore every one had license to do whatsoever pleased him. Many others held a middle course between the two aforesaid, not straitening themselves so exactly in the matter of diet as the first, neither allowing themselves such license in drinking and other debauchery as the second, but using things in sufficiency, according to their appetites; nor did they seclude themselves, but went about, carrying in their hands, some flowers, some odoriferous herbs and other some divers kinds of spiceries, which they set often to their noses, accounting it an excellent thing to fortify the brain with such odors, more by token that the air seemed all heavy and attainted with the stench of the dead bodies and that of the sick and of the remedies used.

Some were of a more barbarous, though, peradventure, a surer way of thinking, avouching that there was no remedy against pestilence better than—no, nor any so good as—to flee before them; wherefore, moved by this reasoning and recking of nought but themselves, very many, both men and women, abandoned their own city, their own houses and homes, their kinsfolk and possessions, and sought the country seats of others, or, at the least, their own, as if the wrath of God, being moved to punish the iniquity of mankind, would not proceed to do so wheresoever they might be, but would content itself with afflicting those only who were found within the walls of their city, or as if they were persuaded that no person was to remain therein and that its last hour was come. And albeit these, who opined thus variously, died not all, yet neither did they all escape; nay, many of each way of thinking and in every place sickened of the plague and languished on all sides, well nigh abandoned, having themselves, what while they were whole, set the example to those who abode in health.

Indeed, leaving be that townsman avoided townsman and that well nigh no neighbor took thought unto other and that kinsfolk seldom or never visited one another and held no converse together save from afar, this tribulation had stricken such terror to the hearts of all, men and women alike, that brother forsook brother, uncle nephew and sister brother and

oftentimes wife husband; nay (what is yet more extraordinary and well nigh incredible) fathers and mothers refused to visit or tend their very children, as they had not been theirs. By reason whereof there remained unto those (and the number of them, both males and females, was incalculable) who fell sick, none other succor than that which they owed either to the charity of friends (and of these there were few) or the greed of servants, who tended them, allured by high and extravagant wage; albeit, for all this, these latter were not grown many, and those men and women of mean understanding and for the most part unused to such offices, who served for well nigh nought but to reach things called for by the sick or to note when they died; and in the doing of these services many of them perished with their gain.

Of this abandonment of the sick by neighbors, kinsfolk and friends and of the scarcity of servants arose an usage before well nigh unheard, to wit, that no woman, how fair or lovesome or well-born soever she might be, once fallen sick, recked aught of having a man to tend her, whatever he might be, or young or old, and without any shame discovered to him every part of her body, no otherwise than she would have done to a woman, so but the necessity of her sickness required it; the which belike, in those who recovered, was the occasion of lesser modesty in time to come. Moreover, there ensued of this abandonment the death of many who peradventure, had they been succored, would have escaped alive; wherefore, as well for the lack of the opportune services which the sick availed not to have as for the virulence of the plague, such was the multitude of those who died in the city by day and by night that it was an astonishment to hear tell thereof, much more to see it; and thence, as it were of necessity, there sprang up among those who abode alive things contrary to the pristine manners of the townfolk.

It was then (even as we yet see it used) a custom that the kinswomen and she-neighbors of the dead should assemble in his house and there condole with those who more nearly pertained unto him, whilst his neighbors and many other citizens foregathered with his next of kin before his house, whither, according to the dead man's quality, came the clergy, and he with funeral pomp of chants and candles was borne on the shoulders of his peers to the church chosen by himself before his death; which usages, after the virulence of the plague began to increase, were either altogether or for the most part laid aside, and other and strange customs sprang up in their stead. For that, not only did folk die without having a multitude of women about them, but many there were who departed this life without witness and few indeed were they to whom the pious plaints and bitter tears of their kinsfolk were vouchsafed; nay, in lieu of these things there obtained, for the most part, laughter and jests and gibes and feasting and merrymaking in company; which usance women, laying aside womanly pitifulness, had right well learned for their own safety.

Few, again, were they whose bodies were accompanied to the church by more than half a score or a dozen of their neighbors, and of these no worshipful and illustrious citizens, but a sort of blood-suckers, sprung from

the dregs of the people, who styled themselves *pickmen* and did such offices for hire, shouldered the bier and bore it with hurried steps, not to that church which the dead man had chosen before his death, but most times to the nearest, behind five or six priests, with little light and whiles none at all, which latter, with the aid of the said pickmen, thrust him into what grave soever they first found unoccupied, without troubling themselves with too long or too formal a service.

The condition of the common people (and belike, in great part, of the middle class also) was yet more pitiable to behold, for that these, for the most part retained by hope or poverty in their houses and abiding in their own quarters, sickened by the thousand daily and being altogether untended and unsuccored died well nigh all without recourse. Many breathed their last in the open street, whilst other many, for all they died in their houses, made it known to the neighbors that they were dead rather by the stench of their rotting bodies than otherwise; and of these and others who died all about the whole city was full. For the most part one same usance was observed by the neighbors, moved more by fear lest the corruption of the dead bodies should imperil themselves than by any charity they had for the departed; to wit, that either with their own hands or with the aid of certain bearers, whenas they might have any, they brought the bodies of those who had died forth of their houses and laid them before their doors, where especially in the morning, those who went about might see corpses without number; then they fetched biers and some, in default thereof, they laid upon some board or other. Nor was it only one bier that carried two or three corpses, nor did this happen but once; nay, many might have been counted which contained husband and wife, two or three brothers, father and son or the like. And an infinite number of times it befell that, two priests going with one cross for some one, three or four biers, borne by bearers, ranged themselves behind the latter, and whereas the priests thought to have but one dead man to bury, they had six or eight, and whiles more. Nor therefore were the dead honored with aught of tears or candles or funeral train; nay, the thing was come to such a pass that folk recked no more of men that died than nowadays they would of goats; whereby it very manifestly appeared that that which the natural course of things had not availed, by dint of small and infrequent harms, to teach the wise to endure with patience, the very greatness of their ills had brought even the simple to expect and make no account of. The consecrated ground sufficing not to the burial of the vast multitude of corpses aforesaid, which daily and well nigh hourly came carried in crowds to every church,—especially if it were sought to give each his own place, according to ancient usance,—there were made throughout the churchyards, after every other part was full, vast trenches, wherein those who came after were laid by the hundred and being heaped up therein by layers, as goods are stored aboard ship, were covered with a little earth, till such time as they reached the top of the trench.

Moreover,—not to go longer searching out and recalling every particular of our past miseries, as they befell throughout the city,—I say that, whilst so sinister a time prevailed in the latter, on no wise therefor

was the surrounding country spared, wherein, (letting be the castles, which in their littleness were like unto the city,) throughout the scattered villages and in the fields, the poor and miserable husbandmen and their families, without succor of physician or aid of servitor, died, not like men, but well nigh like beasts, by the ways or in their tillages or about the houses, indifferently by day and night. By reason whereof, growing lax like the townfolk in their manners and customs, they recked not of any thing or business of theirs; nay, all, as if they looked for death that very day, studied with all their wit, not to help to maturity the future produce of their cattle and their fields and the fruits of their own past toils, but to consume those which were ready to hand. Thus it came to pass that the oxen, the asses, the sheep, the goats, the swine, the fowls, nay, the very dogs, so faithful to mankind, being driven forth of their own houses, went straying at their pleasure about the fields, where the very corn was abandoned, without being cut, much less gathered in; and many, well nigh like reasonable creatures, after grazing all day, returned at night, glutted, to their houses, without the constraint of any herdsman.

To leave the country and return to the city, what more can be said save that such and so great was the cruelty of heaven (and in part, peradventure, that of men) that, between March and the following July, what with the virulence of that pestiferous sickness and the number of sick folk ill tended or forsaken in their need, through the fearfulness of those who were whole, it is believed for certain that upward of an hundred thousand human beings perished within the walls of the city of Florence, which, peradventure, before the advent of that death-dealing calamity, had not been accounted to hold so many? Alas, how many great palaces, how many goodly houses, how many noble mansions once full of families, of lords and of ladies, abode empty even to the meanest servant! How many memorable families, how many ample heritages, how many famous fortunes were seen to remain without lawful heir! How many valiant men, how many fair ladies, how many sprightly youths, whom, not others only, but Galen, Hippocrates or Aesculapius themselves, would have judged most hale, breakfasted in the morning with their kinsfolk, comrades and friends and that same night supped with their ancestors in the other world!

When Geoffrey Chaucer planned his *Canterbury Tales*, he borrowed Boccaccio's techniques as found in the *Decameron*. That is he made dramatic use of the merry crowds he saw on the Canterbury road and, indeed, his pilgrims (twenty-nine including Chaucer) are pledged each to tell two tales. Pollard<sup>27</sup> suggests that this pattern was original with Chaucer since there is no proof of his having seen the *Decameron*. But how Chaucer could have escaped knowledge of Boccaccio's *Tales* is hard to imagine especially since it is well known that he travelled to Italy in 1372 as one of three commissioners to treat with the Genoese and in 1373 visited Florence and Padua where he met Petrarch, a good friend of Boccaccio. Furthermore it is well known that Chaucer's Italian experience greatly improved the literary qualities of his poetry.

There are a few lines from the Pardoner's Tale found in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* that deal with the plague and they are so rich, not only in the character portrayals but also in their giving the reader a vivid description of the plague that I am especially pleased to reprint them. Skeat<sup>28</sup> believed that the pestilence referred to here by Chaucer was one of the great plagues that took place in the reign of Edward III. These were the plagues of 1348-1349; 1361-1362; 1369; 1375-1376. But since Chaucer probably has this story from an Italian source it is more probably the Black Death of 1348—the effects of which spread all over Europe (probably including Flanders in which the scene of the Pardoner's Tale is laid)—and which had been so well told, as we have seen, by Boccaccio.

*Chaucer's Description of the Plague  
from the Pardoner's Tale*<sup>29A</sup>

Thise ryotoures three, of whiche I telle,  
 Longe erst er pryme rong of any belle,  
 Were set hem in a taverne for to drinke;  
 And as they satte, they herde a belle clinke  
 Biforn a cors, was caried to his grave;  
 That oon of hem gan callen to his knave,  
 'Go bet,' quod he, 'and axe redily,  
 What cors is this that passeth heer forby;  
 And look that thou reporte his name wel.'  
 'Sir,' quod this boy, 'it nedeth never-a-del.  
 It was me told, er ye cam heer, two houres;  
 He was, pardee, an old felawe of youres;  
 And sodeynly he was y-slayn to-night,  
 For-dronke, as he sat on his bench upright;  
 Ther cam a privee thief, men clepeth Deeth,  
 That in this contree al the peple sleeth,  
 And with his spere he smoot his herte a-two,  
 And wente his wey with-outhe wordes mo.  
 He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence:  
 And, maister, er ye come in his presence,  
 Me thinketh that it were necessarie  
 For to be war of swich an adversarie:  
 Beth redy for to mete him evermore.  
 Thus taughte me my dame, I sey na-more.'  
 'By seinte Marie,' seyde this taverner,  
 'The child seith sooth, for he hath slayn this yeer,  
 Henne over a myle, with-in a greet village,  
 Both man and womman, child and hyne, and page.  
 I trowe his habitacioun be there;  
 To been avysed greet wisdom it were,  
 Er that he dide a man a dishonour.'  
 'Ye, goddes armes,' quad this ryotour,

'Is it swich peril with him for to mete?  
 I shal him seke by wey and eek by strete,  
 I make avow to goddes digne bones!  
 Herkneþ, felawes, we three been al ones;  
 Lat ech of us holde up his hond til other,  
 And ech of us bicomen otheres brother,  
 And we wol sleen this false traytour Deeth;  
 He shal be slayn, which that so many sleeth,  
 By goddes dignitee, er it be night.'

For the benefit of those of us who prefer Chaucer in modern English the following rendering by J. U. Nicolson<sup>29B</sup> is reprinted:

Now these three roisterers, whereof I tell,  
 Long before prime was rung by any bell,  
 Were sitting in a tavern for to drink;  
 And as they sat they heard a small bell clink  
 Before a corpse being carried to his grave;  
 Whereat one of them called unto his knave:  
 'Go run,' said he, 'and ask them civilly  
 What corpse it is that's just now passing by,  
 And see that you report the man's name well.'

'Sir,' said the boy, 'it needs not that they tell.  
 I learned it, ere you came here, full two hours;  
 He was, by gad, an old comrade of yours;  
 And he was slain, all suddenly, last night,  
 When drunk, as he sat on his bench upright;  
 An unseen thief, called Death, came stalking by,  
 Who hereabouts makes all the people die,  
 And with his spear he clove his heart in two  
 And went his way and made no more ado.  
 He's slain a thousand with this pestilence;  
 And, master, ere you come in his presence,  
 It seems to me to be right necessary  
 To be forewarned of such an adversary:  
 Be ready to meet him for evermore.  
 My mother taught me this, I say no more.'

'By holy Mary,' said the innkeeper,  
 'The boy speaks truth, for Death has slain, this year,  
 A mile or more hence, in a large village,  
 Both man and woman, child and hind and page.  
 I think his habitation must be there;  
 To be advised of him great wisdom 'twere,  
 Before he did a man some dishonour.'

'Yea, by God's arms!' exclaimed this roisterer,  
 'Is it such peril, then, this Death to meet?  
 I'll seek him in the road and in the street,  
 As I now vow to God's own noble bones!'

Hear, comrades, we're of one mind, as each owns;  
 Let each of us hold up his hand to other  
 And each of us become the other's brother,  
 And we three will go slay this traitor Death;  
 He shall be slain who's stopped so many a breath,  
 By God's great dignity, ere it be night.'

Not long after the outbreak of the Black Death (perhaps in 1357), the Chancellor of the University of Montpellier, Jean Jasje, wrote in French verse a tract on plague regimen and remedies which has an interesting history, some of the details of which are still uncertain. Although the plague had been brought to most of the civilized world by the end of that century, it was not until 1450 that it reached Sweden. Then for the next five years it devastated the population. It continued on and off for many years, and one of the most serious pandemics occurred during the years 1464 and 1465. This led a Swedish Bishop, Bengt Knutsson, to circulate a Latin prose version of Jasje's French poem. Whether this version was made by Knutsson, or whether Jasje himself had made it a century before, we do not know; but the early printed editions went under the name Canutus, a Latinized form of Knutsson's name. The same wave of the plague reached Paris and London. In 1485 another plague, "sudor Anglicus" or the English sweating sickness, made its appearance. It was probably this that provided the occasion for the printing, apparently in that year, of three editions of an English prose version made from the Latin prose version of Jasje's French poem. The title was: *A litil boke the whiche traytied and reherced many gode thinges necessaries for the . . . Pestilence.*<sup>30</sup> This was the first English book with a separate title page, and the first medical book printed in England.

During the fourteenth and later centuries many broadsides were published about the plague. Karl Sudhoff<sup>31</sup> made extensive studies of some of the "Pestblätter" and plague tractates. Of 281 plague tracts listed by Sudhoff, seventy-seven were written before 1400 and twenty or twenty-one within five days of the outbreak of the Black Death.

Many playwrights have found it profitable to use the dramatic possibilities of the plague. Sophocles probably was the first. In his tragedy, *King Oedipus*, the king unknowingly kills his father, Laius, and marries his own mother. After a prosperous reign a dreadful pestilence appears and since—as was still believed into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—the plague was caused by the anger of a God over the misdeeds of man, Oedipus attempts to find and punish the murderer of Laius,<sup>32</sup> not knowing that he himself is this man.

Thomas Nashe (1567-1601) the English satirist also introduces the plague in his play *Summers Last Will and Testament*. According to Robert McKerrow<sup>33</sup> the year of writing and presumably of the first performance of the play was 1592.



This is the play where Summer<sup>34</sup> realizes his approaching death and asks Wil Summer to

Sing me some dolefull ditty to the Lute,  
That may complaine my neere approaching death.

And Wil Summer sings:

Adieu, farewell earths blisse,  
This world uncertain is,  
Fond are lifes lustfull joyes,  
Death proves them all but toyes,  
None from his darts can flye;  
I am sick, I must dye:  
Lord, have mercy on us.

Rich men, trust not in wealthe,  
Gold can not buy you health;  
Phisick himselfe must fade—  
All things to end are made,  
*The plague full swift goes bye;*  
I am sick, I must dye:  
Lord, have mercy on us.

Beauty is but a floure,  
Which wrinckles will devoure,  
Brightnesse falls from the ayre,  
Queenes have died yong and faire,  
Dust hath closde Helens eye.  
I am sick, I must dye:  
Lord, have mercy on us.

Ben Jonson<sup>35</sup> also made use of the plague in his famous play, *The Alchemist*. This was written in 1610, a severe plague year, and the action of the play is timed around the plague.

Shakespeare used the language of the plague on many occasions in his plays but did not seem to use it in the development of any of his plots. A good example of his metaphorical use of the plague is found in *King Lear* (Act II, Scene 4, Line 227) in which Lear says to Goneril:

I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad:  
I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell.  
We'll no more meet, no more see one another;  
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter;  
Or rather a disease that's in my flesh,  
Which I must needs call mine: thou art a boil,  
A plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle,  
In my corrupted blood.

Although the literature of the Great Plague of London of 1665 and

the Marseilles epidemic of 1720, the pandemics that brought the cycles of the Black Death to a close, is voluminous, the popularization of these epidemics was the work of Daniel Defoe, and of all the published descriptions those of Defoe are still best remembered. Daniel Defoe was a boy of six during the London epidemic and it is doubtful that much he saw as an eyewitness was remembered. But by the time of the Marseilles epidemic of 1720, he was a mature writer who had recently (1719) penned *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. *Robinson Crusoe* was Defoe's great work and brought him everlasting fame. He found a comparable theme in the Plague. Here it was not the adventures, trials and tribulations, if you will, of a shipwrecked individual but the misfortunes of a great city visited by a dreadful calamity for although he wrote of the great plague of London (1665) it was the Marseilles Plague of 1720-21 that was fresh in his mind. Defoe, also, may have had altruistic motives; he wanted to prepare the people against another possible visitation of the plague in London, the plague of London of 1665 having been so disastrous. During the Marseilles epidemic he had kept a diary which has been printed in some editions of his works. In his *Journal of the Plague Year*<sup>36</sup> and in his *Due Preparations for the Plague*<sup>37</sup> alike, he had both epidemics in mind.

Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year* is vivid and realistic. Richard Mead,<sup>38</sup> the distinguished English physician, quoted from Defoe's work in his account of the plague and thus established its authenticity. The simplicity of Defoe's style makes for clear descriptions and his sense of detail makes for realism.

The sources of Defoe's description have been carefully studied.<sup>39</sup> The three chief printed sources were (1) *London's Dreadful Visitation*, 1665, which gave him the Bills of Mortality, (2) Nathaniel Hodges's *Loimologia*, translated by Dr. Quincy in 1720, which gave him the physician's viewpoint, and (3) the Rev. Thomas Vincent's *God's Terrible Voice in the City*, 1667, which supplied him with the hellfire and brimstone, the popular viewpoint.

As was Defoe's custom, he put the story in the first person, a most convincing method, and in this book the reader learns about the plague from the conversations and thoughts of a saddler.

Defoe's alluding to the city of London as a personality may be compared to the modern sociological ecologic viewpoint.

This comes early in the *Journal*.<sup>40</sup>

The face of London was now indeed strangely altered, I mean the whole mass of buildings, city, liberties, suburbs, Westminster, Southwark, and altogether; for as to the particular part called the city, or within the walls, that was not yet much infected. But in the whole the face of things, I say, was much altered; sorrow and sadness sat upon every face; and though some

parts were not yet overwhelmed, yet all looked deeply concerned; and as we saw it apparently coming on, so everyone looked on himself and his family as in the utmost danger . . . London might well be said to be all in tears. . . .

Though many quacks were to die from the plague even while dispensing their many remedies, they did much to make the most of the plague, and Defoe warns the public against them:

It is incredible, and scarce to be imagined, how the posts of houses and corners of streets were plastered over with doctors' bills and papers of ignorant fellows, quacking and tampering in physic, and inviting the people to come to them for remedies, which was generally set off with such flourishes as these, viz.:

"Infallible preventive pills against the plague." "Never-failing preservatives against the infection." "Sovereign cordials against the corruption of the air." "Exact regulations for the conduct of the body in case of an infection." "Anti-pestilential pills." "Incomparable drink against the plague, never found out before." etc.<sup>41</sup>

Besides writing about the plague in the newspapers and his *Journal of the Plague Year*, Defoe also published in 1722 a work entitled *Due Preparations for the Plague*. It is generally assumed that this account followed his *Journal* since by implication its title sounds like a sequel and in some ways it reads as a continuation to his *Journal*. On the whole it is not as finished as the *Journal*, but there is a story in *Due Preparations* that is Defoe at his best. This is his account of a family who in order to quarantine themselves from any possible infection lived shut up in their house without going outside for a period of five and a half months during the time the plague was at its worst in London (July 14 to the first of December, 1665). This family consisted of husband, wife, three sons and two daughters, and two maid servants and an apprentice.

As part of the preparations for this voluntary quarantine the head of the house arranged for the storing of plenty of provisions. After this had been done Defoe tells of the many precautions taken against any possible contamination. Typical is his account of the purification of letters after being carried to his residence by the postman:<sup>42</sup>

His letters were brought by the postman, or letter-carrier, to his porter, when he caused the porter to smoke them with brimstone and with gunpowder, then open them, and to sprinkle them with vinegar; then he had them drawn up by the pulley, then smoked again with strong perfumes, and, taking them with a pair of hair gloves, the hair outermost, he read them with a large reading-glass which read at a great distance, and, as soon as they were read, burned them in the fire; and at last, the distemper raging more and more, he forbid his friends writing to him at all.

It was probably unknown to Defoe that rats had anything to do with

the spreading of the plague. Yet the master of the house "caused all the rats and mice in his house to be effectually poisoned and destroyed."<sup>43</sup>

Chaucer, as we have seen, made effective use of the plague bell and Defoe also makes use of it to achieve dramatic effect.<sup>44</sup>

By this time they heard a bell go ringing nightly along the streets, but they knew not what it meant, it not being like the sound of the ordinary bellman; and though they heard a voice with the bell, yet as it did not go at first by their door, so they could not distinguish what it was they said; and as their porter did not sit at their door in the night as he did in the day, they could not inquire; but at length their porter informed them that the number of people that died was so great in the outparts that it was impossible to bury them in form or to provide coffins for them, nobody daring to come into the infected houses; and that therefore the Lord Mayor and Aldermen had ordered carts to go about with a bellman to carry away the dead bodies; that this had been done in the parishes of Holborn and St. Sepulchre, Cripplegate, and other large parishes, above a fortnight, and that they began now to come into the city, and that in particular to the parish of St. Olave, Silver Street, which was very sickly, and that the carts were come thither the night before.

Again:<sup>45</sup>

It was observable now that whereas they found, as is said above, that it was very melancholy at first to hear so many knells going continually, so on a sudden they now observed that there was not one knell to be heard; the reason, as his new porter told him, was that the number of those that died was so great, that they had forbid the bells ringing for anybody, and people were all fetched away by the carts, rich as well as poor.

This then has been an excursion into a few of the literary descriptions of the plague. It is by no means a complete review, but is merely suggestive of the power of the talented storyteller in dealing with many situations caused by the pestilential Black Death. The Plague brought with it the downfall of feudal Europe and from the experiences of the Black Death the physicians developed the theory of contagion.

In 1485, according to Hecker,<sup>46</sup> a special council of health was established at Venice which tried to prevent the plague from entering Venice from Milan. This council finally had to be granted the right of life and death over those who violated their regulations to insure their success. In 1485, also, the first lazarettos were established upon islands some distance from the city. These "detaining" stations were used to house strangers coming from places where existence of plague was suspected. In cases occurring in the city the sick and his family were sent to the "Old Lazaretto." When cured the patient and family were transferred to the "New Lazaretto" on another island and detained *forty* days, the original meaning of "quarantine." Even Leonardo<sup>47</sup> contributed ideas to the eradication of the plague of 1484-86. He proposed to Lodovico,

the ruler of Milan, the erection of new towns so that "you will distribute the mass of humanity, who live crowded together like herds of goats, filling the air with stench and spreading the seeds of plague and death."

The bubonic plague is very much a problem today even though its etiology and prophylaxis are well known. Sylvatic (squirrel) plague is spreading through the United States, and in Russia and South Africa there is much concern about the spread of the disease among rodents. Perhaps a rereading of the classic literary descriptions of the plague would help to arouse public support for the necessary preventive measures.

## REFERENCES

1. THUCYDIDES. "The Pestilence of Athens" (430 B.C.) In: Brock, A. J.: *Greek Medicine*, being extracts illustrative of medical writers from Hippocrates to Galen. New York, Dutton, 1929, pp. 98-102.
2. BROCK (op. cit., p. 97).
3. MAJOR, RALPH H.: *Fatal Partners, War and Disease*. Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1941, p. 10.
4. LUCRETIVUS, quoted in Crawford, Raymond: *Plague and Pestilence in Literature and Art*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1914, p. 60.
5. [ROYAL] COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS. *Certain necessary directions as well for the cure of the plague as for preventing the infection: with many easie medicines of small charge, very profitable to his majesties subjects. Set down by the College of Physicians, by the Kings majesties special command*. London, John Bill and Christopher Barker, 1665. Pp. 5-6.
6. TINTORETTO. [Bubonic Plague]. Venezia—Particolare di S. Rocco che risana gli appestati—Chiesa di S. Rocco.
7. PAYNE, J. F.: Plague (in part), *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, ed. 11 (1910-11).
8. RUFUS OF EPHEBUS. In: Crawford, op. cit., p. 76.
9. PROCOPIUS. In: Crawford, op. cit., pp. 77-81.
10. CREIGHTON, CHARLES: *A History of Epidemics in Britain from A.D. 664 to the Extinction of Plague*. Cambridge, At the University Press, 1891, p. 1.
11. MAYCOCK, A. L.: "A Note on the Black Death." In: *The Nineteenth Century and After*. 97: 456-464 (March) 1925.
12. GARRISON, F. H.: *An Introduction to the History of Medicine . . .* ed. 4. Philadelphia, Saunders, 1929, pp. 186-187.
13. CASTIGLIONI, ARTURO: *A History of Medicine*. Tr. and ed. by E. B. Krumbhaar. New York, Knopf, 1941. p. 355.
14. ———: *Italian Medicine*. . . . Tr. by E. B. Krumbhaar. New York, Hoeber, 1932. p. 30.
15. TOBEY, J. A.: *Riders of the Plagues*. . . . New York, Scribner's, 1930, pp. 13-14.
16. NOHL, JOHANNES: *The Black Death, a Chronicle of the Plague*. . . . New York, Harper and Brothers, 1927, p. 2.
17. STRONG, R. P.: *Sitt's Diagnosis, Prevention and Treatment of Tropical Diseases*. ed. 6. Philadelphia, Blakiston, c1942, v. 1, p. 651.
18. FRACASTORIUS, HIERONYMUS: *De Contagione et contagiosis morbis*. . . . (1546). Tr. and notes by Wilmer Cave Wright. New York, Putnam's, 1930, p. 87.
19. GUY DE CHAULIAC: *Grand Chirurgie*. "Description of the Plague." Tr. by Anna M. Campbell. Reprinted from Campbell, *The Black Death and Men of Learning*, pp. 2-3, 1931, by permission of Columbia University Press.
20. MAJOR, RALPH H.: *Classic Descriptions of Disease*. . . . ed. 2. Springfield, Ill., Charles C Thomas, 1939, pp. 90-91.
21. POE, E. A.: "The Masque of the Red Death." In: *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe*. Ed. by John H. Ingram. London, A. & C. Black, n.d. v. 1, pp. 251-257.
22. MARQUAND, J. P.: *The Late George Apley, a novel in the form of a memoir*. . . . New York, The Modern Library, 1940, p. III.

23. BOCCACCIO. Quoted by Hauvette, H.: "Quelle était la Maladie de Boccace?" *La Chronique Médicale*. 21: 376-378 (June 15) 1914.
24. BRANCOUR, RENÉ: "Quelle était la Maladie de Boccace?" *La Chronique Médicale*. 21: 191 (March 15) 1914.
25. BERCHON. "Quelle était la Maladie de Boccace?" *La Chronique Médicale*. 21: 378-380 (June 15) 1914.
26. BOCCACCIO. *The Decameron of Boccaccio*. London, The Bibliophilist Society, n.d., pp. 1-8 (Introduction to the tales).
27. POLLARD, A. W.: Chaucer. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Ed. 11.
28. SKEAT, W. W., in: Chaucer, Geoffrey: *The Complete Works*. . . . Ed. by Walter W. Skeat. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1900, v. 5, p. 286.
29. CHAUCER, GEOFFREY: A. "The Pardoner's Tale." In: *The Complete Works*. . . . Ed. 2. Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1900. v. 4, pp. 310-311. B. *Canterbury Tales*, rendered into Modern English by J. U. Nicolson. With Illustrations by Rockwell Kent, and an introduction by Gordon Hall Gerould. Garden City, N.Y., Garden City Publishing Co., Inc., c1934 by Covici Friede, Inc., pp. 302-303, "The Pardoner's Tale." Reprinted by permission of Crown Publishers, New York City.
30. *A litil boke the whiche traytied and reberced many gode thinges necessaries for the . . . pestilence . . . made by the . . . Bissshop of Arusiens . . .* [London], [1485?] Reproduced in facsimile from the copy in the John Rylands Library. With an introduction by Guthrie Vine, M.A. Manchester, The University Press, 1910. xxxvi, facsimile 9 leaves.
31. SUDHOFF, KARL: *Pestschriften aus den ersten 150 Jahren nach der Epidemie des schwarzen Todes*. Arch. Gesch. Med. 2-17: various paginations, 1909-25.
32. POLAND, F. and others: *The Culture of Ancient Greece*. . . . London, Harrap & Co., 1926, p. 46.
33. NASHE, THOMAS: *The Works of Thomas Nashe*. Ed. from the original texts by Ronald B. McKerrow. London, A. H. Bullen, 1908, v. 4: Notes, p. 417.
34. Op. cit., v. 3, pp. 227-295, "Summers Last Will and Testament."
35. JONSON, BEN: "The Alchemist." (1612). In: *Elizabethan Plays*, written by Shakespeare's friends, colleagues, rivals, and successors. . . . Ed. by Hazelton Spencer. Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1933, pp. 355-409.
36. [DEFOE, DANIEL]: *A Journal of The Plague Year written by a Citizen who continued all the while in London* (1722). New York, Dutton (Everyman's Library Edition). xv, 303 pp.
37. ———: "Due Preparations for the Plague as Well for Soul as Body." (1722). In: *The Works of Daniel Defoe*. . . . Philadelphia, John D. Morris, 1903, v. 8.
38. MEAD, RICHARD: *A Discourse on the Plague*. Ed. 9. London, A. Millar, 1744, p. 106.
39. NICHOLSON, WATSON: *The Historical Sources of Defoe's Journal of the Plague Year*. . . . Boston, The Stratford Co., 1919. 182 pp.
40. [DEFOE, DANIEL]: *A Journal of the Plague Year written by a Citizen who continued all the while in London* (1722). New York, Dutton (Everyman's Library Edition) p. 18.
41. Ibid., p. 34.
42. [DEFOE, DANIEL]: "Due Preparations for the Plague as Well for Soul as Body." (1722). In: *The Works of Daniel Defoe*. . . . Philadelphia, John D. Morris, 1903. v. 8, p. 64.
43. Ibid., p. 53.
44. Ibid., p. 60.
45. Ibid., p. 66.
46. HECKER, J. F. C.: *The Epidemics of the Middle Ages*. . . . Tr. by B. G. Babington. London, The Sydenham Society, 1844, pp. 64-65.
47. Vallentin, Antonina: *Leonardo da Vinci*. . . . New York, The Viking Press, 1938, pp. 127-128.