

category in which Cauchi's case is placed? Is it quite beyond dispute that plague possesses a specific virus sufficing for its extension independently of local and other conditions? Where does the line begin that separates plague from ordinary anthrax and fever? This claim for plague of a distinct and separate poison, while fevers in the same harbour and in the whole population afford indications of a wide spread cause, is simply to assume a distinction before a difference has been proved to exist. I believe the benign fever among the troops, and anthrax in the civil population are the modified results, under different conditions, of the same general cause, though the features of the disease be varied. The case of Cauchi in the Lazaretto has been differently interpreted, and apparently on no better grounds. Does plague admit of no such modifications? Let us see. In the seventy-seven cases on board the twelve plague ships, we find thirty-seven with bubo, five with carbuncle, five with petechiæ, four with tumour, and four with carbuncle and petechiæ, four with bubo and petechiæ, and one with bubo and carbuncle, while no less than seventeen cases present no external marks whatever. What symptoms did these cases show different from ordinary fever? None; except in their being preceded or associated with cases having outward disease, and therefore called plague.

Another point is, that in the "Acheron" (1840) the cases of plague showed themselves seven days after the ship's departure from Alexandria, on the day of arrival in Malta, and in the "Mabruca" (1841) only one suspicious case occurred, nine days after leaving; whereas twelve cases, exclusive of Cauchi's, took place, an interval of from eighteen to thirty days having intervened after communication with Alexandria; showing that the port of arrival, rather than that of departure, is to be suspected.

It appears that the cabin-boy in the "Acheron" had gone into the country at Alexandria with some Arabs; and it is not improbable that the steward had also been on shore.

The only other point of interest connected with these ships is, that they all arrived between the 22d of February and the 8th of July, corroborating general experience, how much the disease is dependant on season. It is also worthy of remark, that all, except the Russian frigate "Castor," had left places suffering from the plague.

From the foregoing I would draw the following deductions:—

1st. That there is no evidence to prove, or even to render it probable, that the plague was introduced either into Malta in 1813 or into Gozo in 1814 by importation.

2d. That there is every reason to believe that the plague existed in Malta at the time of the arrival of the ship supposed

to have introduced the disease; and that in Gozo the first case (a stranger) contracted the disease from local causes, which, enhanced by quarantine, produced it in others.

3d. That the lower orders, and those occupying the lowest, most crowded, and worst ventilated dwellings, furnished the great majority of cases; which decreased in proportion with improvement in these respects.

4th. That as this discriminative preference of the disease to attack certain classes, living in certain localities, never obtains to the same extent with diseases arising from a specific contagion, it is more than probable that the causes engaged in the generation of the plague are not constant, but variable and accidental; its initial cause, the peculiar atmospheric constitution having no power to develop the disease, unassisted by season and local conditions.

5th. That the transmissibility of plague from person to person out of the noxious atmosphere in which it originated—the only certain test of such a power—has not been proved by the four instances, during thirty-eight years, in which it is alleged to have been communicated to persons employed by the Quarantine Department of Malta, carbuncular affections being endemic among the population of this island.

6th. That quarantine restrictions enforced by the penalties of *corporal punishment* and *death*, and seconded by the greatest dread of contact with suspected persons or things, among the panic-struck populations of Malta and Gozo, utterly failed to arrest the progress of plague; on the contrary, where these restrictions were carried to their utmost limits by an absolute power, there the disease persisted longest, and the mortality was greatest.

(Signed)

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Malta, 12th of Oct. 1852.

To the General Board of Health.