THE PLAGUE AT MARSEILLES.

he 15th of March, 1720, was a gay and joyous day in the Queen City of the Mediterranean, Marseilles, which even then was one of the finest places in the Old World, and which to-day is dazzling in the splendor of its gorgeous buildings, its magnificent situation and its sunny sky.

On that day a great event occurred in the commercial history of Marseilles.

The first ship from Levant, laden with precious cachemire wool, had arrived and it was to be woven at Marseilles, whose great ambition was to eclipse the spinneries of Lyons and Rouen.

The sailors of the ship were treated to a collation at the public expense, and until a late hour of the night crowds singing joyous ditties were passing through the principal streets of the city.

Alas! Had the people of Marseilles known that dreadful calamities the woolship had carried to them!

It had sailed from Symrna, and at Smyrna that terrible scourge of former ages the plague, was raging.

Disinfecting processes at that time were never resorted to, and the narrow streets of Marseilles, near the harbor, were kept in a very filthy condition.

Next day the wool-ship was unloaded, and two hours later most of the workmen engaged on the dock near it were writhing in the agonies of the plague.

A cry of horror resounded throughout the whole city when the dread news became generally known. The stores were shut up and the people locked themselves ni their dwellings. Some of the wealthier residents hurriedly left the city, and departed for the pine-clad hills North of Marseilles, where the air was bracing and salubrious.

But the vast majority of the people stayed. Stayed to die—to die in a manner too horrible to imagine.

It was at setting in of dusk that a well dressed and very handsome young man entered a narrow street in the northern part of the city. He stood still in front of a low house, the window shutters of which were tightly closed. From his pocket he drew a silver whistle, and blew three shrill notes from it.

A few minutes later the front door of the house was cautiously opened.

In the dim twilight the young man recognized a frail female form, dressed in a flowing white wrapper. He rushed toward her, and clasped her in his arms exclaimed, rapturously:

"Sephronia!"

"Antoine!"

For a minute they remained locked in a fervent embrace. Then she drew him gently into a hallway. They exchanged many tender caresses.

At last she ushered him into a cozily-furnished back room, lighted by a hanging lamp, which shed a dim light over the room. They sat down on a low divan.

She was a girlish beauty of the true Eastern style. graceful as a fawn, perhaps eighteen years old, perhaps a year or two younger, with hair raven black, a complexion faultlessly pure, magnificent eyes and a mouth as charming as that of the Venus of Milo.

The young man took her hand, and gazed lovingly into her eyes.

"Sephronia," he said at last, "I have come to hear your decision."

A cloud at once darkened the brow of the lovely girl,

"Antoine de Couras," she said, pressing her small hand against her heart, "you have been the most generous of men to me. You have surrounded me with luxuries. You love me—I love you with all my heart. But—"

"But!" he exclaimed impatiently.

"But, Antoine, dearest Antoine, I cannot marry you!"

He sprang to his feet, uttering a wild imprecation.

"Why, Sephronia, why?" he cried, stamping his foot on the ground.

"Listen to me, Antoine," she said calmly. "What am I in the eyes of the world but a wretched outcast? The daughter of a woman who was broken on the wheel as a witch." Her boson heaved convulsively as she uttered these words.

"Poor mother!" she sighed. "She a witch because she cured some sick people whom the stupid physicians of Marseilles had given up."

"It was an abdominable outrage!" murmured M. D. Couras.

"It was Antoine. My life was in danger. You saved me, and concealed me here! And then think of who you are. The only son of a wealthy counselor to the Parliament. Your father would disown you."

"I have a modest fortune in my own right," interpesed Antoine.

"A modest fortune!" she exclaimed almost scoonfully. "How happy you, the petted child opulence, would be with a slender income?"

"I would be with you. But tell me, Sephronia, is your decision irrevocable?"

She hesitated. Then she passionately drew him to her heart.

"No! no!" she cried. "Only give me a week's time. I have a strange forebodings that startling events are going to happen."

"One startling event has already happened," said M. De Couras. "The plague has broken out to-day in Marseilles."

"The plague!" she echoed, with distended eyes.

"Yes; everybody is alarmed."

"And well they may be," she said, solemnly. "Few cures can be affected where the plague appears in its most malignant form."

"Many people have died this afternoon, Sephronia."

Then God have mercy upon Marseilles! You must forthwith leave the city, Antoine!"

He laughed.

"Why! I am not afraid," he said.

"Do not laugh, Antoine; I was born and brought up in Aleppo. I and my whole family would have been swept away by the plague if my father, who was a very learned man, had not possed an infallible remedy for the epidemic."

"Have you got that remedy?" Antoine asked, ergerly.

"I have." she replied.

"Why, then, do not you give it to the authorities, Sephronia?"

"And be broken on the wheel as a witch!" she exclaimed bitterly. "No! no! And what good would it do? They would never apply it."

"I must go, then, Sephronia," he said "I shall come back in a week and get your final answer."

"Stay a minute; I shall give you some f my father's plague arcanum."

She went into an adjoining room nnd returned soon afterward with a large crystal bottle. The other vial she filled with an oily substance, a soft salve, which she took with an ivory spoon from the jar.

"If you should get the plague," she said, "rub your body with this salve, and drink a few drops of the fluid. You will speedily get well."

They parted most tenderly, and Antoine left the house.

He had passed on but a few steps when he was attacked by two desperate fellows who knocked him senseless.

Is is not curious that, when all good people shut themselves up in their homes in order to escape the pestilence, desperate criminals prowl about fearlessly, bent on murder and robbery?

They rifled the pockets of the inanimate young man. They found in them a well-filled purse and two vials. The latter they flung away contemptuously. They then hurried away.

M. DeCouras awoke ten minutes later. The night was very dark, but he groped his way to a thoroughfare and speedily reached his father's palatial mansion.

There terrible news awaited him—his father, his mother, and his two lovely sisters had been attacked by the plague.

All their cowardly servants had fled from the house.

Antoine bethought himself of the two vials Sephronia had given him. He was bitterly disappointed when he found that they were gone.

Suddenly he felt that his own brain began to reel, and he sank senseless to the floor.

He, too, had the plague!

Twenty-four hours later he rewoke to consciousness. At his bedside sat Sephronia.

"I heard that you and your whole family were down with the plague; so I came to your house. Your parents and your sisters were dying. You will live!"

He did recover, and a week later was able to be about. He persuaded Sephronia to let him have a quantity of the panacea.

She remained at the house while he went into the streets, and he effected numerous cures.

Every body was in despair. The physicans did not know any thing about the plague. A stupid rumor had been circulated that the wells had been poisoned. So people refused to drink water. The good Bishop of the diocese, Monseigneur De Benzunoc made superhuman efforts to relieve the suffering, but all to no purpose. There were no hearses, no coffins. Vast numbers of corpses were piled up in the streets. In front of one of these ghastly piles Antoine De Couras one day met the Bishop. The noble prelate's courage was evidently giving way.

Antoine saw at once that the epidemic had singled him out as a fresh victim. The young man poured a few drops of the elixir down the Bishop's throat.

"It revives me," said Monseigneur De Benzunoc, heaving a deep sigh.

"Let me rub your hands and your face with this ointment, Monseigneur. It will save your precious life."

"A thousand thanks, young man! How can I reward you?"

"Will you stay here a minute, Monseigneur, I will be back presently."

In a few minutes Antoine returned with the blushing Sephronia.

"Marry us Monseigneur! Let that be my reward."

"And they were married in front of all those dreadful corpses!

The corpses were finally pushed into the sea by the galley-slaves that had been liberated for that purpose.

Such an appalling calamity never befell a civilized city in modern times.

From Acute to Chronic

Is an easy stage in cases of dyspepsia. A slight attack of indigestion, especially when there is a predisposition to digestive weakness of the stomach, must speedily culminate in the more obstinate form of the disease. It is well, therefore, to adopt preventive measures early. Although Hostetter's Stomach Bitters overcomes, if persisted in, in cases of dyspepsia of long standing, it is obviously the part of wisdom to use it ere the malady assumes a chronic phase. This is particularly true, because as dyspepsia advances, it engenders other bodily evils, such as disorder of the liver, coustipation or undue loosenness of the bowels, nervous disorders, hypochondria, sleeplessness. These maladies are both prevented and remedied by the Bitters, but how much better to check them in their outset with the great alterative, than to wait until they established a firmer foothold in the system. Surely the advisability of this must be apparent.

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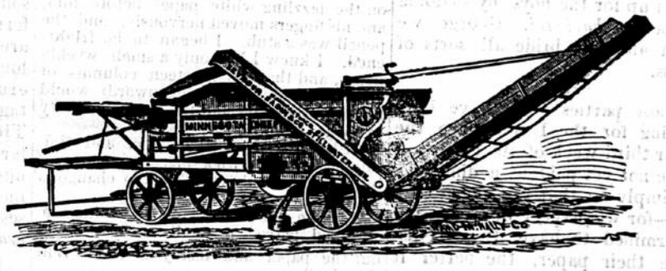

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