

**THE BLACK DEATH
IN THE FOURTEENTH
CENTURY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649074945

The Black Death in the Fourteenth Century by I. F. C. Hecker

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

I. F. C. HECKER

**THE BLACK DEATH
IN THE FOURTEENTH
CENTURY**

THE
BLACK DEATH
IN THE
FOURTEENTH CENTURY,

FROM THE GERMAN OF

I. F. C. HECKER, M. D.

PROFESSOR AT FREDERICK WILLIAM'S UNIVERSITY AT BERLIN, AND MEMBER
OF VARIOUS LEARNED SOCIETIES IN BERLIN, BONN, COPENHAGEN,
ERLANGEN, HANAU, LONDON, LYONS, METZ, NAPLES, NEW YORK,
PHILADELPHIA AND ZURICH.

TRANSLATED BY

B. G. BABINGTON, M. D.

LONDON:
A. SCHLOSS, FOREIGN BOOKSELLER,
109, STRAND.

1833.

CONTENTS.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE	i
PREFACE	ix
CHAPTER I.—General Observations	1
CHAPTER II.—The Disease	4
CHAPTER III.—Causes—Spread	28
CHAPTER IV.—Mortality	54
CHAPTER V.—Moral Effects	82
CHAPTER VI.—Physicians	128
APPENDIX —	
I.—The Ancient Song of the Flagellants	172
II.—Trial of the Jews ac- cused of poisoning the Wells	181
III.—Extracts from “A Boke or Counseill against the Sweate or Swea- tyng Sicknesse”	191

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

IN reading Dr. Hecker's account of the Black Death which destroyed so large a portion of the human race in the fourteenth century, I was struck, not only with the peculiarity of the Author's views, but also with the interesting nature of the facts which he has collected. Some of these have never before been made generally known, while others have passed out of mind, being effaced from our memories by subsequent events of a similar kind, which, though really of less magnitude and importance, have, in the perspective of time, appeared greater, because they have occurred nearer to our own days.

Dreadful as was the pestilence here described, and in few countries more so than in England, our modern historians only slightly allude to its visitation:—Hume

deems a single paragraph sufficient to devote to its notice, and Henry and Rapin are equally brief.

It may not then be unacceptable to the medical, or even to the general reader, to receive an authentic and somewhat detailed account of one of the greatest natural calamities that ever afflicted the human race.

My chief motive, however, for translating this small work, and at this particular period, has been a desire that, in the study of the causes which have produced and propagated general pestilences, and of the moral effects by which they have been followed, the most enlarged views should be taken. The contagionist and the anti-contagionist may each find ample support for his belief in particular cases; but in the construction of a theory sufficiently comprehensive to explain throughout the origin and dissemination of universal disease, we shall not only perceive the insufficiency of either doctrine, taken singly, but after admitting the combined influence of both,

shall even then find our views too narrow, and be compelled, in our endeavours to explain the facts, to acknowledge the existence of unknown powers, wholly unconnected either with communication by contact or atmospheric contamination.

I by no means wish it to be understood, that I have adopted the author's views respecting astral and telluric influences, the former of which, at least, I had supposed to have been, with alchemy and magic, long since consigned to oblivion; much less am I prepared to accede to his notion, or rather an ancient notion derived from the East and revived by him, of an organic life in the system of the universe. We are constantly furnished with proofs, that that which affects life is not itself alive; and whether we look to the earth for exhalations, to the air for electrical phenomena, to the heavenly bodies for an influence over our planet, or to all these causes combined, for the formation of some unknown principle noxious to animal existence, still, if we found our