

prominent growth of the original tubes. For this reason it appears probable that the original colonies were impure, containing both the Loeffler colonies and some other form, which latter was subsequently eliminated in passing through the serum culture.

In cases which were examined at an early stage the Loeffler bacilli were found almost in pure culture. In most cases the staphylococcus aureus was found, but it was usually scanty. The colonies closely resemble those of the Loeffler bacilli for the first day, but can be distinguished at the end of forty-eight hours. Streptococci were seldom met with, and then only in isolated colonies, the scarcity of this organism being contrary to what I had been led to expect from a study of the literature. In the anomalous or doubtful cases, on the other hand, either staphylococcus and streptococcus, or both together, were present abundantly in all instances. The influence of these pyogenic bacteria on the course of true diphtheria is a point greatly needing investigation.

In cases examined during the period when the membrane had begun to soften—that is to say, after the third day in ordinary mild cases—the falling off in the number of diphtheria bacilli was most marked. This did not seem to be due here to the antagonistic action of saprophytic bacteria, as has been commonly assumed, since, as a rule, the cultures made in late stages in cases going on to recovery remained perfectly sterile, except for the few scattered colonies of Loeffler bacilli. This result I attribute to the inhibitory action of the local disinfectant applications—in most of the cases a spray of peroxide of hydrogen was employed—but I have made no experiments to determine this point.

A matter of considerable interest is the question whether this method of examination will ever come into general use, and if such be the case, what class of practitioners could carry it out to the best advantage. This point is considered by Prof. Welch of Baltimore in an address delivered before the ninety-third annual session of the Medical and Chirurgical State Faculty of Maryland in April, 1891 (*Medical News*, May 16, 1891). In