

of the well person with some intermediate object, or with some part of the body of the sick one, on which are present the germs causing the disease in question. If there are germs of syphilis in the mouth, contact with the mouth or with objects containing secretions from the mouth will give the disease to a healthy person. The transmission of disease by intermediate objects is dependent upon the length of time and the conditions under which the germ in question can live outside of the body. Under the germ is carried in droplets of saliva, as sometimes happens in certain diseases, there is no vague blowing about of the poisonous agent in various ways from place to place. The contact is physical, the infection by actual transfer of germs.

*Individual Resistance, Peculiarities of the Germs.*—A third factor enters into the transmission of infections, in addition to the infected body and the intermediate article carrying the germs. This is the so-called resistance of the well person—his ability to fight off germs that try to get a foothold on him. While this is a large factor in protecting well persons from certain diseases, it plays a little understood but probably very important role in protecting healthy persons from syphilis, gonorrhœa, and chancre. To these diseases practically everybody seems to be susceptible—at least everybody can acquire them, although in some the infection may run a milder course than in others. The great factor which, in the last analysis, protects humanity from the practically universal spread of syphilis and gonorrhœa is not the virtue and chastity of some as distinguished from the viciousness of others, although, to be sure, foolhardy exposure increases the risk of acquiring these as much as any other infection—it is essentially the biological characteristics of the germs themselves that save us. Syphilis and gonorrhœa are genital diseases, but not because some far-seeing power set them as watch-dogs at the gate of righteousness. They are transmitted by sexual intercourse and by intimate contacts between person and person (not necessarily man and woman) because, like the homely potato, the germs of these diseases need a certain soil on which to grow. These germs are vegetables, so to speak, and if the conditions can be made unfavourable for them at the spot on which they are planted, no amount of vice and immorality connected with the planting can persuade them to grow. Correspondingly, innocence, virtue and ignorance have no power to retard their growth upon the parts of the body where they find conditions favourable. The absence of air in the genital tract of a saint is as favourable to the growth of the germ of syphilis as in that of a sinner. It makes not an iota of difference whether the cause is just or unjust, the victim innocent or besmirched. No one would go so far as to say that collateral habits of drunkenness, uncleanness and bad living such as are prevalent among the vicious, do not favour infection with these as with all other contagious diseases. But there is no connection so direct as to justify the title of venereal as applied to any disease to mark it as a punishment for sin.

*Intimate Contact and Moisture Necessary.*—For the transmission of syphilis and gonorrhœa in general, intimate contacts between moist surfaces are essential. Intimate contact between the male and female genitalia, however, is in no wise essential. A syphilitic chancre on the cheek from an infected razor cut, or gonorrhœa in infants from contact with an infected