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ABSTRACT OF THE LUMLEIAN
LECTURES ON ENTERIC
FEVER,

*Delivered at the Royal College of Physicians,
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In considering this subject, I propose first of all to search for its origin, then to trace its association and relationship with other diseases in further illustration of its origin, and lastly to call attention to the treatment of the disease, the materials serving for this purpose being the cases which have come under my care in St. Thomas's Hospital during the last ten years and those whose histories are given in the Medical Reports of the War of the Rebellion of the United States of America. In considering the etiology of enteric fever, I shall not confine my enquiries to a narrow field, but shall be prepared to find a variety of influences accidentally combining to produce the same result—the development of enteric inflammation. We are all assured that filthy air and filthy food or drink are producers of enteric fever, and inferentially we may go a step further and concede that filth generated within will also produce it. Science, however, is not satisfied with generalities, but seeks to know the immediate cause, to isolate the simple factors, and then to ascertain how these can set up a specific morbid action; but the more the view is narrowed the greater do the difficulties become. Granted, for example, water which has filtered through cesspools

a little higher up the valley is the cause of an outbreak of enteric fever in the village below, what particular constituent of this fluid is it that produces the disease? Is it a chemical compound, or is it an organized body? If it be the former, it exists in such tenuity that the chemist fails to detect its presence; if it be the latter, it is a microscopic dot.

Micro-organisms exist in the clear limpid sewage filtrate which causes enteric fever, and they also abound in the stools of patients suffering from this disease. But what of these? Within the last few years the influence of micro-organisms in the production of disease has engaged the attention of a large number of observers, who have pursued this attractive study with an ardor which has never been exceeded in the progress of medicine. They have isolated and exposed to our wondering gaze the concrete essence, the absolute and visible germs of vaccinia, of variola, of scarlatina, of tubercle, of syphilis, of cholera, of enteric fever, and indeed of almost every other important disease, and they have employed their leisure in cultivating these dreadful germs, and they handle them with a freedom and impunity that the cobra charmers might envy. It is interesting to witness the effect of these revelations; the novelty and simplicity of the discovery, and the complete absence of everything like doubt or hesitation in the announcement one after the other of these discoveries, have made an easy conquest of medical opinion, and at the present time the bacteriological laboratory is a necessary adjunct, not to say an important department, in all the more advanced of our medical schools. In one little field of vision we may see, side by side, the germs of almost every disease, and the medical tyro readily enumerates the distinctive character of each of these seeds of woe, while he attributes to each its specific power.

But our admiration is not allowed to stop here. It has been shown that these agents may by successive cultivation, be robbed of their fatal power and brought into beneficent subserviency to human beings; and yet, further and more wonderful than all, a microbe thus tamed by culture, thus robbed of its fiendish power