

# The Canadian Practitioner and Review.

---

VOL. XXIV. TORONTO, JUNE, 1899.

NO. 6.

---

## Original Communications.

---

### RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE THEORIES OF IMMUNITY.\*

BY DR. WM. H. WELCH,

Professor of Pathology, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

There has been no subject of so great interest to bacteriologists as this, and indeed none of greater interest to medicine in general. The theories have more than theoretical interest, because the deductions of so great practical importance have come almost entirely from the working out of theories. One's theories as to the nature of disease determine to a great extent one's method of practice, and even those who consider themselves eminently practical will find that they are very much influenced by theories. So no apology is necessary in calling your attention to this subject.

The understanding of immunity is an insusceptibility to infectious diseases, and that immunity may be natural, pertaining to the race or individuals of the race, or it may be acquired. It may be acquired in different ways, by having had a natural attack of the disease, or acquired by artificial methods. Physicians of the earliest time were familiar with the fact that certain diseases left behind an immunity that might be transitory or life-long in its duration. It was not until recent years, however, when it was found possible to produce immunity experimentally that we had any idea of the factors concerned in the production of immunity. We have had for over a hundred years a striking example of immunity, that is, the immunity against

---

\* Read at meeting of Clinical Society of Maryland.