

THE GERM THEORY.

It may not be uninteresting before presenting the facts we have to offer regarding disinfectants to briefly allude to that theory of the origin and propagation of infectious diseases now widely accepted as the most tenable, viz., the Germ Theory, inasmuch as an appreciation of the manner in which disease is originated and spread will make clearer the rationale of its prevention by disinfectants.

The Germ Theory of disease assumes that infectious diseases depend for their existence and power of infection on the development of micro-organisms (microbes of Pasteur), variously called micrococci, bacilli, bacteria, spores, etc., the life and growth of which are favored by bad hygiene and unsanitary surroundings.

Though it has not as yet been scientifically demonstrated that all infectious diseases are caused by the invasion of the body of the sick person by living germs, it has been proved in so many diseases of this class that it is highly probable it is true for all.

These germs, although not visible to the unassisted vision of the ordinary observer, may exist in the air, or in fluid or solid food, and it is by these avenues of communication that they chiefly gain access to the system.

The necessity, therefore, for pure air, food and drink, is apparent, and these are to be secured by thorough ventilation of the rooms we live in, careful exclusion of our food from possible sources of contamination, and improvement of our sanitary surroundings, by appropriate means, which it is the purpose of this *brochure* to describe.