

That even in lunatic asylums—even in the luxuriously appointed English institutions—tuberculosis may make its appearance as an epidemic in the place, has been observed with horror by the English colleagues. In this it is not the poisoning of the institution which alone plays the role there.

How dangerous it is to expose such evils is best shown by an incident in history, which should be preserved, of the renowned Austrian gynæcologist Semmelweis. The lying-in-hospital, as it existed then, had as chief an ignorant, weak-minded and incredibly careless professor. There prevailed the septic puerperal fever, and the carelessness had to be charged with 20,000 victims. At times only the mothers who had given birth in the streets escaped with their lives. Semmelweis roused an alarm but without any momentary success and his honesty and faithfulness to duty undermined his life's happiness. History acclaims him as the pioneer of asepsis; but when a call to the Vienna University was spoken of, he received of all the members of the faculty but one vote—albeit that of Skoda. That so noble a circle of men which composed the faculty, would not pardon the opposition of a young scholar to an Ordinarius is worthy—though not for the object of intimidating—to remain forever memorable. Such sins are committed by even the noblest oligarchy from considerations of *esprit-de-corps*.

Often the Congresses are the proper places to bring such evils to the light of publicity, and to morally compel the respective authorities to afford relief.

#### IV. THE POISON-GERM.

Above all, the question of the origin of the poison-germ and its vehicle must be elucidated. Outside of the products of cattle (milk, cheese, perhaps meat), it is man from whom the poison of consumption originates. The sputum and the exhalations from the lungs are looked upon as the chief vehicles. Certainly not less important the sweat, neglected wrongly by the moderns. Sweat is the attempt of nature to discharge the poisonous matter, and that its admixture with the air and food means the poisoning of others, is doubtlessly ascertained from the facts in our clinics. From these sources rises also the dangerous quality of the insufficiently disinfected linen of person and bed and clothing of the patient.

It would be in order again to turn to the sweat that carefulness of research and investigation applied in former centuries.

Clinical facts—much better than those from the laboratories—tell us that all these poisonous vehicles from the human body must be aggregated, and, as Galen maintained, become only active after a long time. It seems that there must first develop a certain fermentation or putrefaction until the germ becomes active.