

sarcoma; perhaps even the same fungus or a fungus of the same genus may be the active agent in producing carcinoma by its action upon the tissues of the epithelial type and sarcoma by its action on those of the connective tissue type?

CERTAIN POINTS IN CONNEXION WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR  
KNOWLEDGE OF ACTINOMYCOSIS AND ITS CAUSATION.

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I had hoped on this occasion that Dr. Keenan<sup>1</sup> would have given us a resumé of his own bacteriological studies upon actinomycosis instead of merely dealing with the generalities of the subject. To him has been due the positive bacteriological, as distinguished from the earlier clinical, diagnosis of the majority of the cases described this evening by Dr. Bell, and, in his studies, he has accumulated a considerable number of data regarding the morphology and mode of growth of the forms from these various cases. More particularly, I had hoped that we should have heard from him his opinions as to whether we are dealing with one or several forms of the Ray fungus producing disturbances in man. I trust that, on some other occasion, he will deal more fully with these matters.

It struck me that this evening it might be serviceable to say some few words regarding the development of our knowledge of this subject of actinomycosis. It has, indeed, rather an interesting history, carefully compiled by Crookshank in the third edition of his Bacteriology. While it is usual to date the first positive recognition of the disease to Bollinger's observations in 1876, the history goes back to as long ago as 1815, when Von Langenbeck, of Kiel, noted the characteristic little grains, which now we know to be those of the Ray fungus, in pus from a case of caries of the vertebra in man. Thus, as a matter of fact, it was in man, in whom the disease is more rare, and not in cattle that the first observations were made. Langenbeck, however, while he made drawings of these peculiar bodies, never published them. In fact, only in 1878 were Von Langenbeck's drawings given to the world by Israel. The first recorded observations were also from a case in man, and here a great pathologist comes in, no less a man than Louis, who gave to Lebert some curious gelatinous pus to examine which he had obtained from an abscess in the thoracic wall in a man presenting somewhat obscure pulmonary disturbances, which M. Louis thought might be cancerous. Lebert gave a very full description of the little spherical bodies of greenish yellow colour, and about the size of the head of a pin, with

<sup>1</sup> See page 105.