

Romans had a fairly clear conception of the disease. They got their knowledge from the Greeks, and it is more than likely they got the tubercle bacilli from the same source.

The Greeks, to whom we are indebted so much for the history of medicine during antiquity, are believed to have taken their knowledge of the healing art from the Egyptians, and it is just possible they took the tubercle bacilli too. Back of the Egyptians all is tradition. The buried records may some day unfold the mystery.

It is scarcely likely that the modern tubercle bacillus has the same morphology and life history as the early denizens of the microscopic world. Due allowance must be made for evolutionary processes and the effect of association and environment. From the similarity, not only of their methods, but of their finished work, we recognize, in these aboriginal bacilli, the kith and kin of our modern enemies. It is fairly clear that the origin of tuberculosis was contemporaneous with the origin of civilization, and it is certain that tuberculosis has followed closely on the heels of civilization, down through the ages.

The question naturally arises, tuberculosis being universal and contagious, what has saved the human family from extinction? From Hippocrates we learn that the disease was more prevalent among the early Jews than it is among either Jews or Gentiles at the present time. Then what has saved the race?

There is an inherent law of antagonism in all organic nature, and it is this very antagonism that preserves the equilibrium. The antagonism between the flexors and extensors maintains the body erect. Every living thing is in a sense parasitic, and in turn is preyed upon. Man is the prey of many parasites. He has within him, however, the elements of successful defence—a strong navy—the phagocytes. When he has waged war against a parasite, and has won the battle, the vanquished foe cannot again take up arms for a longer or shorter period of time. This is immunity, and it is this immunity that has saved the race.

Parents who have had tuberculosis and have recovered from it transmit a partial immunity to their children, and these