

regards the remote part, all that can be said is that the history of the disease brings out that countries in which cereals have not been grown have been free from indigenous measles, and discloses nothing which is incompatible with the theory; whilst as regards the immediate past, my impression is that if those who have had either ordinary or special opportunities for observing outbreaks, for the last ten or twenty years, will be at the pains of tracing back, they will find that damp and rotten straw may generally, if not invariably, be connected with the appearance and spread of measles. But if the evidence as to the past be obscure and incomplete, that to be obtained in the future should be clear and full. Any inquiry in this direction will be but rarely complicated by questions as to the actual source of infection: for I venture to suggest that measles are seldom communicated direct from body to body, although it is commonly taught that the affection is largely propagated in this way. They who investigate this matter should have regard to no source of error. A straw mildew will colonise itself on congenial substrates in its neighbourhood just as readily as when transplanted on to the living human substrate, and perhaps with greater facility. It will be borne in mind, therefore, that a mildew occurring on damp straw may quickly overrun other moist vegetable and animal substrates, and may thus convey infection (more or less modified toxically, perhaps, by the nature of these foreign soils) to some distance from the straw starting-point. From this and other cases occasional difficulties may intervene to prevent particular cases from being relegated to their precise sources. There must always be a proportion of cases where infective agents are concerned in which the infective processes are set up under conditions that are sometimes considered anomalous or erratic, because the appearance of the disease is inexplicable. Fewer instances will be met with in connexion with measles, however, than with most of the so-called zymotic diseases. Even a superficial investigation of outbreaks will, I conceive, enable the inquirer to connect measles with damp straw as surely as ague may be connected with marsh miasm.

As I may merely outline an argument here, perhaps the most concise shape in which to put it will be to assume a mildew causation of measles. This is admittedly a resort to the *petitio principii*, but it will be a convenient form for exposition. The reader can easily correct the conclusion. I therefore submit:—1. That in a dwelling free from straw (or the like vegetable fibre) measles will not occur *de novo*. 2. That the inmates of such a dwelling have immunity even in the centre of severe epidemics. 3. That if a patient be introduced into, and remain during the whole progress of the disease in such a dwelling, the probabilities are great that the other inmates will not be affected. (In such a case, however, the nature of the excreta-disposal system of the dwelling may determine whether or not the measles will be propagated.) 4. That the inmates of isolated dwellings, the bedrooms in which certain straw, may, under