

LECTURES ON MEDICINE TO NURSES

I

GERMS AND INFECTION

TO-DAY I wish to give you some idea of the life-history of germs, together with the way in which they cause disease. A slight knowledge of the elements of bacteriology will be useful to you in more than one branch of your work; indeed, without it you would be quite unable to appreciate the meaning and importance of surgical cleanliness.

At the present time most of us believe that all forms of infectious disease, both in men and animals, have their origin in extremely minute living bodies called "germs." These germs are the contagion of each disease, and by means of them it spreads. We also believe that just as each *germ* has its own particular seed, so *each disease has its own special germ*, which can produce that disease and no other.

For some diseases, as, for instance, tuberculosis and diphtheria, this has been proved; in others, a germ has been discovered, but at present it is a disputed point whether it is the right one; while in a third class, of