

the teaching of Semmelweis in view of the brilliant results obtained by him, and to continue in the old path of ignorance and indifference. Little wonder is it that in later years Semmelweis lost patience, as he showed so strongly in the open letter to Seanzoni, always one of his most bitter and prejudiced opponents. When we remember that among the disbelievers were such men as Carl Braun, Veit, Kirvisch, Breisky, Hecker, Zipfel, and even for many years von Winekel and Virchow, it is little to be wondered at that he lost both his patience and his temper. It was not until 1860 that he published his *magnum opus* on "The Ætiology of Puerperal Fever," one of the most important works ever published in medical literature. To use a much-abused expression, this work was "epoch-making," but unhappily it attracted but little attention and met with much hostile criticism.

It is interesting to note, and an honorable thing to recall, that the doctrine of Semmelweis was accepted with more cordiality in Russia than in almost any other country. The history of its reception in this country is not one that does much credit to the British school of obstetricians. It was first proclaimed by the late Dr. Routh, who had been to Vienna and followed Semmelweis' practice. Communicated by letter to Simpson by one of Semmelweis' friends, it elicited a reply from that great clinician which showed that he did not clearly appreciate the difference between the theory of contagion, at that time widely held in Great Britain, and the doctrine of Semmelweis. However, to his credit be it noted, in after years he made ample reparation, and it was largely owing to the teaching and example of the Edinburgh school that the doctrine so quickly found acceptance in this country. Unfortunately, later the teaching lost ground, and the chaotic state of opinion in England was well illustrated by the discussion on the subject which took place in the year 1875 at the Obstetrical Society of London, fifteen years after the publication of Semmelweis' great work. Within a few years of the appearance of his book Semmelweis gave up any further attempts to take part in the controversy about his doctrine and devoted his attention to gynecology. Apparently he was the first operator to perform ovariectomy in Hungary. He was, however, not destined to live much longer, and, unhinged by the trials and sorrows of his arduous life, his mind gave way, and in July, 1865, he was committed to an asylum. Immediately after his admission a septic wound of the right hand was discovered, and, despite all care, he died, like his friend Kollerschka, from the disease to the prevention of which the whole of his life had been devoted. It is impossible to read this book by