

of them idiopathic, Dr. Park asks us to accept with him the theory, when he has excluded the streptococcus and staphylococcus forms, that all others, or nearly all others, proceed from the appendix and are pure cases of bacillus coli infection. That a fecal mass in passing may irritate the tender lymphoid margin of any appendix, thus closing or partially closing it by tumefaction, and that in the secretions thus retained or partially retained an intense, poisonous, bacillary commotion and multiplication at once commences, rapidly producing inflammation, strangulation, necrosis, perforation, and infection and inflammation of perhaps the entire peritoneum, and that the potent and deadly agent in it all is the benign bacillus coli communis, whose true function in the economy is connected with the assimilation of the food we eat—this is the theory of Dr. Park and those who believe with him that the problem has been solved. The records of recent surgery, the annals of the dead-house, and the experience of every careful practitioner, all do seem to point strongly to the appendix as the pathway by which the infection approaches the sensitive peritoneum; but a theory like this makes life a frightfully perilous journey to anticipate, if we are all going about with every element of so deadly a disease at so near the exploding point. But if all this be true—and after all it may be—what shall we say of the manner of selecting its victims? Those in the very vigor of life, with all its functions at their best, are well-nigh always chosen, and the constipation and indigestion and indiscretions and decay of later years bring apparent immunity. And finally, if such a theory as this be the true one, what shall the answer be to a statement of the facts which follow?

In the winter of 1886, near the village of Morpeth, a strong, robust man named Wilson was suddenly stricken with a violent attack of peritonitis and was dead on the third day. His was the first case of an outbreak that continued for a couple of months, including about thirty cases, all within a radius of four or five miles, in one of the healthiest non-malarial districts in America. Shortly after Wilson's death his comrade, who had been with him for some time in the same employment, was attacked and was dead almost as suddenly as his friend. The mortality of this deadly visitation was very great, reaching so far as I know perhaps forty-five per-cent., and including eleven men from seventeen to thirty-five years of age. The records of this epidemic are too incomplete, because of the death of the physician in whose hands nearly all of these cases occurred, and because of the lesser interest that prevailed in reference to peritonitis and appendicitis even eight years ago. In only one case, that of the man Wilson, was a post-mortem made, and the inflamed appendix