

Formerly it was thought that an attack of most infectious diseases created an immunity against subsequent invasion of the same germs, by reason of the fact that all the pabulum necessary for these germs had been consumed already ; or that perhaps the germs when once they gained a foothold in the body, produced self-destructive chemical poisons, thus preventing a further development at a subsequent exposure.

The experiments which have proved these theories in all respects untenable, and which have shown that other factors come into play, represent some of the most spirited and prolonged discussions which the medical world has ever been called upon to witness. With characteristic animosity the German and French schools upholding diverse opinions, have found it difficult to agree, though their combined theories have given to most observers all the essential explanations of this acquired immunity. Through the researches of Metchnikoff, of Massart and Bordet, of Nuttall, Pfeiffer and a host of others, we now know that the invasion of the body by micro-organisms is followed by a chemical attraction of certain cells of the host, inducing thus a battle royal between the invaders and the invaded. That not only can the cells destroy bacteria by intracellular digestion, but that where the leucocytes themselves break down or are destroyed, they may give off to the bodily humors in which they lie, certain secretions or excretions which render these humors bactericidal.

It is impossible here in these few moments to make more than a passing reference to this interesting topic ; though as a valuable sign of the times and as an indication of the valuable work which has been done within recent years it cannot be omitted ; and it is but a fitting tribute to the great originator of this valuable means of curing disease, namely Edward Jenner, that this day, the 14th day of May, 1896, 100 years from his celebrated inoculation, should be duly noted in the medical world.