

defined source of contagion, renders all our antiseptic preparations useless.

May not the question be fairly asked : if all the known and well-defined sources of contagion are strictly guarded against would we need all this paraphernalia to protect our patients against an imaginary foe ?

When going through a hospital and seeing wounds filled with pus that have been made under the spray and dressed according to Lister's method, it is really amusing to listen to the many explanations given to account for the presence of the pus and the unhealthy action. Some little detail, we are gravely told, was accidentally omitted, and this is the result. Explanations which can only be compared to the reasons given by those estimable people possessed of more goodness of heart than of wisdom when trying to account for the non-restoration to health of some one who had something the matter with him and had been prayed over by the brethren possibly for months together.

Herbert Spenser in his essay on the coming slavery says, that when railways were first opened in Spain peasants standing on the track were not unfrequently run over, and that the blame fell on the engine drivers for not stopping,—rural experiences having yielded no conception of the momentum of a large mass moving at a high velocity, and he goes on to speak of a political momentum which, instead of diminishing or remaining constant, increases. I think we might recognize a momentum in antiseptic theories—a momentum that seems to be carrying us into irrational and absurd practices, that after a time we shall be compelled to give up, but not without the loss of prestige and influence with the public. According to the present rate of progression we shall soon, when called upon to attend a case of midwifery be compelled to retire to our bath-rooms, wash and scrub in disinfectant solutions, don a fresh suit of disinfected clothes, and, like the Romish priests, when called to administer the communion at a person's residence, we shall go forth, preceded by couriers to clear the way and open doors, etc., etc., not daring to touch even a door bell knob, lest, possibly, an unclean mendicant has first handled and defiled it.

Would it not be better if our line of action were directed against more tangible sources of septic poison than the atmosphere we breathe. Instead

of becoming machines, let us more carefully and intelligently avoid known sources of danger.

We, as general physicians, must attend diphtheria and scarlatina and peritonitis, etc., but if we do, before going from these cases to attend confinements, let us take those measures to ensure against conveying them to our patients which every-day experience proves to be sufficient, rather than inflict upon our patients a long detail of preventive treatment, which is repugnant, troublesome and costly, both as to time and money.

More than this, these very precautions which some would induce us to take to insure the safety of our patients may be made indirectly to increase this danger by rendering us less careful in avoiding known sources of contagion. When in Philadelphia a year ago, in conversation with Prof. Levis, he expressed himself as a thorough believer in Listerism. He told me that when going through Sir Joseph Lister's wards Lister remarked to him that his wards were æsthetically dirty but surgically clean.

That simply proved that it was possible by great care and by the use of every precaution to keep a surgical wound clean in an æsthetically dirty ward ; but it shows the tendency to trust to these more showy and formal means of prevention, and to neglect the ordinary rules of cleanliness, which have been rightly said to rank next to godliness.

Let us first pluck the beam from under our finger nails, and then, perhaps, we shall see more clearly to pluck out the mote from the atmosphere.

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By the Rev. J. B. SAUNDERS, C.M., M.D.

We have reached to-day one of the goals in life's great race. The hopes of years to-day are consummated. The boding fears of many months now are dispelled for ever, and, armed with our letters patent, we gladly array ourselves for the stern battle of professional life.

We have sat in meekness at the feet of these "most grave and reverend Seigniors"—the amazement growing every day how those "small heads could carry all they know," and the still greater amazement, how we could store their instructions