

## Chapter II

### INFECTIOUS DISEASES

#### FACTS

It would appear, then, that environments affecting bodily functions have little to do directly with the incidence of most of the specific infections,\* notwithstanding that nutrition, temperature, fatigue, and alcoholism are generally credited with some effect, especially in pneumonia and tuberculosis.

Damp, cold, and fatigue perhaps precipitate the pneumonias, provided one of the infective agents be present. The environments that precipitate tuberculosis constitute a problem as yet unsolved. Very much is widely believed, and even more is freely taught, concerning this subject, but the evidence is tangled and often contradictory. "Poor ventilation," dust, dampness, etc., have all been accused, but very little has been proved concerning the real factors actually at work or their mode of operation. In the other infectious diseases the effects even of extremes of the above factors are but rarely definitely recognizable. One thing, and one thing only, is absolutely established, namely, that tuberculosis, pneu-

---

\*The terms **contagious** and **infectious** were formerly carefully used and carefully distinguished. Modern writers, however, fail to find any useful or basic significance in "contagious" as contrasted with "infectious." Hektoen, in Osler's "Modern Medicine," discards "contagious" and "contagion" entirely.

In these articles "infectious" is used to mean "transmissible" or "communicable."