Certain bacteria having gained access of the blood of animals, if permitted to live, alter the chemical nature of the blood by appropriating certain constituents of it as food, and producing poison as a result of their vital activity. Having once established themselves and multiplied in the blood, they are difficult to kill as the poisons most potent in their destruction are also injurious to the host whose blood has been invaded. Man, therefore, wages war against these germs, outside the body, with disinfectants. Some bacteria, however, are very tenacious of existence, and some persons very ignorant and careless; then again, the difficulties of isolating diseases which run a long course, such as tuberculosis, are insuperable; and so, having discovered the cause why many persons are attacked by certain diseases, we also need an explanation of the fact that the majority of persons remain healthy although exposed to pathogenic microbes. In most cases, a solitary bacterium, or even a small number, entering the blood are destroyed. M. Metchnikoff, a few years ago, claimed to have discovered that the colourless blood corpuscles or leucocytes were the destroyers of bacteria in the blood. He described how he had seen two or three leucocytes surround a bacterium and deprive it of life and digest it, so making the enemy provide a meal for those whom he had sought to devour. On account of their destructive power, the leucocytes were termed phagocytes, and hence Metchnikoff's theory—phagocytosis.

Various facts of previous experience seemed to render this theory more plausible. The white blood corpuscles are known to be absorbents of poisonous matter. The cells of pus are white corpurcles which have collected so much poison that they are fit only for expulsion from the body; the lymph glands, which are centres for the manufacture of white corpuscles, play the part of "physiological filters" in relation to lymphatic absorption, so that poison received by a slight cut or scratch may set up inflammation, which is blocked by a swelling of the nearest lymph glands, the swelling being the result of an increased number of corpuscles produced for the express purpose of dealing with the poison.

In the address, to which reference has already been made, Dr. Klein gave it as his opinion that the power to destroy microbes lay more probably in the blood plasma than in the corpuscles, and during the three years which have since elapsed, the scientific world seems to have come round to this view, and the phagocyte theory is less in favour, although it was defended with much zeal by M. Metchnikoff, at the recent International Congress of Hygiene at Buda Pesth.

Prof. Buchner, of Munich, who was the most prominent supporter at the Congress of the "germicidal plasma," or "serum-thérapie" theory explained that natural immunity from disease rests on quite different conditions from immunity acquired by inoculation. The former he attributes to a compound known as *Alexine*, in the production of which the leucocytes may take part, and the latter to the presence of modified bacterial products.

The *Times* correspondent thinks that the recommendations of the German report with regard to diphtheria will probably be read with feelings of dismay, as opening up a terrible prospect of slavery under the dominion of the bacillus, and of protective inoculation. It appears to us, that readers of the proceedings of the Congress as a whole will be quite as liable to feel how very imperfect and open to criticism our knowledge of infectious diseases is, when regarded as a basis for protective legislation.

## The Drama.

### AT THE CRITERON THEATRE.

Mr. Henry Arthur Jones has generally something to say which is not only well worth hearing, but which is well said; and in his "Case of Rebellious Susan," he has sketched human nature as exhibited in the present day with a master hand. The first scene opens with Lady Susan Harabin consulting two friends concerning some letters which she has discovered amongst her husband's papers, and which are evidently considered sufficiently incriminating to justify her in leaving her home. Sir Richard Kato, Q.C., as the cynical barrister whose views of life have been largely modified by twenty-five years' experience in the divorce court, and Admiral Sir Joseph Darby, a sailor of the old school, who are uncles to Lady Susan, attempt to reason with her. All remonstrances, however, fail, and the first scene falls upon the Lady Susan's departure from her husband. Ten months afterwards, during which she is supposed to have been travelling about the world with a lady friend, and to have introduced, as she terms it, "some romance into her life," brings upon the scene a Mr. Lucian Edensor, with whom the romance is supposed to be connected. The fervent protestations of this gentleman to Sir Richard Kato of his undying admiration and love for a certain unknown lady, a subsequent scene between Mr. Edensor and Lady Susan, and the efforts of each to appear unknown to the other, has the effect of arousing the Q.C.'s suspicion, and of the successful dismissal of Mr. Edensor to New Zealand. In the third scene, fifteen months afterwards, the news of Mr. Edensor's marriage in New Zealand is brought home, and bygones being held to be bygones, Lady Susan and her husband are re-united. A side play, in the shape of a lady with views of her own, and a marvellous fluency of speech, who, against the wishes of her guardian, becomes married to a visionary gentleman who announces his intention of "stamping himself upon the Age," supplies a delightful relief. Constant quarrels evidently occur in the Clapham menage of this ill-assorted couple, and finally the lady—who unites the female workers of Clapham and leads them in insurrection against the postmaster, with the effect that the postoffice is wrecked and the postmaster physically damaged, is at the close of the play about to surrender herself a martyr to outraged law, and is expected to be about to receive a term of penal servitude—to the immense relief of her husband. The play is, perhaps, near to the border line at which Mrs. Grundy would take serious exception, and there are parts of it with which many women will certainly not agree. But the acting is of the highest order, and as Mr. Charles Wyndham, Miss Mary Moore, and Mr. Kemble take leading parts, it is needless to say that "The Case of Rebellious Susan" is perfectly placed before the public. In the minor parts, Mr. Fred. Kerr stamps himself upon the audience if not upon the Age, and Miss Nina Boucicault fills the rôle of the advanced

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