

AN
INAUGURAL DISSERTATION

ON
Phtisis Pulmonalis

SUBMITTED TO THE
PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES,
AND MEDICAL FACULTY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF NASHVILLE,
FOR THE DEGREE OF
Doctor of Medicine.

BY
Thos. W. Greenwood

OF
Texas.

1858

W. T. BERRY AND CO.

BOOKSELLERS AND STATIONERS, NASHVILLE.

Phthisis Pulmonalis

Phthisis is a diseased condition of the lungs, in which there is wasting away of the system shown by debility, prostration, and emaciation of the body. It is the most insidious of all diseases and exceeds all other diseases in the number of its victims, and with perhaps but one or two exceptions the fatality of its attack.

It generally commits its ravages on the young, frequently on the most gifted and beautiful.

Phthisis is considered a hereditary disease attacking those of families who are of a scrofulous habit, and individuals of such families who were troubled with white swelling, in infancy rarely escape Consumption

in more advanced life

But Phthisis is not to be considered a disease that affects only those of particular families nor is it confined to those of scrofulous parents, for it is not uncommon to find whole families die of Consumption where the Father and the Mother were both healthy and exhibited no appearance of strumous disease, through life, and it no doubt frequently occurs that Phthisis supervens in persons whose physical education was improper although there was no hereditary taint and that under a proper training in infancy and youth would have escaped the disease Tubercles are a deposit of matter from the blood not confined to

5
The lungs but may be found in certain subjects in the mesenteries and all other of the viscera but are oftener found in the lungs than elsewhere, and more generally in the upper and back part of the lungs than in other portions of the structure, and some contend that the left lobe is more subject to the tubercular deposit than the right, but if such be the fact I can see no philosophy in it nor any cause why it should be so.

The disease attacks persons of all the different sexes according to their position in life, among the affluent it is more common among females and vice versa in the lower grades it is more frequent in the male

sex, which is explained by the fact that in the upper circles the females are more exposed to the exciting causes by the insufficiency of the dress dictated by fashion and in the laboring classes the males are more exposed to the vicissitudes of weather on account of the nature of their employment.

Tuberculosis most frequently develops itself in early life, say from the eighteenth to the twenty-fifth year and it is said after the thirtieth year rarely to make its appearance.

Consumption makes its approach in a gradual and covert manner as to attract but slightly the attention of the patient and it is

frequently observed first by the friends of the patient, that he is in delicate and declining health, even before they are aware of the nature of the attack, and when induced to call in medical aid they speak of feeling nearly as well as usual, and upon being questioned they speak of a slight uneasy feeling the cheeks look slightly sunken and a small hacking cough with but little if any pain, he will speak of his inability to bear exertion and a feeling of constriction about the chest and difficulty in making a full free inspiration, the expectoration at first mucous becomes in a short time tinged with streaks of blood. These symptoms often

abate especially if the seasons are favorable, and return again on exposure or change of weather with an aggravation of all the symptoms, the cough becoming more harassing of morning, upon arising.

About this time hectic supervenes which tends very much to debilitate the patient. It usually comes on in the morning and subsides in the evening or early part of the night and is followed at night by a copious and exhausting sweat saturating the clothes with moisture and making it necessary for the patient to change his linen. In early Phtisis the expectoration is frothy and changes its colour and consistence as the

disease progresses. The pulse is quick and jerking from the first and increases in rapidity through the course of the disease. It is said at times that the pulse will exceed by one hundred beats to the minute the normal standard.

As the disease advances the emaciation which was slight at the first appearance increases, until in the closing stage it becomes extreme frequently becoming so great the bones come through the skin in portions of the body upon which there is most pressure, while the patient is in the recumbent position.

In uncomplicated Phtisis the digestion is good and the appetite does not fail frequently until the

patient is in a dying condition,
and when such is the case the patient
continues cheerful, flattering himself
to the last he is getting well on
that he will get well no matter
how unfavorable the symptoms may
be, and charging his want of
amendment to lack of skill in
his physician, and for that reason
will change his medical attendant
frequently, and ultimately will
try any or all the nostrums,
which with their list of certifi-
cates, disgrace our public journals.
On the other hand when Phthisis
is complicated with gastro enteric
disease, it produces deep gloom
and insurmountable depression.
In the last stage of the disease

The patient is harassed with frequent stools, his night sweats become more copious, and his voice becomes hoarse and weak owing to an ulcerated condition of the trachea and mouth and he becomes so weak that he is unable to expectorate the matter effused into the lungs and dies of suffocation.

The duration of Phthisis is generally about two years, the supervention of pneumonia or pleurisy may hasten the catastrophe, or the removal of the patient to a favorable climate with the proper medical and hygienic treatment may prolong life to an indefinite period in fact often longer than would be expected of the individual were

be free from disease of the lungs.
Persons dying of Phthisis most
frequently die in early spring.
Intermittent fever is supposed by
some authors to prolong the life
of patients suffering with the
disease, and others reject the doctrine
contending that the latent pre-
disposition to Phthisis is frequently
developed by intermittents.

I believe it is generally ad-
mitted that pregnancy will suspend
the disease and that the feeblest
woman will live through gestation
until the birth of her child.

Phthisis stands at the head of the
list of the opprobria medicorum and
it may be considered in its genuine
tubercular form to be incurable.

1
but the medical man should not
on that account stand with his
hands folded and say I can do
nothing. for there can be much
done to alleviate suffering and
prolong life

In considering the treatment of
Consumption our attention is first
called to the prophylactic treatment
and first among those modes is
the choice of a residence where the
climatic influences are the most
favorable. The selection of a
diet containing the largest amount
nourishment with the smallest
amount of stimulants. and
exercise in the open air sufficient
to invigorate the system, but
not to fatigue the individual.

After the disease has advanced to the formation of tubercle, before the expectoration of tubercular matter, a removal to a warmer climate is to be recommended, as it is thought by some that by that means the disease might be suspended and a cure effected, and although we should not be too sanguine of curing we can doubtless protract life and add to its comforts by adopting a proper treatment although a cavity may be formed in the lungs - and tubercles be softening and, ^{being} expectorated

Emetics are recommended by many in the first stage of P^hth^{is}is on the opinion that

Their operation assists the expecto-
ration of matter effused into the
lungs. Mustard practices applied
to the chest over the region of
pain afford relief.

Horseback exercise is recommended
for Consumptives so long as
they are able to ride without
fatigue and when their strength
fails. Then riding in a carriage,
sailing on the water or other
passive exercise

There have been very many remedies
proposed as a cure for Consumption,
but unfortunately they have not
borne the test of experience and
the medical world have been
doomed to frequent disap-
pointment, Among the remedies

107
That are now depended upon I
will notice is cod liver oil, from
which there has probably been as
much benefit derived in the
treatment of Pittuitis, as from
any other remedy known.

Its use is proper in the earlier
stage of the disease, and it is
thought to mitigate the cough
lessening the expectoration and
at the same time diminishing
the frequency of the pulse causing
a cessation of the night sweats,
improving the appetite, flesh
and strength of the patient
It is said that it does not
agree with all patients, but
those with whom it does agree
it occasionally improves vastly,

in some cases even simulating
a cure.

The probability is its beneficial
effects are derived from its nutritive
qualities as a great many assert
it has no power in controlling
the disease, only by adding to
the general health and strength
of the

The Iceland moss has been in
high repute as a remedy for
Phtisis. and formerly there
were frequent, reputed cures
from its use. but it has fallen
almost entirely into disuse

In the progress of the disease
 hectic fever and the night sweats
having come on, we must treat
the symptoms as, ^{they} arise, and the

sulphuric acid has to be resorted to, which generally alleviates these symptoms temporarily at least; but after some time it seems to lose its power when we must try the bark or in fact any tonic that may seem best suited to the patient's case, The last remedy I shall speak of is the sheet anchor of our hopes, not as a specific, but as the means of alleviating most of the distressing symptoms of the disease in all its forms and all its stages, I of course allude to opium and its preparations which give relief always, and no doubt lengthens life frequently