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AN
INAUGURAL DISSERTATION

ON

Bloodletting

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BY

M. C. Davidson

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Bloodletting

In speaking of bloodletting as a remedy in disease we include both general and local. By general bloodletting we mean the act of taking blood directly from a vein or an artery. When we take blood from a vein it is called venesection or phlebotomy. When from an artery, it is called arteriotomy.

Local bleeding is performed by the application of cups or leeches to or in the vicinity of the diseased part.

Bloodletting is classed among the sedatives one of the best classes of remedies we have for the very good reason that the great majority of diseases we have to treat are attended with over excitement and by the use of these remedies we reduce the excitement and relieve our patient of a

grate deal of suffering or at least
 of a grate deal of uneasiness and restle-
 ssness and perhaps prevent the onward
 march of the disease to a more serious
 termination. For instance in pneumo-
 nia per se by bloodletting and the othe-
 -r's antiphlogistic remedies we can often
 stop the disease in the congestive
 stage when if it was let run its
 course a while longer it would have
 went through all the stages of the
 disease. But it is not my intention to
 take into consideration any of the
 sedatives except that of bloodletting.
 We will first take into consideration
 its affects on the system and its
 application as a remedy in disease.
 Its affects on the system as modified
 by various circumstances

for instance the effects of this remedy
 is produced by a much less amount
 of blood taken from the healthy sub-
 ject. than from one laboring, under
 active inflammation. By bleeding
 we alter the quality as well as the
 amount of blood contained in the
 system the vessels becoming empty
 readily absorb the water from the
 system and is rendered less stimulant
 A reduction both in the quantity
 and quality of the blood has a tendency
 to reduce the vital action - it depresses
 especially the hearts action. The lancet
 was formerly resorted to a great deal more
 than at the present day and as a
 general rule the people were better
 able to stand the remedy for they
 were generally of better constitution

Consequently When they were taken sick
 the excitement of the system was in
 proportion to their physical strength
 hence they needed more active treatment
 than persons of more delicate constitution
 But there is no doubt but what
 the lancet was famously many often
 used when it was not called for
 and when it did desided injury
 too the patient. But we should not
 compare the crimes committed in those
 days by the use of this remedy to
 that which might be committed at
 the present time if used to the same
 extent for as I have said the people
 were of better constitution than they
 are at the present day. So perhaps
 there was not as much murder in the
 days as might be supposed to have been

We said in the commencement of our
 illucidation of the subject under
 the present consideration that blood
 letting was a sedative but it is not
 under all circumstances - the general
 rule may be said so long as the blood
 is in excess as regards its animalised
 or vital constituents under these
 circumstances the remedy may be used
 if indicated by acute inflammation
 of any of the vital organs. But copious
 bloodletting, when mistakingly used
 may act as an excitant instead of a depress-
 -ing agent to certain functions and
 especially that of the heart and nervous
 system - the functions of the system
 generally feeling the want of their
 wanted support make it known to the
 nervous centers and they transmit a

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Stimulant impression to the heart causing it to act tumultuously in order to supply the wants of the system. under no circumstances is the heart made to act more tumultuously than some times in an impoverished state of the blood this remedy therefore should be used with the utmost caution in anemic states of the system even when strongly indicated by other circumstances Bloodletting upon the whole is a remedy that should not be used without discrimination for it is a certain fact if we do our patient no good we do him an injury hence before resorting to this remedy we should use discrimination and be satisfied from the signs and symptoms that it is indicated

or by the use of it we can benefit our patient I do not think we could be too cautious of the bad effects which may be produced by the use of this remedy for it is one of our best remedies in complaints which indicate its use and one of the worst when used in disease regardless of its effects on the system. There are a diversity of opinions as to the propriety of the use of the lancet - some are still adhering to the old system of practice that it is our best remedy in cases of excitement of the circulation especially when attended with fullness of the system. And some that it is our best remedy in all cases of active inflammation others and we believe the greater majority

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of physicians believe it is not applicable even in all cases of active inflammation for instance a patient that had been the subject of the malarial fever until his constitution was broken down was attacked with the splenetic. Who would think of benefitting such a patient by taking blood from him we think we shall better try to get more into him by the use of tonics and good diet and treat the inflammation by counter irritants and if necessary local bleeding general bleeding is by far the best remedy we have for the treatment of acute inflammation of the vital organs

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There are several considerations to take in view before resorting to the use of this remedy, to wit the mode of taking, the blood and the propriety of repeating the remedy. all varying greatly in different cases. It is of great importance that we should learn to use this important remedy so as not to abuse it for its power is great for evil as well as for good and in rash an unexperienced hand too often becomes an instrument of mischief. It is of the utmost importance that we should recollect the effects of the different modes of blood-letting for it is necessary to bleed patients some times who are very much debilitated and

in this case we should endeavor to produce as much of the sedative effects of the remedy with as little loss of blood as possible. To accomplish this the patient should sit or stand up and the blood be taken from a large orifice. It is of great importance that we should have this in mind for if the blood was drawn from a small orifice while the subject was in the recumbent position the vessels would have time to adapt themselves to the amount of blood in them and the recumbent position favoring the flow of blood to the brain we might bleed such a patient near to death without producing

but may little affect from its
employment. The quantity of blood
to be taken may vary with the nature
of the case inflammation of the
brain and other vital organs
have the loss of blood better
than the less vital organs. As a
general rule the blood should
be allowed to flow until there
is a decided impression produced
on the system or till signs of
approaching syncope appear but
it should not be carried to
complete syncope for there is
naturally a reaction after bloodletting,
and it is apt to be much greater
when carried to this extent. We
should recollect that some people
have bloodletting better than others

the very young and old do not bear it as well as the middle aged females worse than males the nervous and lymphatic worse than the sanguine and phlegmatic. The tolerance is affected more by the existing disease than any other cause. There are many indications for the employment of this remedy as it is not to be resorted to in all cases of active inflammation we should consider the principles which regulate its employment. There are three things to be taken into consideration first the patients strength and the state of his constitution secondly the part affected and lastly the amount of injury and nature of the

nature of the cause which produce the disease. As to the state of the system bleeding is born best when the temperament is sanguine and the patient in full habits when he was attacked with the inflammation and, is born worst when the patient is debilitated from any antecedent disease.

As to the part affected it is born best in inflammation of the brain and other vital organs. There might be an equal degree of inflammation in some of the less vital parts and yet not require the use of this remedy. We will now take into consideration the special indications for the use of this remedy.

The presants of pyrexia especially when the febrile symptoms are well marked indicate the necessity of bleeding especially when associated with a full hard puls. The puls is the best sine we have for the use of this remedy but it will not always do for our guide.

A hard full and frequent puls we think always indicates the use of this remedy. So when we meet with this sort of a puls in inflammation of any of the vital organs we think we are justifiable in the employment of the lancet some people are in the habit of looking at the frequency of the puls

As a sign for the use of the
 lancet but the frequency is
 Worth but little to us as
 an indication for the use
 of this important remedy, for
 We may have fever and a frequent
 puls without any inflammation
 at all hardness is the best sign
 we obtain from the puls in
 relation to the use of the
 lancet but it a low will not
 doo to go by in every case
 for it exist naturally in some
 people or some chronic disease
 of the heart may be the cause
 of it, the period or stage of
 the disease is an important consid-
 eration as to whether we should
 resort to the use of this remedy or

not. We should always use this
 remedy in the commencement of
 inflammation the sooner we
 bleed the more shurely will the
 inflammatory process be moderated
 We will not attempt to give all
 the diseases to which this remedy
 is applicahle, Bloodletting is a
 good remedy in cynanche trachealis
 or croup on the principall that
 the blood is not duly aerated
 and doo not afford the proper
 stimulus to the brain but
 depresses the functions of organ
 by the carbonaceous matter contained
 in the circulation hence when
 medicines are administered they doo
 not have their proper effect from
 the fact the brain is not a line

to their action hence we may give large doses of emetics and they will not have much effect - but if we take away some of this unpurified blood, The oxygen the patient breaths may be sufficient to purify the remainder of blood and if so the patient will be relieved of the cerebral depression by this means we may gain the effects of remedies when before the use of the lancet they had but little effect. With these brief remarks on general blood letting we will make a few remarks on local bleeding. There are two modes of taking blood in this way one by the application of leeches

and the other by scarifying
 the surface and drawing it
 from the part with a cupping
 glass. This is an important remedy
 in chronic inflammation when
 the strength of the patient will
 not bear general bleeding, or
 in active inflammation after
 the use of the lancet it is
 an important remedy where wish
 to disengage the capillaries of
 an inflamed part. Some say
 it can do no good in this
 way for ~~being~~ they say if it does
 disengage these vessels they will
 be immediately filled again but
 we believe it is beneficial in this
 way for when it once unloads
 the capillaries of a part if the blood

is sent back to them they are in a condition that they can dispense with it. As to which is the best mode of taking blood in this way as a general rule we are inclined to give the preference to cupping but there are certain cases in which leeches are preferable in situations where we can not apply cups of course leeches would be most efficient. General bleeding is best suited to active inflammation and local in chronic or that which is slow in its action but a combination of the two is an excellent mode of treating active inflammation. We may lessen the general circulation by venesection but the

capillaries of the inflamed part
now remain engorged now by the
use of local bleeding unload
these vessels and hasten the termin-
ation of the inflammation.

The good effects of local bleeding
after the use of the lancet is
often made manifested by the
relief of pain