IN AUGURAL DISSERTATION
ON
Diagnosis

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OF
of Middle Tennessee

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Before we can become conversant with disease, it is necessary that we study its language.

To a person unacquainted with diagnosis, disease speaks in an unknown tongue, and symptoms are as unintelligible as the gesticulations of idiocy, or the science of grammar to the untutored savage.

Pain always indicates disease, but the seat of pain is by no means the locality of disorder. Action, by the mysterious connection of organs in the human system, distant and apparently dissimilar parts frequently, and as regard some always? Become deranged from the same cause, and sometimes the wildest confusion is produced among the different organs from causes almost
insignificant, for instance a worm in the alimentary canal of an infant may render some circumstances produce no effect at all, while under the same circumstances so far as the eye of science can perceive, the consequences of its presence may be restlessness, itching of the nose, grinding of the teeth, or perhaps convulsions and fatal spasms.

It would be unphilosophical to say that like causes did not produce like effects, but I do say that frequently so far as the most experienced eye can observe, the circumstances which determine the variety of symptoms, and vary their nature, and intensity, are hidden from the most experienced and practical eye, in the present state of our knowledge.
of the science of medicine.
The anatomical connection of tissues, and organs as well as the physiological relations of these parts often aid the physician in his inquiry into disease and delights him in tracing causes to effect, yet he too often has reason for the humiliation of his pride, when he can only know that one thing sometimes follows another, the one a cause, and the other an effect, or perhaps only a consequence, and he has not the power to tell how or why it is so, so far then he acts upon such knowledge he humbly feels that he is related to an empiric, a character which he has always taught himself to despise.
Science has unfolded the med.
and morbid impressions are transmitted from one part of the system to another.

The physiology of the nervous system is only partially understood, but the functions of this mysterious apparatus is so connected with the principles of life, either as the cause or effect of vitality, that the modus operandi of the nerves will probably ever remain an enigma to the medical philosopher, as obscure and occult as the relation of mind to matter.

Experience has collected a great number of facts, and as far as some of these facts are found usually to depend upon each other, one has been called a symptom of another, and upon this collection of materials in the museum of science, is founded the science of symptomology, and
if this branch of medicine was always the same the practitioner would feel as confident in his course as the pilot who steers by the needle or the north star. But the physician can never be certain, while his guide is liable to error. Now it often happens that the symptoms of a disease is deranged, and then it may lead the physician like a blind guide into snares, and fatal errors, among the diseases prevalent in every climate.

Verminous affections of infants are perhaps the most frequent of any other, and their symptoms often the most plainly marked, yet I have often heard physicians ans say, and such is the language of the books, that there is only one certain sign of worms, and that is the appearance of them in the
alvive discharges, still however.

These symptoms indicate irritation
of the Tracts, and the physician
may know that fact, although he
may not know whether, worms
cause the train of symptoms or
any other offending substance, and
he may be left to guess which
is the cause. Luckily however it
makes but little difference gener-
ally whether it be the one or the
other, provided he does not persist
too long in unsuccessful efforts
directed to one before he trims to
remove the other, under this
state of things medicine must
always, to some extent be an uncer-
tain science, and perhaps it should
be so for our good, for it is inten-
ded that man should know not
what a day may bring forth.
There is still enough known in
this mystic science to encourage
the energy of ambition, and genius, in acquirey it; and though we be often deceived, and mistaken in our opinion and diagnosis, we can learn to trace disease in its various forms by the light of experience, and rational deductions so far as satisfy our minds and greatly relieve suffering humanity.

An acquaintance with diagnosis is sufficient to distinguish the scientific physician from the trusting quack, who lives upon his own imprudence, and the credulity of his unsuspecting victims.

To understand the symptoms in disease it is necessary to be acquainted with the anatomical connexions of organs, and also their nervous relations, and sympathies; this implies a great deal, and the physician who expects to be a scientific man misses wide the marks
if he calculates to be upon legs; for, he must be a poor pathologist, who is not a good physiologist. If a physician could not associate one thing with another, and trace their relations, medicine would be but a confused mass of isolated facts, presenting a chaotic confusion, which the mind would fail to remember, and memory, taxed with an infinite number of tasks. I have before intimated, that symptoms were the language of disease, and it should not discourage us to study them, because they sometimes mean one thing, and sometimes another. It is a peculiarity of our own language, and any person can understand its variations. By studying its etymologies, so is it with disease, the symptoms of disease have their deviations and modifications.
of some of the German physicians has spent itself in diagnostically between the thousand and one cutaneous eruptions that are to be treated the same way, and in the scarcity of our knowledge perhaps their talents and investigations would have discovered facts of more importance, had they been dictated in more useful form.

The symptoms of disease generally need much elucidation, and diagnosis cannot advance until more attention is paid to sympathies. I use the word sympathy because I think it is just as applicable as any other, although much objection has been made to it. It is just as significant as reflex action or any other term, conveying the same meaning until the nature
involving the digestive organs for a long time while the latter will react upon the spine, and thus increase each other, at which it may be difficult or impossible to say which is the first link in the disease without inquiring how the disease first originated. And perhaps then the cure of the former disease may not relieve the latter, on account of its functions being disturbed, and so long, and so long as local, or constitutional irritation, has settled there, may require specific treatment for their removal.

Happily for the science of medicine in many diseases similar in their symptoms, their treatment is generally similar as their features, and causes are generally treated in accordance with their symptoms, but it is by no means always
In the case, it is sometimes difficult to discriminate between neuralgic, nervous, and inflammatory affections, wherein a mistake may be of serious consequence, for nervous and inflammatory diseases are treated in precisely opposite ways, and what would cure one would perhaps increase the other. Upon the principle of curbi irritatio ibi fluvius a neuralgic disease will present all the local appearances of inflammatory action. The periodical affections known as hives, pain, and the delirium are attended with great pain, suffusion of face, redness of the eyes, and sometimes a free discharge of the tears, and from the nose, showing great determination of the blood to the parts affected, presenting all the outward signs of severe inflammation; now, who would
think of using the lancet for the removal of these affections, especially, when they attack weakly persons; it is here absolutely necessary to judge correctly, for bad consequences must result in a mistake of the physician, who would, instead of using antiperiodics and tonic medicines, resort to depleting and debilitating means; in such cases, the medical attendant should examine all the symptoms and make every deviation from health. Inflammatory affections generally enlist the sympathies of the heart and arteries, and develop more constitutional disturbance than do nervous diseases. There are still a great variety of disorders that belong to both classes; inflammation can put on more varied and different characters than the pathologist can possibly imagine.
It often becomes important to distinguish between common and specific inflammations, and more mischievous bladders could hardly be conceived than a mistake between a common phlegmon and chancre, or simple ulcer; yet much discussion is found in the books as to the appearances of the Hunterian chancre, and the physician often has to depend upon the character or declaration of his patient.

There are however distinguishing marks in the true chancre, which ordinariety ulcers do not display, but how few can declare with any certainty, whether a syphilitic ulcer exists or not, if the patient should persist in concealing his former habits of licentiousness, avow his previous continence, and strongly induce
often exists to deceive in such cases, even though it may be better that a free acknowledgement be made.

There cannot be more difference among the profession on any one question than the distinctness of peculiarity of cancerous affections; some physicians profess to cure cancers almost every day, while others positively declare that a genuine cancer never was cured, and even go so far as to say the curability of an ulcer a diagnostic test that it is or was not cancer; and so it is with consumption, though not so much now as formerly, for it appeared a short time ago that between the stethoscope, sphygmometer and cod liver oil that the days of consumption were numbered and it would have to be degraded to ranks of trifling diseases,
But the probability is that mistakes have been made in guessing the name or nature of the disease, or that the disease has learned a mode of defense that now defies the phosphates of time, rod oil &c., and goes on its desolating course as usual.

In the scald, febrile diseases are very common, and since the days of Johnson who wrote on the diseases of the tropical climates, and after him Co. of Kentucky, and physicians of the Mississippi valley, have generally charged the liver with being the cause of nearly all fevers; instead of examining the general system, they have narrowed the compass of their investigations and simplified pathology almost into units by declaring the liver to be the first link in the chain of diseased action.
vena cava, the portal circle, and the liver as the great first cause, and I might say with some least understood.

There was not an organ in the system, but what could take on inflammation by sympathy with the liver, and all that was wanted to locate the disease was to suppose some organ weakened as they called it, and it would be kind enough to become the security for the liver, by assuming to bear its responsibility.