

AN
INAUGURAL DISSERTATION
ON

Febris Miasmatica.

SUBMITTED TO THE
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BY

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Febris Miasmatica.— Under this head I shall consider those diseases which are caused by a peculiar virus, called miasm. Now as to the causes which produce this virus, I acknowledge my ignorance. Some say one thing, others say another. But from its history, the experience of close observers and my own observation, I am compelled to deny, that the decomposition of vegetable matter, is the only cause, which produces this virus. For we see its effects, where there is no decomposition

of vegetable matter. Let there be moisture immediately under a surface, parched by a hot sun, and we have this virus generated, regardless of vegetation.

It is not my object to discuss the cause of this virus, or its *modus operandi*; but the effects which it produces upon the human economy. I shall treat of its diseases, their symptoms, course, and treatment. All the varieties may be classed under the following heads, viz. - Intermittent and Remittent. And these again divided into

Simple, Inflammatory, and Malignant.

1. Simple Intermittent Fever.

Three principal varieties,—

Quotidian, where the paroxysm occurs every day.

Tertian, every other day.

Quartan, every third day.

Symptoms,— Three stages, cold, hot, and sweating, all of which occur, and end in twenty four hours.

The cold stage.— This begins ^{with} chilliness over the whole body; shiverings, headache, quick pulse, and sometimes slight nausea. This may remain from a few minutes to several hours;— then

comes the hot stage. This commences with flushes about the face. The skin becomes hot and dry, and the pulse quick and full. This generally continues for several hours; - then comes the sweating stage. This begins on the neck, head, and face, and continues until the whole body is profuse with sweat. After this the patient feels well again, until the next day, or two days, or three, (according to the type), then comes the same symptoms as before. In this Disease, there is a

"lesion of innervation and circulation." Derangement of the secretions.

Treatment.— This Disease requires nothing but quinine; if uncomplicated.

Commence giving the quinine after the paroxysm, and continue until the system is under its influence.

After an attack of this Disease, it is apt to return every seventh, fourteenth, or twenty first day; therefore, give large doses of quinine, at times sufficient to have the system under its influence, when the above periods arrive.

2nd,- Inflammatory Intermittent Fever. - This disease is somewhat similar to the first form. The symptoms are more marked, and the intermission is not complete, which proves the existence of inflammation. We should examine the spleen, liver, stomach, and head, for the location of this lesion. But should we fail in its location; we are not to conclude, that it does not exist, for the spleen may be inflamed, without complaining. The fever continues from chill

to chill, showing conclusively the existence of inflammation.

Treatment,— The first indication, in the treatment, is to subdue the inflammation. This is done by bleeding, cupping, or leeching, and purging. If the stomach is irritable, blister; give blue-mass at night, followed by a saline cathartic the next morning; or take 12 grs. calomel, and give $\frac{1}{2}$ gr. every half hour, until the desired effect is produced. After the inflammation is subdued; give quinine, as in the simple form.

3rd. - Congestive, or Malignant. Intermittent Fever.

^{or} This is an obscure disease.

^{or} The symptoms are different, in different patients, and in different attacks.

It is generally of the tertian type. It commences with a chill, which may be like the simple intermittent chill, or it may last for hours, or so long that reaction will never take place. Symptoms;

There is chilliness in different parts of the body, with a disposition in other parts, to react.

The forehead and breast are very warm; while the extremities, nose, and ears are cool. Difficulty of breathing, restlessness, sighing, turning from side to side on the bed. The pulse rapid and weak; appears to be only half full. Nausea and vomiting are generally present. If the disease is not arrested, the same symptoms come on the next day, or day after, with more violence, which often proves fatal. Not unfrequently, the third

one comes on, which is certain to terminate in death. The lesions of this disease; appear to be that of digestion, circulation, respiration, calorification, and secretion. Treatment, The first indication, during the chill, is to bring about reaction. It is said, "this is best done, by the application of large quantities of cold water to the whole surface." — "For this increases the nervous excitability," and therefore brings about reaction.

In this disease, we are recommended to use stimulants; both internal and external;—warm applications; but recent observers have generally conceded to the cold water plan, as recommended before.

After reaction is established; give large doses of quinine every hour, until there is a decided impression made upon the system.

If the stomach is irritable, allay it; but we should lose no time in giving the quinine.

Remittent or Bilious Fever.

This disease differs from Intermittents, in the intermission not being complete. There are striking exacerbations and remissions, one paroxysm occurring in twenty four hours.

This disease is divided into three kinds, - simple, Inflammatory, and malignant.

1. Simple Remittent Fever.
Symptoms, - several days before the paroxysm commences, there is epigastric uneasiness, pains in the limbs and

back, headache, restlessness at night; then comes the invasion with chilliness of the surface; this colonep is soon superseded by flushes of heat and cold, alternately;— generally attended with nausea and vomiting.

The pains in the head, back, and limbs, become more severe; the tongue is heavily coated, mouth dry— thirst great.

The pulse is hard, full, and frequent; the bowels are constipated; and the urine scanty and

high-coloured. The surface very hot and dry.

These symptoms generally continue, from six to eighteen hours, when perspiration breaks out; the frequency and strength of the pulse falls; the irritability of the stomach subsides; then comes the remission, not intermission.

This remission is exceedingly variable in duration; lasting from a few hours, to twenty four; being longer or shorter, according

to the type. Another
paroxysm then com-
mences, generally with-
out a chill, running
the same course and
ending as before, only
the exacerbation is
protracted, and the re-
mission less marked,
^{viz} this disease continues
from seven to fifteen
days, if not arrested.

^{viz} The lesions of this fever,
are that, of the stom-
ach and bowels, liver
spleen, and the secretory
organs generally,

Treatment; Give an ac-
tive cathartic of cal-

omel and jalap; sponge the surface, if not contraindicated, After the worst symptoms are allayed, and remission comes on, give large doses of quinine, and cut the disease short.

2nd - Inflammatory Remittent Fever,

Symptoms; - In this disease, the symptoms are more marked, than those of the simple form, showing conclusively the existence of inflammation. Determination of blood to the brain; bilious tongue.

Treatment; The first indication, is to subdue the inflammation. This is done by anti-phlogistics; bleeding, general and local; and purging. The best purge, is that of calomel and jalap. During the fever; give some effervescent draught, sponge the patient with cold water, if it adds to his comfort. After the inflammation is subdued; give large doses of quinine, as recommended in the simple form.

3rd Malignant Remittent Fever.

This disease is the most fatal, of all autumnal fevers.

There is great nervous prostration.

Symptoms;— It may commence like an ordinary intermittent; but most frequently with its own peculiar features. When fully formed, the features are expressive of alarm; the skin shrivelled and contracted; the extremities cold; the head and chest very hot.

The pulse is quick,
and appears to be on-
ly half full; the tongue
is coated. This disease
appears to carry all
the symptoms of an
ordinary remittent
through all of its
stages; each stage
trying to master
the other. The great
lesions of this dis-
ease are that of in-
nervation and cir-
culation. The par-
oxysm may last from
a few hours to days.
The 1st. and 2nd. paroxysm
often kills; the 3rd never fails.

In this disease there is great congestion of the deep-seated arteries.

Treatment:— The great object in the treatment of this disease, is to remove the congestion, and bring about reaction.

This may be done by cupping over the spleen, liver and stomach; using at the same time internal and external stimulants. After reaction is established, and there is a remission; give large doses of quinine, as recommended before. ~