

AN
INAUGURAL DISSERTATION

ON

Gastritis.

SUBMITTED TO THE
PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, AND MEDICAL FACULTY
OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF NASHVILLE,

FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF MEDICINE.

BY

A Jackson Oliver

OF

Scriven Co. Co.

1851.

W. T. BERRY & CO.,
BOOKSELLERS AND STATIONERS,
NASHVILLE, TENN.

Before proceeding to a regular description of inflammation of the stomach, and the treatment to be observed in the management of the same, I deem it not altogether out of place, by way of an introduction to the subject, to make a few general remarks in relation to the part, which, that organ sustains in the animal economy; together with the abuses to which it is subject, and the suffering and disease such abuses often generate.

The stomach is undoubtedly one of the most important and useful organs in the human body; and very properly classed among those termed vital, as death would almost as certainly result from its receiving a severe injury, as it would, were such injury inflicted upon the heart or brain. It is the great organ of digestion. In it the most important part of the process of the generation of the vital fluid takes place. All other organs and parts of the body are entirely dependent upon this organ for the proper preparation of the

food necessary for their nutrition and support.

No organ of the body has wider connections or closer sympathies with other organs, than the stomach; and consequently a derangement of it is more apt to give rise to a greater amount of suffering and disease, than a derangement of most any other organ. But notwithstanding such is the fact in regard to the stomach, and that a normal state of this organ is so necessary to the enjoyment of health, yet I am to say, and it is much to be regretted, that this is the organ above all others, the most liable to be abused, and the one by far the most abused than any other.

It is the viscus that must bear the excesses of gluttony, and the intemperance, the hardships of poverty, and the ignorance of cooks. The stomach of other animals have their appropriate food, the lower tribe being confined to a single article; but widening in its range as it rises to man, he eats every thing, he

is called omnivorous. But not content with the high privilege of eating all kinds of food, he mixes many articles into the most discordant dishes; and then he eats with an excess provoked by every artificial stimulant, he has had power to obtain or invent. Is it strange that his stomach is diseased by this outrageous treatment. The vitiated appetite taxes this organ beyond its powers, and with a peculiar appetency, shall I say instinct, it refuses to digest more than is needed for the support of the body, and is consequently diseased by the excess.

The stomach is abused and maltreated in a variety of ways, and the evil arising therefrom does not always unfortunately for the abuser, stop with the injury which that organ sustains itself, but, owing to its extensive connexions, and close sympathies with other organs of the body, they also not unfrequently are involved, and become the seat of disease. The nervous system sometimes becomes the seat of derangement,

and then there is to be witnessed all that
train of suffering and pain, such de-
rangement never fails to produce. In fact
the entire system is very often from the mal-
treatment of the stomach, placed in a con-
dition, and rendered subject to take on
most any and every description of dis-
ease that man is heir to. At least without
any exaggeration, the system from maltreat-
ment of the stomach, is rendered liable
to become affected with a number of
diseases, that it would have otherwise
been proof against, had no such abuse to
-then place.

The maltreatment of the stomach also
often leads to the abuse of other organs, there-
by not infrequently producing a vast
amount of evil. As for instance, when
is a man more apt, or the temptation more
irresistible to abuse those organs, which
God has given him to replenish the earth
with, than when he has partaken of the
luxuries of the table to excess, or has im-
bibed too freely of the sparkling contents

of the wine cup. Never is he more apt, or the temptation more irresistible. His animal propensities are then wrought up to the highest degree of intensity, at the same time that his brain is rendered unfit ^{for} the play of reason, and consequently he is levelled to the grade of the mere brute, and prepared for the committal of any vice whatever.

And how very often is it the case, under such a state of excitement, is the Debauchee is to be seen wending his way to those sinks of hell, and places of lewdness, where the vile temptress, and angel of darkness in her man form is ready to receive him, and by her hellish and seductive powers, insuare him to her foul and contaminating embrace. He is led like a lamb to be slaughtered to her ornamented room, and bed be decked with crimson and purple silk, and scented with sweet spices. Impure ecstacy takes place, and the next morning the miserable and deluded wretch may be noticed groping his way homeward, bearing the germ of a horrible and most loath-

Some disease, which is soon to sprout forth, bearing bitter fruit, to the laying waste not only his own health and happiness, but also sometimes, truth impels me to say, to that of an affectionate and fond wife. For upon enquiring the Debauchee will not always be found to be a single gentleman, but on the contrary, will often be found to be a man of family, with loving wife and dutiful children. I have known a few instances, where wives had to taste of the bitter pill, and Heaven knows they were to be pitied, as all such unfortunate creatures should be.

The abuse and maltreatment of the stomach, produce evil and suffering in a variety of ways, upon which, I could write a volume; but for the sake of brevity and convenience, I will not further extend these introductory remarks by the enumeration of any more of them.

If God in his infinite wisdom and mercy had not so constituted the stomach, as to render it less subject or prone

to take an inflammation, and more able to bear abuse with impunity, than most any other organ of the body, there is no telling where pain, suffering, and mortality ^{would} end, originating from such a cause, as the one I have just been considering.

How all important is it therefore, after taking into consideration the great evil, which may be produced by the maltreatment of this great organ, that we be exceedingly careful to abuse not the stomach, but on the contrary, be extremely solicitous that its normal state be maintained, and its functions be properly performed.

It was my determination at one time, since I have been engaged in writing this treatise, to introduce an anatomical and physiological description of the stomach as a part of the subject; but upon more mature consideration, and feeling assured that such subjects must be perfectly familiar even to the embryo student engaged in the study of medicine, that determination has been changed.

Having gotten through with my rather lengthy introductory remarks, I will now proceed to take up the main subject - Gastritis, upon which, I expect to be very concise, as I have nothing ^{new} or interesting to offer upon its consideration; never having engaged so much as an hour in the practice of Medicine, (and probably never will,) consequently knowing nothing in regard to the subject, save what I have gleaned from authors on Practice, and learned from lectures on the same.

I will remark just here, that much more brevity would have been used in my introductory effusion, had I not known that originality even in an introduction, would be much more valued, than borrowed ideas upon the main subject.

It is difficult to determine the meaning of most authors, especially the more ancient ones, when they speak of gastritis. Some use the term to indicate inflammation of the peritoneal coat of the stomach, which is a rare disease; others the mucous. A great deal of obscurity also prevails in different

works, from the use of the terms phlegmonous & erysipelalous, adhesive and erythematous, which, I shall therefore, be careful to avoid. What I understand gastritis to mean, and the sense in which I shall use the term, is as follows. Inflammation of the mucous membrane of the stomach, frequently involving the sub-mucous tissue, and occasionally the muscular coat.

This disease occurs with such various degrees of intensity, that it is difficult to give any single description of it. In one case it will destroy life with rapidity, and with the most dreadful sufferings to the patient, in another it may represent a slight dyspepsia; between these extremes the shades are infinite.

I intend however, considering it under two forms only - the acute and chronic; as there is little or no advantage derived from dividing the first of these two forms, into the different varieties, which, the ancient, and some modern authors have done, the disease being essentially the same, notwithstanding it may, and does occur under a thousand

modifications of intensity.

Acute inflammation of the stomach is not of very frequent occurrence, all things being considered, and as an idiopathic or spontaneous affection, it is rarely met with. In fact the most that is known of this disease, has been derived from the study of those cases, where it was produced by the introduction of corrosive and irritant poisons into the stomach.

Symptoms of acute gastritis. A violent burning pain in the region of the stomach, with great soreness, distension, and flatulency, a severe vomiting, especially when anything is swallowed, whether it be liquid or solid, most distressing thirst, and a desire for cold and acidulated drinks, restlessness, anxiety, and a continual tossing of the body, with great debility, constant watching, delirium sometimes, and a quick, hard, and contracted pulse, attended with fever of the inflammatory type at first, but soon assuming the typhoid form. These are the most characteristic symptoms of acute

gastritis; and if they are not arrested speedily, the patient rapidly sinks into a state of great prostration of strength, with feeble and intermitting pulse, cold extremities, and profuse clammy perspiration; and death soon closes the sad scene.

The bowels are almost always constipated in this affection, unless some other portion of the canal, and especially the colon, is involved in the disease; when such is the case, diarrhoea is frequently met with. The tongue is generally found red at its tip, and round its edges, loaded, and occasionally very rough in the centre and towards the root. Hiccough and eructa are also sometimes present. The hiccough most usually, does not make its appearance until a late period in the course of the disease.

Of course the above enumerated symptoms are met with under various degrees of intensity, and in different combinations, in different cases. Very rarely if ever will they all be found in a single case; but a sufficient number of them are

always present, and of such a characteristic nature, as to render a correct diagnosis comparatively easy, in a large majority of cases.

The brain, lungs, and other organs of the body sometimes sympathize very strongly with the stomach, in this affection, giving rise to sympathetic symptoms, which should be well understood by the practitioner, as he might be led into a very erroneous and disastrous practice, occasionally, were they not. He might for instance, mistake gastritis for pneumonia, and administer tartar emetic - one of the principal remedies in the treatment of that disease, but which, could not but prove in the highest degree deleterious in acute inflammation of the stomach.

We are not apt however, to mistake this affection for any other disease, if proper attention be paid to making inquiry into the history of its cause, origin, and course.

Causes. These are, according to Eberle, substances of an irritating or corroding character, received into the stomach; cold

water rapidly swallowed when the body is heated, and in a state of free perspiration from fatiguing exercise; morbid distension of the stomach by stimulating or indigestible food; stimulating drinks; the external application of cold; the suppression of habitual sanguineous discharges; external mechanical injuries of the epigastrium; and ^{other} causes which I need not mention.

At the same time that acute gastritis is a very rapid and formidable disease, yet it is not a very fatal one, if the proper treatment be early put in requisition. When it does prove fatal, it is usually within a few days.

The pathological appearances to be noticed ~~in~~ death by acute inflammation of the stomach, are, using Watson's language, redness of the mucous membrane, softening, sloughing, and even (after the action of strongly corrosive poisons) perforation of all the coats of the stomach. More redness alone does not necessarily

prove that inflammation had previously existed, as redness may be the result of various causes, venous congestion being the most important one.

Treatment. In treating a case of acute gastritis, it should be recollected that it is a very dangerous disease. All the remedies used in it should be thoroughly and faithfully tried. In considering the treatment best suited in this affection, I will take up, systematically, and in accordance with their importance, each class of remedies recommended, and make such remarks upon each, as I may think or deem proper.

Emetics. By far the greatest number of cases of acute inflammation of the stomach, depend on offending matter taken into that viscus. This should unquestionably be ejected in the most speedy manner. Emetics are the readiest means, and should be chosen from the mildest, most certain, and speediest articles in their operation. Opusac, and sulphate of zinc possess these qual.

ities in an eminent degree; the dose of either article is about the same - from ten to thirty grains, in water.

But in most cases the patient is not prescribed for till by the vomiting attending the disease, every thing which can, in this way, be discharged from the stomach, is thrown up. The draughts of cold water so useful at this stage, in diluting the contents of the stomach, cooling its burning heat, and limiting its contractions by affording a matter easily discharged, have been taken. There is no longer any use for emetics. Their use will be improper and highly deleterious under these circumstances, for they would most assuredly tend to increase the already highly irritated state of the stomach.

Bloodletting. This remedy, by most authors, after the stomach has been relieved of all irritating matter, is placed at the head of the list of the remedial agents recommended in the treatment of acute gastritis, and very properly too, in my judg-

ment, especially in the first stage of the disease, and when the patient is robust and of full habit of body, and when the pain is great, and the fever high. In such a case as this, venesection is most unquestionably, and ostensibly called for, and should be repeated again, and again, until all the symptoms have abated. There are cases however, where the propriety and benefit of blood-letting are doubtful. As for instance, where the patient is of a very delicate constitution, where the physician is not consulted till a late period in the course of the disease, and where there is extreme prostration of all the vital powers. I would under such circumstances, place more reliance upon local depletion by means of leeches, together with counter-irritation by the use of blisters, than I would in general blood-letting. The smallness and feebleness of the pulse should not deter us from the use of the lancet; as frequently it is the case, that the pulse becomes fuller, ~~and~~ less contracted, and

and more regular even while the blood is flowing. Gastritis is a very rapid and prostrating disease, and we should always be guarded against the too free use of the lancet. An improper-timed bleeding, under unfavorable circumstances, and where the symptoms do not plainly indicate and demand it, might lead to very disastrous and fatal results. We should at all times, in the use of venesection in this disease, be governed by the indications and symptoms, which present themselves in the case.

Leeches. These are of next importance, and in some cases preferable, to blood-letting in the treatment of the disease under consideration. They should be applied over the epigastric region in numbers proportionate to the acuteness of the attack, and the constitution of the patient. The re-application of the leeches should be continued as long as the symptoms continue, and according to Dr. Stokes, it is better to re-apply them more frequently, than to encourage the rising after they have been applied, by

the application of a poultice, as the weight of the poultice is often very troublesome, and the heat produced by it disagreeable to the patient. The re-application of the leeches should not be discontinued upon the mere subsidence of the pain and soreness, so long as the other symptoms remain, as such subsidence does not necessarily prove that the inflammation has left.

Blisters. These I would not recommend in the first stages of the disease, on account of one very striking and important reason, if there were no others, which is, that by their use, and consequent action upon the epigastric surface, we are debarred the employment of another, and far more preferable and beneficial remedy, the application of leeches. I have seen it stated somewhere in my researches, that cold applications, by napkins dipped in the coldest water, or ice applied in bladders over the region of the stomach, have almost entirely driven blisters from the treatment of acute gastritis, not only

in the first stages, but in all of them. But in my opinion blisters should have their time. Let cold applications have their place in the onset of the disease, but if the irritation continues after the fever has in some degree subsided and the skin becomes bedewed with perspiration, a large blister should be applied ^{over} the epigastric region. I have no hesitation in saying that blisters, at this stage of the complaint are more serviceable than leeches, or any other remedy that could be recommended.

Ice-water. This is not only a grateful article, but I think has considerable claims as a remedy, in relieving acute inflammation of the stomach. The ice may be swallowed whole in small lumps, or dissolved. If ice cannot be obtained cold water may be substituted. Neither should be taken in larger quantities than the stomach will retain, for nothing can be more ^{hurtful} than the unlimited indulgence of thirst, in swallowing large draughts

of water, and throwing them up as soon as they are swallowed. Other drinks have been recommended, such as flax-seed tea, barley water, lemon and orange juices diluted with water etc. The ice-water is preferable to them all.

Cathartics. No one would think of administering purgatives in acute gastritis; yet as there is harm in the constipation which frequently attends this disease, what shall be done to move the bowels? force itself upon us. Injections naturally suggest themselves, and should be preferred to more active means. Warm water may suffice if the constipation be not great; if it is, laxative enemas should be employed. But in the contrary, should the bowels be loose and irritated, as they sometimes are, opiate injections must be resorted to.

Opium. This article is highly recommended by some authors, after general and local bloodletting have been premised. Eberle says that it should be given in large

and repeated doses so as to keep up a continued impression on the system. Its most important effects, when thus used, are the mitigation of the pain and the reduction of the pulse. If it be true, as some writers contend, that opium has not a constipating effect upon the bowels, when given in acute gastritis, but on the contrary, has an opposite tendency, then there can certainly be no objection to its employment; for the patient is, owing to its anodyne and soothing qualities, undoubtedly saved a great deal of pain and distress, when it is employed in this affection.

Opium is sometimes given with happy results, in combination with small quantities of calomel. The Nitrate of silver in combination with the ext. hyoscyami has been used in a few desperate cases, with entire success. I would not however recommend its employment, until all the less powerful remedies had been faithfully tried.

The diet during convalescence from this disease, ^{should} be strictly attended to, and

nothing but the mildest and blindest articles of food, in the way of nutrition should be allowed the patient. Solid and stimulating food could not but produce the most deleterious consequences.

Chronic Gastritis. As acute inflammation of the stomach was intended to constitute the main and principal part of this treatise, and as I have dwelt ^{at} some length upon its consideration, and further more, wishing to be as concise as possible in this production, not only for my own convenience, but also for the convenience of those whose duty it may be to have the perusal of the same, for the purpose of passing sentence upon its merits, or worthlessness. I will therefore dispose of chronic gastritis in quite a summary way.

This disease according to Mr. Cullen, is one of the most common of all phlegmasial affections. The worst forms of dyspepsia, and all that host of inveterate gastric and bilious disorders of which so much is heard, and the true nature of which is

so often misunderstood, we say the same author, in nine cases out of ten the consequences of a chronic inflammatory ^{condition} of the lining membrane of the stomach. Chronic gastritis is a slow, and sometimes a very treacherous disease, occasionally leading to near a fatal termination, without scarcely attracting a moment's serious consideration on the part of the patient.

The symptoms however, most commonly met with in this affection, are usually more marked; and are (quoting from Walese,) pain or uneasiness in the epigastrium, increased by pressure; increased also on the introduction of food, or perhaps felt only while digestion is in progress; flatulence and eructation; vomiting of mucus, and of the meals; loss of sleep; languor and debility; together frequently, with an acceleration and hardness of pulse: more or less thirst: a dry skin: scanty and deep coloured urine: a red tongue, red especially at its tips and edges; patchy and fissured; or smooth and glossy, like a slice of raw meat. The

throat is also often tender; and the pharynx and palate unnaturally vascular. All of the above enumerated symptoms are not always found in the same case, nor as before indicated, are they at all times well defined when present. There are also a host of other symptoms to be met with occasionally, in different cases of chronic inflammation of the stomach, not mentioned in the above list; but which I will not trouble myself to notice, owing to reasons previously stated.

This disease is not a fatal malady, by any means, if the proper treatment, which is quite simple, be early had recourse to, or before fatal disorganization takes place. This however, owing to neglect on the part of the patient, the insidiousness of the disease sometimes, and other causes is not always done, and death is occasionally the consequence. Death from this disease may happen in a number of ways. I will however mention but one or two of the most important. It may result from extensive

hemorrhage occasioned by a large blood vessel being laid open from the ulceration so commonly in attendance upon fatal cases of this disease. All the coats of the stomach may be penetrated by the same cause, (ulceration) and its contents allowed to escape into the peritoneal cavity, thereby setting up fatal peritonitis. Or it may occur from gradual exhaustion and protracted suffering.

The post-mortem appearances to be observed after death in fatal ^{cases} gastritis. A thickening of the coats of the stomach, and ulcers are said to be the most common and constant appearances.

The most usual causes giving rise to this form of gastritis are indigestible and irritating articles of food; acrid medical substances; unwholesome and insufficient food in conjunction with habitual exposure to cold and damp situations; neglected or ill-managed dyspepsia etc. It may also be the consequence of a degeneration of acute inflammation.

tion of the stomach.

Treatment. The most important thing to be observed in the treatment of this affection is the due regulation of the diet. In fact all other remedies would most assuredly fail of success in relieving this disease, if that be not strictly attended to. The food should not only be mild and unstimulating in quality, but should also be sparing in quantity. It is better to let the quantity be small and often repeated, than to take more than the stomach will retain without producing vomiting.

At the same time that the diet is being properly attended to, leeches should be applied in small numbers over the epigastrium, every day, or on alternate days so long as the tenderness and pain continue to be considerable; when they have in a great measure subsided, counter irritation by means of blisters, or friction with tartar emetic ointment may be employed with advantage. Several internal remedies have also been rec.

numided in this affection, such as the
^{sul}phate of iron, balsam coparia, the nitrate
of silver &c. all of which, in the hands of
different physicians, and in different ca-
ses have been used with benefit. Some
anodyne, Opium powder for instance, might
be administered at night on the pa-
tient's retiring to bed, in order to pal-
liate the distressing eructations of the
stomach, as well as the general irita-
bility of mind and body, which is so
frequently in attendance upon ^{this} disease,
and also to procure refreshing sleep.

The bowels should be kept in a prop-
er state of regulation by purgative en-
emas, and not by laxatives taken by the
mouth, as even the mildest of them ta-
ken in this way, occasionally do harm, by ir-
ritating the morbid mucous mem-
brane of the stomach.

By A. J. Oliver

Nashville Jan 30th 1852.