An Inaugural Dissertation

On

Dysentery

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By

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Dysentery

There is perhaps no disease more common, or that engages more frequently the attention of the practitioners in this valley than Dysentery. I can safely rank it in the great list of diseases on account of its frequency and fatality. Dysentery makes its appearance among us at all seasons of the year, and at all times, though it is much more prevalent in summer and autumn than in winter — and in hot than in temperate climates. And it very frequently makes its appearance as an epidemic, and in some instances where of that character it prevails
over a considerable extent of our country, but more commonly it is con-
fixed within small and very narrow limits. It is especially apt to prevail in miasmatic dis-
tricts and generally preceding, accompanying intermittent, or remit-
tent fevers. At other times it cannot be traced to any local cause whatever. This malady
presents itself to us in a variety of forms differing in a regular gra-
dient of severity, from a very slight affection, where there
is not much irritation in the colon
and rectum, presenting in a few
days one of the most serious and
aggravated forms of disease to which
the human system is liable involving the mucous surface of the whole intestinal canal.
This great difference is probably owing to the cause of the disease or to the greater susceptibility of the patient, and it may also depend upon whether the disease be simple, or complicated if simple it may run its course in three, or four days, without fever; whereas if protracted beyond that period, there will be more, or less fever. Dysentery may be either acute, or chronic, as the latter is not an original disease but the result of the former. I will first speak of
the former. Symptoms. The symptoms that indicate an acute attack of dysentery are such as griping pains in the abdomen, straining at stool and tenesmus, with discharges from the bowels which follow each other almost without intermission, which gives but slight relief to the patient. The pains are generally severe especially when the discharges from the bowels are accompanied with a burning sensation and in the region of the anus, and as the disease advances this becomes more aggravated and with frequent inclination to go to stool without the
ability to evacuate anything more than a little bloody mucus. The symptoms of hemiplegia increased as the disease advanced, and at length it became one of the most certain symptoms of the disease. The abdominal pains became more severe and appeared to concentrate themselves mostly about the rectum. At the beginning of the malady the discharges are more or less foetid, after a few evacuations they become mucous tinged with blood. Finally, they are entirely blood, or nearly so, with these as the disease advances, in some cases there is, a little acetated bile
and Shreds of false membrane intermingled and lumps of hardened mucus. Though this is not always present. The discharges from the bowels are very frequent at the commencement they may not amount to more than half a dozen in twenty four hours but as the disease advances they may amount to forty or fifty. In the advanced stage of the disease the stools become very offensive. They acquire a peculiar odour and differ in every respect from the natural odour. As the disease proceeds the abdomen becomes tender and tympanitic, and generally the precise seat of the angle...
amniation is indicated by the pain experienced upon pressure, in some instances the inflammation exists only in the colon and rectum; but very frequently when the disease continues to manifest the whole of the large intestine are involved, and at other times the small ones, though when the whole of the intestines are implicated which is sometimes the case, the colon and rectum in such instances present a greater degree of inflammation than any other part of the intestines. There is always fever except in very slight cases the skin warm and dry."
scanty, the pulse accelerated generally full and forcible.

The secretions of bile diminish in cases when the rectum is unflattering and the belching acrid, and as it descends the patient experiences an indisposition by painful, feeling of cholera, as sinking in the abdomen attended with a cold clammy skin affable and almost threadlike pulse, as soon as the bile is discharged then the patient soon recovers. Those symptoms abate until an other discharge.

In the greatest majority of patients the disease takes a favourable turn between the sixth and tenth day.
Cases where the disease terminates favourably, the discharges become less frequent and more frequent, the skin becomes moist, the discharges from the bowels more copious and less offensive. Tarrying and Tenebrous about and at length becomes nothing more than a common diarrhoea which soon subsides. But should it terminate unfavourably, the symptoms are a cool, skin alivrd or lustrlish appearance under the eyes and about the lips, with much tarrying and T برنmus incessant discharges, tense and tumid abdomen with great tenderness on pressure.
The disease generally gives way by the tenth day, and if it should not at becoming aggravated, torpid, and tender, the abdomen becomes swollen, and tender. The tongue becomes dry and gashed. The patient becomes more emaciated and restless, the stools more copious and offensive than in the first stage of the disease. The disease that are combined with dysentery are billiary, adjutant intermittent and remittent fevers, very frequently disorders of the liver and stomach attend the disease from the beginning. Billiary, Dysentery. In almost all cases of dysentery the billiary
Secretions are somewhat diminished but in the simple form of the disease this may be considered as nothing more than a result of the colitis in like manner as the dry skin and scanty urine but occasionally, disorder of the liver attends throughout the whole of the disease which aids in the production of the intestinal affec- tions. The complaint under these circumstances is sometimes denominated bilious dysentery. It is characterized by a feeling of oppression in the epigastic region, sympathetic pains in the shoulder, a yellow tinge of the skin and conjunctiva, urine high
coloured, a higher degree of fever, or entire absence, morbid increase, or depraved condition of the biliary secretions. Adynamic Dysentery is another form of the disease which occurs in persons who have been exposed to the action of various depressing causes, as in ships, camps, prisons, etc. Under these circumstances along with the symptoms of ordinary dysentery an engravelling degree of malignant, typhoid, or septic diseases, such as great thirst, irregular and feeble pulse, a foul and almost dry tongue, the skin hot and sometimes cool and occasionally marked with pite
chial darte livid spots. The discharge from the bowels more copious than in the simple disease with a brown or blackish appearance, and in some cases hemorrhagic discharge from the bowels consisting of altered uncoagulable blood, great prostration of strength soon from the beginning, and finally various evidences of nervous disorders as anxiety, depression of spirits, headache, low delirium etc. Caused.

Cold is one of the most common exciting causes especially when combined with moisture. Perspiring exposed to the night air after having been very much wet.
ted during the day are very apt to become affected with dysentery by its arresting the peristalsis and causing congestion of the portal circle, and inflammation than it very apt to be the result in the intestinal mucous membrane. Again substances that are directly irritating when taken into the intestines are very apt to produce it. Those substances are such as unripe fruits in perfect fermentative alcoholic drinks such as cider beer or wine. It is sometimes produced by digestive catarrh, it is also due to the accumulations in the intestines, wholesome and indiges.
the food of all kinds. Excretaions from putrid animal substances and vegetable miasmas are also among the causes of treatment. Some discrepancy of opinion exists among physicians in regard to this. The most interesting part of the subject is the treatment of dysentery, some object to bleeding others are in favour of it. Dr Wood recommends it in cases where there is much pain and tenderness of the bowels with peristalsis and a vigorous pulse. In such cases we should bleed freely until there was a decided impression made on the pulse. In
ordinary uncomplicated colitis

the indications are simply, one

mild bleeding will answer?

though when the patient is filled

and with violent inflammation

severe pains in the bowels, the

bleeding should be restored
to freely at first. After

bleeding, mild purgatives should

be next to free the bowels from

irritating secretions and accumula-
tions; secondly to diminish

congestion in the portal circe,
in such cases calomel is a good

remedy. Though there other pur-
gatives of a milder nature that

will answer, such as rhubarb

aloe and Scammony may be aptly
and give it according to circumstances. Diaphoretics are recommended by some, where the skin is hot and dry, small doses of Tartar emetic and the neutral mixture may be given either alone or combined every hour, or so. Dr. Etherly speaks favourably of a mixture, say, twenty grains of Abscissias Tuberose, half a grain of Phoe, and a quarter of a grain of opium, every two or three hours after the general excitement has been brought down by active depletion. Where there is great pain, opium answers a good purpose besides
observing the pain it greatly facilitates the action of cathartic medicines, especially where there is much of phlegm, it is best however to postpone it until the system is greatly reduced by the Sämtet. In many cases however the indications are such as to demand the administration of this remedy from the commencement on account of pain and discharges from the bowels. It is best to begin at night so as to produce rest to be used at short intervals in small doses so as to check up a constant impulsion. At an advanced stage of the
disease, alternatives should be used, such as calomel combined with astringents, cups and leeches to the abdomen, warm fomentations, of calomel dipped in warm water and applied to the abdomen. In the adynamic or typhoid form of dysentery bleeding is not admissible. The bowels should be kept clear of irritating substances. Such medicines as are calculated to support rather than to weaken, such as in Judkins's mixture of Rhubarb with the oil of turpentine in small doses, it is often necessary in adynamic dysentery to support the strength
of the patient by stimulating and nutritious drinks, such as card ammonics, wine and
brandy. The diet should be simple and unirritating, since the very best