AN
INAUGURAL DISSERTATION
ON
Phthisis Pulmonalis

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Phthisis Pulmonalis

Phthisis is a disease condition of the lungs, in which there is wasting away of the system shown by debility, prostration, and emaciation of the body. It is the most insidious of all diseases and spreads all other diseases in the number of its victims, and with perhaps but one or two exceptions, the fatality of its attack.

It generally comes in its ravages on the young. Frequently on the most gifted and beautiful.

Phthisis is considered a hereditary disease attacking those of families who are of a scrofulous habit, and individuals of such families who were troubled with white swelling, in infancy rarely escape Consumption.
in more advanced life.

But Phthisis is not to be considered a disease that affects only those of particular families nor is it confined to those of scrofulous parents, for it is not uncommon to find whole families die of consumption, where the Father and the Mother were both healthy and exhibited no appearance of strumous disease, through life, and it no doubt frequently occurs that Phthisis supervenes in persons whose physical education was incomplete although there was no hereditary taint and that under a proper training in infancy and youth would have escaped the disease. Tubercles are a deposit of matter from the blood not confined to
The lungs but may be found in certain subjects in the mesentery and all other of the aeries but are often found in the lungs than elsewhere, and more generally in the upper and back part of the lungs than in other portions of the structure, and some contend that the left lobe is more subject to the tubercular deposit than the right, but if such be the fact I can see no physiological in it nor any cause why it should be so.

The disease attacks persons of all the different saxes according to their position in life, among the affluent it is more common among females and vice versa in the lower grades it is more frequent in the male.
Sep, which is explained by the fact that in the upper circles the females are more exposed to the exciting causes by the insufficiency of the dress dictated by fashion and in the labouring classes the males are more exposed to the vicissitudes of weather on account of the nature of their employments. This is most frequently develops itself in early life, say from the eighteenth to the twenty-fifth year and it is said after the thirtieth year rarely to make its appearance. Consumption makes its approach in a gradual and covert manner as to attract but slightly the attention of the patient and it is
frequently observed first by the friends of the patient, that he is in delicate and declining health, even before they are aware of the nature of the attack. And when induced to call in medical aid they speak of feeling nearly as well as usual, and upon being questioned they speak of a slight uneasy feeling. The cheeks look slightly sunken and a small hacking cough with but little if any pain. He will speak of his inability to bear exertion and a feeling of constriction about the chest and difficulty in making a full free inspiration. The expectoration at first mucous becomes in a short time tinged with streaks of blood. These symptoms often
abate especially if the seasons are favorable, and return again on exposure or change of weather with an aggravation of all the symptoms, the cough becoming more harassing of morning upon arising. About this time hectic supervenes which tends very much to debilitate the patient. It usually comes on in the morning and subsides in the evening or early part of the night and is followed at night by a copious and exhausting sweat saturating the clothes with moisture and making it necessary for the patient to change his linen. Soon early Phthisis the expectoration is frothy and changes its colour and consistence as the
disease progresses. The pulse is quick and getting from the first and increases in rapidity through the course of the disease. It is said at times that the pulse will speed up by one hundred beats to the minute the normal standard.

As the disease advances the emaciation which was slight at first appearance increases, until in the closing stage it becomes extreme frequently becoming so great the bones come through the skin in portions of the body upon which there is most pressure, while the patient is in the recumbent position.

In uncomplicated Phthisis the digestion is good and the appetite does not fail frequently until the
patient is in a dying condition, and when such is the case the patient continues cheerful, flattering himself to the last he is getting well on that he will get well no matter how unfavorable the symptoms may be, and charging his want of amendment to lack of skill in his physician, and for that reason will change his medical attendant frequently, and ultimately will try any or all the nostrums which with their list of certificates disgrace our public journals. On the other hand when Phthisis is complicated with gastro-enteric disease, it produces deep gloom and insurmountable desolation. In the last stage of the disease
The patient is harassed with frequent stools, his night sweats become more copious, and his voice becomes hoarse and weak, owing to an elevated condition of the trachea and mouth, and he becomes so weak that he is unable to appreciate the matter effused into the lungs and dies of suffocation.

The duration of Phthisis is generally about two years. The supervision of Pneumonia or Pleurisy may hasten the catastrophe, or the removal of the patient to a favorable climate with proper medical and hygienic treatment may prolong life to an indefinite period. In fact, often longer than would be expected of the individual were
be free from disease of the lungs. Persons dying of Phthisis most frequently die in early spring. Intermittent fever is supposed by some authors to prolong the life of patients suffering with the disease, and others reject the doctrine contending that the latent pre-disposition to Phthisis is frequently developed by intermittents. I believe it is generally admitted that pregnancy will suspend the disease and that the fallest woman will live through gestation until the birth of her child. Phthisis stands at the head of the list of the opprobria medicorum and it may be considered in its genuine tubercular form to be incurable.
but the medical man should not on that account stand with his hands folded and say I can do nothing, for there can be much done to alleviate suffering and prolong life.

In considering the treatment of consumption our attention is first called to the prophylactic treatment and first among these modes is the choice of a residence where the climatic influences are the most favorable. The selection of a diet containing the largest amount of nutriment with the smallest amount of stimulants, and exercise in the open air sufficient to invigorate the system, but not to fatigue the individual.
After the disease has advanced to the formation of tubercle, before the expectoration of tuberculous matter, a removal to a warmer climate is to be recommended, as it is thought by some that by that means the disease might be suspended and a cure effected, and although we should not be too sanguine of curing we can doubtless prolong life and add to its comfort by adopting a proper treatment although a cavity may be formed in the lungs and tubercles be softening and expectorated.
Expectorations are recommended by many as the first stage of Phthisis on the opinion that
Their operation assists the expectation of matter effused into the lungs. Mustard plaisters applied to the chest over the region of pain afford relief.

Horseback exercise is recommended for consumptives so long as they are able to ride without fatigue and when their strength fails. Then riding in a carriage, sailing on the water, or other appropriate exercise.

There have been very many remedies proposed as a cure for consumption, but unfortunately they have not borne the test of experience and the medical world have been doomed to frequent disappointment. Among the remedies
That are now depended upon I will notice — cod liver oil from which there has probably been as much benefit derived in the treatment of Phthisis, as from any other remedy known. Its use is proper in the earlier stage of the disease, and it is thought to mitigate the cough lessening the expectoration and at the same time diminishing the frequency of the pulse causing a cessation of the night sweats, improving the appetite, flesh and strength of the patient. It is said that it does not agree with all patients, but those with whom it does agree it occasionally improves vastly.
in some cases even simulating a cure.
The probability is, its beneficial effects are derived from its nutritive qualities as a great many assert it has no power in controlling the disease, only by adding to the general health and strength of the
The Iceland moss has been in high repute as a remedy for Phthisis, and formerly there were frequent reputed cures from its use, but it has fallen almost entirely into disuse in the progress of the disease h"ctic fever and the night sweats having come on, we must treat the symptoms as they arise, and th
sulphuric acid has to be resorted to, while generally alleviates
their symptoms temporarily at
least, but after some time it
seems to lose its power when
we must try the bark or in
fact any tonic that may seem
best suited to the patients case.
The last remedy I shall speak
of is the sheet anchor of our
hope, not as a specific, but as
the means of alleviating most
of the distressing symptoms of
the disease in all its forms and
all its stages. Of course,
alleviate to opium and its preparations
which give relief always, and
no doubt lengthens life frequently.