AN INAUGURAL DISSERTATION
ON
Scarlatina

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Scarlatina.

This is a febrile, contagious disease, which has for its principal characteristics, inflammation of the jaw, and a scarlet rash, appearing on the second day and generally ending in desquamation about the sixth or seventh. Scarlatina was long confounded with measles, being considered as a variety of that disease.

It was not until the year 1556 that it was noticed as a peculiar one. There have been described three varieties of scarlet fever, but as the disease is essentially the same in all its varieties, and is produced by the same causes, I shall speak of it as a general malady. The mildest form of scarlatina, is usually
ushered in, without much rigor or disturbance of the stomach, but there is always present, more or less pain, or disagreeable sensation in the head, with lassitude, and asthenia. This scarlet rash, which makes its appearance on the second day, begins upon the face and neck, showing itself in innumerable little red points, which in the space of twenty-four hours can be seen over the whole surface of the body.

As these points multiply, they coalesce, and by the end of the third day, the eruption presents a diffuse and continuous efflorescence over the limbs. The colour of the rash has been compared to that of a boiled lobster, but it is perhaps a little darker, and is more intense at the
flexures of the joints. The rash has
sometimes a rough sensation, not
unlike that of gooseflesh, caused by
the enlargement of papillae. The coalar
line disappears under pressure, but
returns when the pressure is removed,
and is increased during the exacerbation
of the fever, and when the patient is
otherwise agitated.

The fever does not abate with
the appearance of the rash, but
continues throughout its whole progress,
with very frequent pulse, much more
than other febrile diseases of the
same degree of violence. The skin
is very dry and burning hot, with a
temperature, as indicated, by the
thermometer, about 105°. The fever
is generally increased towards evening.
attended with delirium, and restlessness, and sometimes with comatose symptoms. The throat affection, in some cases is not at all severe, but in others, seems the most prominent and dangerous symptom, being attended with external, and internal, swelling of the organs, with painful delirium, and impaired respiration. The disease usually attains its height, from the fifth to the ninth day, when in all favorable cases, the morbid symptoms begin to decline. The rash fades away with diminution of the heat of the skin, and the pulse becomes slower and fuller. Then the process of desquamation commences, the cuticle separating in small flakes, and while it is thick, as upon the palms of the hands, and soles of the feet, it
comes off in large scale, and in some instances, it has been known to come away with a complete moulé of the members. At this period, it is thought that the contagion is most active. It must generally affects individuals, but once, during life.

Recurrence of the disease has certainly been observed, but is of very rare occurrence, and such cases are merely exceptions to the general rule. The subjects of scarlatina are for the most part children. Adults are known, by no means, exempt from it, though much less susceptible, and in them it does not appear so soon after exposure. Persons advanced in life are very rarely attacked by it. Children are more liable to it.
because of their susceptibility to disease, and because their functions perform more rapidly, than those advanced in life, and, possibly, women are more liable to it, for the same reasons, than men. There are certain persons, who seem to be entirely insusceptible to this disease, never becoming affected with it, though fully exposed to its influence. In some epidemics, scarcely any other but children are attacked, while others are principally confined to those beyond the age of puberty.

There seems no particular reason favorable to the prevalence of scarlatina, but a warm, humid, state of the atmosphere, and low, moist, districts, would appear more favorable to its dissemination, and increase its violence.
Great irregularity sometimes marks the progress of this disease when epidemic, for after raging extensively with great violence, it may suddenly abate, or nearly disappear, and then recur with symptoms of greater malignancy than before.

Few diseases have a longer train of evils behind them than scarlatina.

Among the most common are the abscesses, which form near the parotid and submaxillary glands, which are often large and exhausting, and often the discharge of pus from these sources is more than the weakened system can bear, and the patient, after having survived scarlet fever, dies of hectic. They also greatly protract convalescence.
and the constitution is long in regaining
to normal strength, though freed from
disease. Diarrhea is another frequent
consequence of scarlatina, which is
domestic very obstinate, wearing out
the remaining strength of the patient;
though it may yield to judicious
Treatment. Serous membranes are often
attacked with inflammation, either during
its progress, or decline, and encephalitis,
pleuritis, and peritonitis may be
added to its legacies. But the most
dangerous of them all is dropsy.
The patient is liable to this during
diarræa or, and for sometime afterwards.
The cause is, by many, supposed
to be the premature exposure of the delicate
skin, to cold. But Dr. Wood seems to
doubt this, and says according to
his own experience, dropsy has occurred
more frequently after mild cases, than
severe ones. It sometimes follows cases, in
which the skin is very slightly diseased,
and when no exposure to cold has existed.
It is generally in the form of anaemia,
though sometimes of hydrothorax, hydro-pi
cordium, and even hydrocephalus.

Drowsiness, approaching to stupor, as well
as, other signs of central disease, are not-
uncommon attendants on the dropsy of
scarlatina. The effusion yields to proper
 treatment, but is dangerous when the
brain or heart is involved. Though it
only moves one fatal case, and in that
the heart was affected. It is said that
in certain epidemics, dropsy has resulted
from mere exposure to the contagion,
without being preceded by the usual symptoms
of the disease, which is owing to the
absorption of the poison, and its direct
action upon the kidneys. This has been
noticed by some writers as a peculiar form
of the disease, and it is proposed to call
it scarlatina latera, but the same name,
might with equal propriety be given to
those cases of sore throat, and swelling
of the salivary glands, which occasionally
arise from exposure to the contagion, without
the other symptoms of the disease.

In the early stage, before the eruption,
scarlatina may be readily mistaken for
many other febrile diseases. The most
characteristic symptoms are the extraordinary
frequency of the pulse, and the
appearance of redness in the faces.

After the eruption, one of the complaints
with which it may be confounded is measles. From this, however, it may be distinguished by absence of catarrhal symptoms, by the occurrence of the rash upon the second, instead of the fourth day, by the characteristic anginous effection, and by the peculiar nature of its rash, which is of a brighter red colour, more punctuated in the beginning, and more uniform at last, without the clustered arrangement of the rubious eruption, and without its roughness.

**Prognosis.**

There is no complaint in which the result is more uncertain than in this. The seemingly mildest cases, sometimes assume the most malignant form, and patients suddenly die, with profound sensorial disturbance, often
supposed to be quite free from danger; and
while, conversely, cases apparently the most
desperate, sometimes end favorably.

Even after the case has reached conva-
slence, under highly favorable circumstances,
there is liability to secondary serious effects.

There is in certain individuals an
extraordinary tendency to the most
fatal form of scrofula. It now
unfrequently happens that two or
three children die in one family,
and sometimes a whole family is
thus decimated, upon the same or
successive occurrences, though the
disease prevailing at the time may
have no particular malignancy.

In such families the prognosis
is always more unfavorable than
in others, and special care should
be taken to guard them until the susceptibility may be supposed to have worn off with age. In judging of the probable nature of any particular case, reference should always be had to the character of the epidemic. When this is very mild, one may, with some confidence, predict a favorable issue, under apparently favorable circumstances. When otherwise, we should be more guarded. Among the unfavorable signs are a late appearance, deficiency, or sudden retrocession of the eruption, in connection with other bad symptoms, such as delirium, coma, having or purpureal colour of the rash, with hemorrhage, a livid appearance of the jambs, with gangrenous ulcers or sloughs, and
gover frustration. The absence of the
above symptoms and a gradual
subsidence of the disease, are favorable
evidences.

In simple and uncomplicated cases,
no very active remedies, will be
demanded. It is the duty of the
physician, however, to watch closely the
disease, throughout its entire course,
for in the milder form, symptoms
of a severe and dangerous character,
are liable to be, slowly or suddenly,
developed, which it is all important
to attack at once by appropriate
remedies. We cannot be too much
upon our guard against unsuspected,
and unfavorable changes, and in no
case, even the mildest should the subject
medically be lost sight of. It is also
important, that the treatment of every
case of scarlet fever, should be
commenced, if possible at the very
commencement of onset of the attack,
for, probably, then, by the simplest remedy,
administered at this period, we will
often have it in our power, to effect a
very important modification in the
subsequent features of the case, and
frequently, to render mild, and extremely
manageable, an attack, which if
neglected might have proved one of
extreme danger and violence.

In the vast majority of cases
scarlet fever would end fatally
without treatment, and it is from
this fact, that homoeopathy acquires
its reputation, in this disease.
When the symptoms are very mild, it is advisable to do little more than to keep the bowels open, to administer cooling drinks, regulate the diet, and to see that the apparatus is well ventilated, and of comfortable temperature. A gentle emetic, given at the outset, is said to have a happy effect in modifying its future course. I think it advisable to administer it in every case, when seen at that stage, for though it may not be necessary, yet it can do no harm, and it is impossible to foresee what is to be the character of the case. If necessary, it may be used, or a mixture of this with Cortis emetic. In all cases, except those of great mildness, it will be
proper to follow it in children, with a frugitive dose of calomel, which, if not operating thoroughly in six or seven hours, should in its turn be followed by castor oil, magnesia, or one of the saline laxatives.

Afterwards the bowels should be kept open by cathartics, which should be accommodated to the circumstances of the case. There is a depleting choleretic such as sulphate of magnesia when there is much excitement, or with considerable energy of system. When there is nausea and something sudor, magnesia when there is acidity of the gastric juice. Castor oil may be given when there is abdominal pain, and rhubarb when the patient is too feeble to admit of strong purgatives.
In the incident of cholera, advantage
may accrue from castor oil, combined with
laudanum, as the bowels are thereby cleaned
of the offensive secretions, which are produced
and at the same time, rendered less
sensible of the intent impression.

Great care should be taken not to
purge to exhaustion. The propriety
of bleeding has been much discussed
by writers, and the profession is greatly
divided upon the subject. Dr. Condor
recommends active depurative in all
cases of inflammatory or other fever,
without the fear of supressing debility,
remembering always, that when deemed
the earlier active remedies are employed
the more efficient they will prove,
and the less difficult is their propriety.

Considering the character of this
Disease, I think, it is rather a doubtful remedy, and should only be called into question when there is obvious indication, such as skin symptoms or inflammation of one of the vital organs, exist, and threaten great danger. In no instance, even of decided inflammation, should it be resorted to, when the pulse is full and other signs indicate a malignant tendency, and in all doubts it is best to bow receive to local application, by cups and leeches.

Dr. Word says he has seldom found it advisable to bleed in any case, and does not remember an instance, in which it appeared to him, that he had occasion to repeat his operation. cutter bleeding
is employed, it would be a good rule to place the patient in a sitting posture, as the failure of the pulse in that position will sooner give warning to arrest the flow of blood, than in the horizontal. In all cases of acute serous inflammation, leeches may be employed with advantage, and in cases where the skin is burning hot and dry, and the patient experiences no chilly sensation, the external application of cold water is highly useful. When the fur is fully developed, a course of internal refrigerant treatment, should be adopted.

Preventive Treatment.

It is important to guard children against this disease, as the older they grow, the less liable they are to be
attacked. Hence they should be kept separate, as far as possible, from every source of the infection, and free ventilation of the sick chamber should be employed, to dilute and dissipate the poison. Different prophylactic remedies have been recommended, among which, belladonna, perhaps, enjoys the confidence of most practitioners. This is used in very small doses; three grains of the extract dissolved in a fluidounce of distilled water, and three drops of the solution given twice a day, to a child under one year, to be increased one drop for every additional year. This is extensively used in this section of country, as a prophylactic.