

On Hypochondriasis.

By

Christopher Deighton.

On Hypochondriasis.

The term Hypochondriasis has been employed from a very early period - to signify a depressed state of the mind - although this name conveys no proper idea of the nature of the disease in as much as a certain amount of mental depression accompanies many other diseases - Thus in certain hepatic affections there exists a despondency of feeling - all kinds of inflammations of the liver acute and chronic - and more particularly even find this term applied to dense dark diseases - We can I think account for the origin of the term, applied however as is the case with more than ordinary vagueness -

But perhaps it has this advantage over any other that might be substituted, that it conveys to the minds of Medical Men the idea of a certain series of phenomena - although as we shall have occasion to notice, the ideas attached to the name is almost as varied as the phenomena themselves -

However I doubt not that as our knowledge of Pathology advances the morbid feelings and pains usually described by patients of this class will be more easily accounted for - If we investigate the nature of the disease

with more accuracy, than has hitherto been the case,
and although much difficulty attends this — yet we
anticipate or hope, that what we have ^{to} mention
concerning this subject, will give a more precise and
definite idea of the Pathology & of this obscure disease.

On perusing various Medical authors on this disease
we find that scarcely one agrees with another — What Hypo-
chondriasis really is? — Thus Cullen defines it to be "indigestion
with languor, sadness and fear from inadequate causes in
a Melancholic temperament" — Sydenham on the other
hand regards Hypochondriasis and Hysteria as one and the
same disease. He says "The affection which I have characterized
in Females as Hysteria, and in males as Hypochondriasis,
arises (in my mind) from a disorder (atony) of the animal
spirits — This precipitates them on different parts of the
system: so that bearing down violently and multitudinally
upon particular organs, they excite spasm and
pain wherever the sensations are exquisitely acute,
deranging and perverting the functions both of the parts they
leave and of the parts they fall on — no wonder if
the irregularity of the distribution is opposed to Nature
and the economy takes them from danger" *.

A similar view was held by Sauvages, Pinel, Mason Good &c.

* Sydenham's works Epistol: Disertations art. 79 888 —

And in more recent times has received the support of
M. Georges who states that Hypochondriasis "is in all cases
a primary affection of the Brain" * - M. Roussais considers it
as depending mainly on a state of chronic inflammation of
the stomach and intestines in the form of gastro-enteritis † -

Audral adopts a similar view "L'hypochondrie est souvent une
conséquence de la gastrite chronique" † - Hoffman terms Hypochon-
driasis as a "spasmodic flatulent affection of the primæ viæ,
namely of the stomach and intestines arising from a dis-
turbed and inverted peristaltic action by sympathy throwing
the whole nervous system into commotion and deranging all
the functions of the animal economy" ‡ -

M. Billermy in his lectures on nervous diseases agrees in
this opinion, but expresses himself more definitely on this head
"C'est pas dans l'altération du tissu nerveux lui-même, qui réside
la cause immédiate de cette neurose; c'est dans une affection
des propriétés vitales des nerfs de la nutrition; aussi l'on reconnaît
généralement pour siège primitif de l'hypochondrie les viscères
abdominaux spécialement l'estomac, affecté dans leur sensibilité
organique" §

* M. Georges de l'hypochondrie de l'hystérie 1146

† Audral Pathol. Interne by Latour

‡ Opéra Hoffmanni tom. 114

§ M. Billermy des Maladies Nerveuses -

Mashed on the other hand regards it, as depending on a morbid
Condition of the ganglionic Nerves.* —

In reviewing the opinions held by the various Medical
Authors which we have spoken of — we are forcibly struck
with the want of unity ^{among} held by those writers on this subject,
altho' we by no means wonder that they should so differ
seeing that patients coming under their notice with such
a Catalogue of Symptoms — (as we shall have occasion to notice)
And how Pullen, Billermy, Mousais, & should refer the disease
as of Abdominal origin; or how Mr George should class it,
as a primary affection of the Brain, and the arguments
he has adduced seem to have considerable weight, — But
when we reflect on the mental distress of Hypochondriacs
their train of morbid feelings, of painful sensations, which
annoy ~~them~~ ^{patients}, we can the more readily admit, that a
deviation from the natural and healthy state of the
Cerebral functions has a close connection with their
disease — I think if we view this disease as depending
on a morbid condition of the blood, and through
the influence of the blood acting on the Brain and
other Nervous Centres — as that of Colic jaundice & — It will
I think go further to explain the real nature of the

* Mashed Recherches sur la nature & le siège de l'hypochondrie et de l'hyp
-ochondrie. et sur l'analogie & les différences de ces Malades —

phenomena, than any of the opinions advanced by various
writers on this subject. — We have many diseases arising
and depending on an alteration and derangement of
the blood, & of a different type to that we
are now considering — We have many instances
of derangement of this fluid, in which matters are
formed by the metamorphosis of the tissues during
the performance of the vital functions; or produced during
digestion and nutrition and which are destined for
speedy elimination, which may become increased from
various causes, and if retained in the system give
rise to various morbid symptoms — This we find to
be the case with regard to urea, uric acid — Sugar &c
Their proportions may become much increased, and
when such takes place a morbid condition of the
blood ensues — This urea and uric acid should
be secreted by the kidneys as soon as formed. — However
the function of these organs being deranged, and
as a consequence one or more of these substances are
retained in the blood, and when such follows the
blood undergoes other changes — — We know that the
existence of an excess of urea in the blood, deranges
the functions of the brain and functions of its several
parts — Now whether this state be induced by the state

of the blood: or by the state of the mind, each equally interfering with the proper performance of the nervous system.

This derangement in the state of the blood may only amount to what we call Hypochondriasis: or it may proceed to Coma and Death—

But before entering into details it will be necessary to consider the Causes and Symptoms of Hypochondriasis and then consider the nature of this disease under our pathological head—

Causes

There is no disease whose development is not favoured by certain conditions, acting in various ways and with different degrees of intensity—Therefore it is very necessary that I should mention the various conditions which predispose and excite Hypochondriasis—

The predisposing Causes seem to depend in some measure on the general constitution of the individual, as from age, sex, and probably occupation— An inquiry into the habits and circumstances of the life of the Hypochondriac previously to the attack of the disease will often tend to remove much of the obscurity in which its nature and causes are enveloped— In this way we will generally learn from the patient's previous history.

That he has been subject to the morbid influences of circumstances adverse to health which will always tend to the disturbance of some of those various vital processes on the due performance of which the preservation of the health as well as of the mind, as of the body, in a great measure, depend —

The middle period of life, or the interval between the twentyfifth and fiftieth years, is the age which is principally disposed to this disease — It seldom attacks persons before the twentyfifth, or those advanced beyond the fiftieth year — Men & says Dr Copland "Hypochondriasis appears in early life excessive sensual indulgence particularly masturbation should be regarded as having been the chief cause" * — Men in general seem to be more liable to this malady than women, & tho' it does occasionally occur in the latter class —

There appears to be two distinct and separate sources — one of a moral nature — the other physical. The moral causes act injuriously on the body through the agency of the mind — The physical act more directly as impediments, to the performance of the functions by which healthy blood is prepared, and effete matters removed from the system —

* Copland's Medical Dictionary Art: Hypochondriasis —

The primary result of both exalted condition of the body and the second as a consequence on this disease of the body is the affection of the mind —

Among the physical causes we may class sedentary employments, intemperate habits. — Dr Gregory remarks on the latter, "that this disease has some obscure connections with the Country diathesis — It often arises in those who by too rich or full living have overcharged the vascular system — It is a frequent occurrence to persons addicted to the use of spirituous liquors — I have met with it in great severity in many merchants and publicans — Persons accustomed to active occupations, mental or bodily, or to much exercise in the open air — upon retiring from business have found their hopes of enjoyment marred by the miseries of Hypochondriacism, more especially if they live fully and in a state of comparative indolence" * Dr Prichard states "that he has known it to occur among agricultural labourers — especially in those whose occupations are solitary" † I have known one or two instances occurring in this class of persons —

* Dr Gregory's Practice of Medicine p 403.

† Dr Prichard

of Medicine Vol: Hypochondriasis

The Moral Causes of Hypochondriasis includes all emotions of a painful character - such as long continued anxiety, Care grief, disappointments from whatever cause - Studies and professions which require intense and constant application of the mental faculties - anxiety respecting schemes and prospects of worldly advancement, and the disappointments that follow when these prove unsuccessful - The indulgence in vicious habits - &c which produce evils alike great to the mind as well as body -

Symptoms

The most striking and peculiar characteristics of Hypochondriasis are. The desponding state of mind - lowness of spirits and the great anxiety manifested by patients on the subject of every bodily ailment, however slight it may be -

In their general appearance they have an unhealthy look. - The countenance presents a dull leaden hue - (Not the dull pallor colour from obstructed bile, as we are accustomed to observe in those Europeans who have resided for some time in warm climates) The individuals who

labour under this malady may occasionally present
no external indications of disease - even the person may
have all the appearance of good health - but the
latter is rare - At other times their skin has a
peculiar dark and dingy hue - In most cases there
is not much emaciation altho' this sometimes
occurs - The muscular development does not
indicate much weakness, altho' there is a great
complaint made by the patient in regard to
loss of muscular power - They often tell us that
they are unable to walk; or if they do so, feel
quite fatigued with the slightest muscular
exertions -

They complain frequently of distensions of the
stomach and hypochondrium - pains and indescribable
sensations which are chiefly referred to the left
hypochondrium especially after eating these
sensations are much increased with a sense
of weight and oppression - sometimes this
amounts to very severe pain which returns
at very short intervals after meals - accompan-
ied with eructation, Cardialgia or a sense of
burning heat at the extremity of the oesophagus -
The tongue is in most cases clean or only

Covered with a slight brown coat— The pulse is for the most part slow and languid and the action of the heart diminished, indicating that blood is propelled with feebleness and want of energy—

Sometimes the respiratory movements are executed with as much freedom as in health— Ordinarily however the respiratory functions are performed more slowly than in health—

The eyes are usually dull and without lustre in some degree sunk in the orbits— Large and tortuous vessels are often seen in the conjunctiva, betraying a sluggish and retarded circulation— On looking at any object for a short time the eyes grow dim— They usually experience a sense of confusion with pains in the forehead and temples, sometimes in occiput with a feeling of dullness and stupidity accompanied generally with distressing headache, and intolerance of light, which renders the patients unfit for any mental exertion—

They often experience faintness and sensations of sinking as if dying— wandering pains of a neuralgic character are very frequently felt along the course of the principal nerves—

Sometimes accompanied with a feeling of numbness described as occurring in the leg, arm or fingers -

Stupor is often one of the most distressing symptoms complained of by the hypochondriacs - They generally lie tossing about all night or until towards morning when they may chance to fall into a disturbed and unrefreshing sleep to awake again as miserable and dejected as before - This stupor is so much attended that the hour of rest is equally shunned, but the later they are in retiring the more unhappy and wretched are they while in bed - and the fatigue and languor of the following day is proportionally increased -

The secretions usually indicates a depraved and disordered condition - The Urine is generally dry and harsh to the feeling - The perspiration secreted is for the most part of an unhealthy and unnatural quality accompanied with fetid odour -

The bowels are often disposed obstinately to constipation. This state may give way occasionally to diarrhoea - but sometimes confined or relaxed alternately -

The evacuations are in most cases unnatural - arising sometimes from vitiated state of the Bile, and faces are often covered with a large quantity of Mucus - At other times altho' the evacuations may have been unhealthy they may have become natural showing a return of the functions of the liver and other secreting organs sufficient to prevent any increase of the Malady but not sufficient to free the system from the morbid matter influencing the disease -

The urine being the most important secretion and which most frequently indicates the first deviation from health to disease - will seldom be found to be in its normal condition - either in quality or quantity - This change has been long observed by the older Physicians -

Cycenham made some observations on this point - he remarks that "In males even a few seconds after passing water of the fine straw coloured hue - a sudden and violent mental emotion may produce the discharge of an abundant flow of urine not of a straw colour but of crystalline clearness - as long as the urine is of this colourless character, the fit is on

The patient and he suffers accordingly *

I cannot say that I have observed the wine present the character described by Sydenham - but in the majority of cases it is more limpid than in health and of lower specific gravity - The wine passed in the morning is generally of a higher density and of a dark colour acid and when allowed to stand deposits a copious sediment, - In some of these deposits I have observed the well defined octahedral crystal of bicarbonate of Lime (on this point I shall have occasion to speak hereafter).

The appetite is in most cases considerably impaired, altho' instances have occurred where the contrary was the case - Besides the Physical signs we have just enumerated, - The mind labours under a degree of morbid excitement in hypochondriacal patients, but this is very distinguishable from all the modifications of insanity - The morbid feelings of the hypochondriacs are real and arise out of physical disturbance of the system which he apprehends to be much greater than they are and this apprehension leads him to dwell upon them and make them the subjects of

* Sydenham works art. 78

Conversation whenever he has an opportunity of
doing so* - From the derangement of their Physical
System and more particularly the Nerves of Sensation
under these Conditions are morbidly susceptible to
a very high degree - so that light, sound, noise
are intolerable - Hence this morbid Condition
of Mind is constantly placing them troublesome
sensations and feelings in different parts of
their bodies, to the account of some more serious
organic Diseases, and thus they go on constantly
describing their Complaint in great details and
accuracy - which however is much magnified by
their fears, and often false conjectures concerning
its real nature - The Concentration of their whole
Thought and Attention being directed to one
Object, and that their own Malady -

Finding also as is too often the case that
they derive little benefit from medical aid,
and being moreover made the object of Gossip
by popular writers, as well as the want of
that sympathy which their case most -

* Dr. Portland on: Hypochondriasis -

† Vide Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy. - The horrors
of a Hypochondriac by Charles Lamb. Willous Tales of the Borders &c

unquestionably merit; all tend to aggravate their symptoms, which increases their misery and discomfort to find that instead of that sympathy and compassion they meet with the very opposite -

It is then, less to be wondered ^{at} that they fly from one Physician to another, until perhaps they find themselves in the clutches of the Quack who leaves them still more squalid and wretched than they were before - Can it be wondered at, that they are tired out with disappointed expectations and tortured with wretched feelings of despair, and their life a burden to them - that they should look upon death as the only form of relief from their miseries -

Well might each say to himself what Couper so well expressed "Could I be translated to Paradise unless I could leave my body behind me my melancholy would cleave to me there"

Pathology

"Anatomical Researches" says Dr. Pritchard have thrown no light on the Pathology of Hypochondriasis nor does it appear at all probable

that the subject will ever be elucidated by such means - organic changes of almost every description have been discovered in the bodies of persons who have been the subject of this malady - This diversity is too great to allow of the supposition that they are all connected with one complaint - The individuals in whose bodies they have been discovered have terminated their existence under various diseases - Hence the diversity of Morbid Phenomena, which if it were possible to trace the connection of Causes and effect would probably be found to have stood in no near relation to hypochondriacal ailments which affected the individuals in question without endangering life or ultimately accelerating its termination*.

From what has been stated it is evident that little information can be obtained, as to the nature and seat of this malady from Morbid anatomical investigations - Our inquiries must from necessity be directed to the Morbid condition of the System during life - And considering what advances have been made into the nature of many hitherto obscure diseases by the aid of Chemical and

* Cyclopaedia of Medicine Vol II P 653

Microscopical investigation of secretions and excretions of the body - We naturally look to such means, when information cannot be obtained from any other source -

Viewing this Malady as one depending on a morbid condition of the blood - and more especially the importance of this fluid - the various vital and chemical changes which it constantly undergoes during life - to reflect - how we do not wonder that diseases may arise from alterations of the blood - when we consider the numerous circumstances by which it may be altered - Atmospheric vicissitudes - Aliment, drinks and the various conditions of the nervous system - by which all the secretions are governed - All exert a powerful influence on the blood and may give rise to numerous derangements in the system - On this account, look on this fluid as "fons et origo" of Hypochondriasis -

It is now fully established that if the retention of any substance in the body, that is usually rejected, has a very prejudicial influence on the system - But this requires careful observation in rightly estimating its effects and appreciating its reality -

For if any secretion or excretion be imperfectly performed

invariably almost, we have a compensating action ~~one~~
set up. There is an increased action in the parts.
The effects are still greater activity of vessels - still
excitation - and this usually takes place in some part
with which this abnormal condition has a concurrent
function - as from the Brain to Kidney - Lungs and
Skin and so on -

But if we suppose that there is no compensat-
ing action set up - What is the result? - For it is of
little consequence whether the influence be as coarse
and tangible as a bullet: or as mysterious and
refined as the passions - As far as they are equ-
ally injurious influences acting on our physical
organization the mode of dealing with them uniform
for they alike produce gradual and more or less
continued disturbance exactly according to the
state of the body and the intensity of their
actions -

If we take for instance anger or grief, just as
we see them applied with greater or less intensity
in different conditions of the system, we observe
every class of results in kind, that we notice to
follow other injurious influences - The immediate
effects in certain persons are excitement and excitation -

It is true that certain intensities of passions overcome these relations, as Anger, Fear, &c in great excess will equally stop the heart's action - But the usual forms of Anger the will much more frequently excite the heart and skin - Fear the heart and kidney - The latter we find sometimes occurs in Hypochondriasis - one of the symptoms frequently complained of is palpitation, and some believe that the quantity of urine is also increased -

If the passions act in a more subdued and incontinued form they appear to produce effects having a close analogy to the action of alcohol - The pathology of alcoholic intoxication according to Dr Carpenter and the "modus operandi" of the poison have been fully made out by experiments and observations. Thus ^{that} when alcoholic liquors are introduced into the stomach should undergo rapid absorption into the sanguiferous system is precisely what might be anticipated from our knowledge of the conditions under which that absorption takes place; and there is ample evidence that such is the case - Thus Dr Percy was always able to detect the alcohol in the blood of the animals, which he had poisoned by injecting alcohol into the stomach, provided they did not live too long afterwards: and

M. Bouchardat and Candreas have more recently determined its presence in blood of gastric veins -

The rapidity with which the absorption takes place may be judged by the fact, that in one of Dr Percy's experiments in which the animal fell lifeless to the ground immediately that the injection of the alcohol into the stomach was completed (the respiratory movements and pulsations of the heart entirely ceasing within two minutes) the stomach was found nearly void, whilst the blood was thoroughly impregnated with alcohol - Hence it may be reasonably inferred that in all ordinary cases of intoxication, and in a great number of cases of death from the introduction of alcohol into the stomach the effects are produced by the passage of the alcohol into the current of the circulation so as to extend a direct action on the nervous centres, and this influence is confirmed by the fact that Dr Percy has demonstrated its presence in considerable amount in the substance of the brain*.

Now we are aware that there exist certain morbid conditions of the blood, the causes of which

* Dr Carpenter Prize Essay on alcoholic liquors p 17. 18.

may be superior - Yet the effects are as palpable
on the nervous centres, as that we find to take place
with alcohol - Many of these are applied so grad-
ually as not to produce ^{such} excitement as takes place
with alcohol, but just that sensible increase of
action on organs which leads to a gradual and
morbid condition of other organs and thus a deviation
of the healthy condition takes place - There is then
an actual poisoning, as well as imperfect nutrition
of organs - These nourished by not only a poor but
poisoned blood, which is the result of the want
a proper elimination from the system - The blood
being deranged this state interferes with perfect
Sanguification, a poor nutrient fluid is carried
to the brain which becomes as a consequence ill-
nourished - Now when we consider the causes that
give rise to Hypochondriasis as exemplified in
intemperance, how the various morbid symptoms
can arise from derangement of the brain and
other nervous centres - As we have already shown
that the mind as in fear and grief exercises a
direct influence over all the bodily functions -
It is easy to see that the depressing passions
must to a very considerable extent operate in

This way — all the secretions are under the influence of the emotional feelings to a remarkable degree —

For instance intense sorrow suspends the secretion of Gastric juice — sudden fright stimulates the action of the Kidney to an unusual degree — anger arrests the action of the Liver — even tears do not flow when grief is violent — We find then that a certain amount of nervous stimulus is necessary their due performance, that changes in the quality and amount of this stimulus are capable of modifying their actions — Therefore whatever causes impairs, or suspends this nervous influence must necessarily diminish, derange or arrest this important functions — And as a consequence derangement to this system

We are all conversant with the almost overwhelming influence which mental emotions of an agreeable character have upon health in arousing abnormally the vital actions — We also know the pernicious effects which mental depression gives rise too in depriving the body of that stimulus so necessary to the harmony of the system —

This points out, how close the relationship that exists between the vascular and nervous system, and how impossible it is to affect

the one, without more or less impairing the other —

It would be foreign to our subject to enumerate all the causes that act as depressing or exciting agents —

But however varied these may be the effects are similar.

It is not to be considered ^{at} them, that slight effects brought about slowly, but not less certainly should interfere in some degree, ^{with} the functions of a fluid so necessary for the due performance of the functions of life, and how exhilarating impressions should have an opposite effect (unless in excess)

We might bring under review a large class of diseases which derive their origin from disturbances of the organic elements in blood — in which the vital and chemical forces expel some of these elements — or from a deficiency of these forces are unable to eliminate ^{them} from the system — If we take Bright's disease of the kidney the blood in that disease is deprived to a considerable extent of its serum — one portion escapes into the cavities and tissues of the body: whilst the other is removed by the kidney — The presence of albumen in the urine indicates a disturbance of the circulating fluid — We ^{know} say Dr. Jones "that the kidneys are not to form urine but to separate from the blood substances that are useless or hurtful to

The system - any organ that is erect must be repaired
and the substances that have been used must be removed -
Take the muscle for example: The muscle consists of water
salts non-nitrogenous fat and a highly complex arrange-
ment of Carbon, Hydrogen Nitrogen, Oxygen, Sulphur
Phosphorus, - Carbonic Acid Sulphates & Phosphates, water
are the last products of muscular action, and of the action
of oxygen on the muscle - The intervening products,
probably, ~~are~~ are innumerable: Creatin, Creatinine, uric
acid, urea, lactic acid - some of the products
are thrown out of the body by the lungs, others by
the kidneys - If the removal of some of these products
by the lungs is stopped, the circulation through
the lung ceases in two minutes; the functions of the
heart and brain are arrested, and from the mecha-
-nical stoppage in the lungs death ensues - If
their removal by the kidneys is stopped in ten days
the patient is poisoned: The nerves and muscles
are affected by the poisons and chemical death
ensues* - Such is the result of the retention of substances
in the body, which ought to have been excreted by the
Lung, Kidney &c - We know that there may be various
degrees of intensity of such effects, arising from morbid

* F. W. Jones on the relations of the urine to the Food & the System London: Long 1850

States of the blood - Besides there exists under certain conditions of the system a selective power of certain organs - Thus the fixation of Syphilitic poison to the skin and periosteum - of the poison of scarlet fever to the tonsils and lymphatic glands - of measles to the lungs - of cholera to the gastro-intestinal mucous membrane and also particular parts of the body in Gout and Rheumatism, when the blood is largely changed with the poison - It in no degree militates against the humoral view of the pathology of Gout, ^{that} the morbid matter selects the great toe as its favourite locality - or against Rheumatism that the morbid poison is prone to attack the knee -

These are fundamental facts in pathology and one of great importance in pointing out, how certain organs of the body become affected by the presence of certain morbid poisons - The result of which are as obvious, as that of other poisons, although some of them may exist in such minute quantities, as not to be detected by the most careful analysis: that will notwithstanding, localize in particular organs: or even in particular spots of the same organ.

It will I think appear not improbable, and in accordance with the pathological laws, we have mentioned - If we view

Hypochondriasis as depending upon the presence of certain morbid substances existing in the blood acting on the brain and other nervous centres and through them, giving rise to ^{the} phenomena of symptoms we have considered, - Believing as we do that this disease depends on the presence of certain morbid substances existing in the blood - producing a source of irritation on the nervous centres and that in ^{the} central axis a diffusion of this irritation takes place through the grey or white matter, so that it involves other nerve fibres, and as a consequence this impression is diffused to distant parts - producing sensations far beyond the part in which the primary impression was produced.

We know that mental influences may be conducted from the brain through a succession of nervous centres - the spinal chord and ganglia - to one or more ganglia of the sympathetic to produce the influence of the mind on the organic functions - Not less so, with the presence of morbid substances acting on nervous centres - We know also the functions of the pneumogastric nerve, more particularly of its oesophageal and gastric branches, how mental influences acts on these nerves through the central axis -

We know too how quickly poisons taken into the circulation react on them - Considering Hypochondriasis in this light, will explain in some degree, the pain and palpitation of the heart, and also how the solar plexus may become to a certain extent impeded in its function by the presence of morbid substances existing in the blood + as it is that portion of the nervous system through which splenic, hepatic and gastric functions are supplied with nervous influence - When disturbance of these takes place, uneasy feelings and painful sensations may be produced from this derangement of functions, - and account in some measure for many of the patients symptoms, which are referred to this region of the body - This view of Hypochondriasis will not appear so improbable when we consider, that in Gout, which depends on morbid substances existing in the blood - that disordered circulation of the Celiac axis gives rise to the affection termed "gout in the stomach" -

What this morbid substance is I am at present not prepared to say? But from the information obtained by the examination of the wine much valuable and important information has been gained by the

Aid of Chemistry and ^{the} Microscope - The presence of oxalate
of lime in the urine, and the symptoms which ^{accompany} the
presence of this salt when in excess, are very
much allied to the disease under our consideration -
Since Dr. Wirtz in the 1st edition of his work on urinary
deposits, pointed out the frequency of oxalate of
lime in the urine, many doubted his statement;
or if they did not, they considered its presence
as of no importance - Dr. Jones says "oxalate of lime
is so frequently found in the urine of those
who are in good health, that I do not consider
it as indicating any disease, but only a dis-
order of no serious importance." - He adds "scarcely
indicates a more serious derangement of the
general health than waste of ammonia" - *

Dr. Garrod in treating of this subject is more definite
than Dr. Jones; thus he says "when the uratic diathesis
is thoroughly established it depends on some, that
assimilation and ^{seems} to have a close connection with
the digestive functions, and perhaps considering
the diseased state in which oxalates are found
in the urine, it would be proper to separate
them into two classes, one in which oxalates are"

* Dr. H. B. Jones Lancet July 1859 -

"occasionally found; in the other where oxalic acid is a constant constituent in the urine, and in a great measure replaces this latter body in which the relative amount of urea is greater than in health - In such a condition a series of symptoms are generally present, usually of a nervous character, great depression of spirits, incapability of exertion; or extreme depression after slight exertion, dull heavy pains in loins - dyspeptic symptoms" - *

Dr. Mead in his new edition on urinary deposits agrees in the statement of Dr. Gurood - he states - "It is impossible to connect any definite set of symptoms with all cases in which oxalate of lime appears in the urine, indeed persons will often go about their ordinary duties in apparently fair health for a long time and yet be constantly secreting oxalate of lime - In consequence of this some persons have actually affirmed, that it has no relation with any pathological state of the system, and its appearance in the urine of no consequence - This opinion can result from very limited experience alone, - indeed

* Dr. Gurood Lectures Lancet 1848 -

"I am not sure that Lehmann valuable as his opinions as a Chemist has any claim to our confidence, as a Physician, and he is chiefly referred to as advocating the erroneous view I have alluded to — If this kind of reasoning be admitted the existence of albumen, or blood ^{in the urine}, might be regarded as of no importance because we often find patients afflicted with this very condition, and yet are so free from apparent indisposition, that we are enabled to persuade them to take care of their health until the disease indicated by the state of the urine in question has proceeded to an incurable condition* — I cannot refrain from making a further extract from this valuable work more particularly on the symptoms which those labouring under this diathesis present, ^{and} ~~then~~ more especially from the close analogy and approximations they have with many of the symptoms of Hypochondriasis —

Thus he states "that persons afflicted with the form of disease referable to this class are generally remarkably depressed in spirits, and their melancholy aspect has often enabled me to suspect the

* Dr. Golding Bird on Urinary deposits 1837

Presence of oxalic acid in the urine - Sometimes a peculiar livid greenish hue of the surface has been observed, but more especially the face has a dark and dingy aspect common in some forms of dyspepsia in which the functions of the liver are deranged -

They are generally much emaciated excepting in slight cases, which extremely nervous and painfully susceptible to external impressions often hysterical to an extreme degree - and in many cases labour under the impression that they are about to fall victims to consumption -

They complain bitterly of incapability of exerting themselves, the slightest exertion bringing on fatigue - In temper they are irritable and excitable: in men the sexual power is generally deficient and often absent: an effect probably ^{due} to exhaustion produced by the excessive secretion of urea, so common in this affection - A severe and constant pain across the loins is generally a prominent symptom, with often some amount of irritability of the bladder - The mental faculties are generally, but slightly affected, loss of memory being sometimes more or less present. Well-marked dyspeptic feelings are always complained of

"Indeed in most of the cases in which I have been consulted - I have been told the patient was ailing, losing flesh health and spirits daily: or becoming persistently ill and weak without any definite or demonstrable cause" * -

The predisposing causes which induce this state of the system are also in close approximation with that which gives rise to Hypochondriasis - But the question naturally suggests itself to us is analuric and this disease one and the same - I think in the present state of our knowledge on both diseases it would be rather premature to come to the conclusion that they were - As the pathological conditions of the system which induce these diseases and give what we have stated of the evidence of uric acid, indicating a derangement in the system - so far corroborates the views we have advanced in regard to Hypochondriasis - as it clearly points out a derangement existing in the blood - The same holds true in Hypochondriasis from what we have stated warrants us to show the following generalization of the pathology of this disease -

* B. C. Bird urinary deposits -

I, As hypochondriasis is a disease occurring for the most part at the adult period when the brain is peculiarly liable to suffer from mental shocks: or other causes of disturbances of the system and more particularly the blood becoming altered and generating some morbid substances, which act as irritating agents —

II, That the nature of the cerebral affection is one of weakened nutrition accompanied with irritation arising from the existence of certain morbid matter in the blood — acting on the brain causing it to generate its forces more feebly and irregularly, than in health —

III, That the sympathetic system, — as the solar plexus &c become disturbed in their functions by the presence of this morbid state of the blood — and as a consequence give rise to various troublesome and uneasy sensations —

Diagnosis

as we have already stated that hypochondriasis has been regarded by some as a disease closely allied to some others of entirely different type — on this account it is of importance to be able

to distinguish it from others, to which it is more or less liable to be confounded with —

I. From Dyspepsia - by languor, fear of death, Concentration of the whole mind on self - But dyspeptic symptoms are more or less present in Hypochondriasis. Dyspepsia seldom assumes so aggravated a form and is generally more amenable to treatment -

II. From Melancholy - Hypochondriasis generally bears so close a resemblance to several varieties of genuine Melancholy - as to be often distinguished from the former with very great difficulty; the more so as it is not an uncommon thing for Hypochondriasis to terminate in Melancholy; or for Melancholy to be combined with Hypochondriasis - There is however this distinction between these two diseases - True Melancholy even in those whose health is much deranged seldom arises except from mental causes such as grief and distress, joined to the corporeal ones - Melancholy may be said to be always excited by mental causes - arising from the various forms of Grief, Despondency and Despair, where everything is viewed through the medium of gloom and despondency - Whereas Hypochondriasis though low spirited and dejected one in a very different state of mind from persons

Suffering under melancholy - The morbid feelings and
Complaints arise generally from corporeal causes and the
Mental phenomena consist of erroneous ideas entertained
by the patient about their body health - In other
Subjects they think and converse rationally, occasion-
ally with cheerfulness, their feelings and affections
are not in that perverted and withered condition
(except in extreme cases) which is one of the most
characteristic symptoms of melancholy -

III, From Chronic gastro-enteric inflammation - In
this disease it will often be difficult to draw a
line of demarcation - There is generally little pain
felt on pressure in hypochondriasis and that they
bear strong and continued pressure better than
slight and momentary - whereas it usually causes
severe pain when there is much abdominal inflam-
mation - In hypochondriasis the bowels are generally
constipated, in the gastro-enteric affections they are gener-
ally loose and variable - The absence of febrile
symptoms - the capability of using exercise with consid-
-erable degree of muscular strength - appetite not so much
impaired - will alone be sufficient for us to recognize the
one disorder from the other -

IV, From Hysteria says Dr. Bennett. that hypochondriasis

is characterized by a false direction of the moral energy and is generally associated with inactivity, a concentration upon self and a disposition to have recourse to a great variety of Medical Practitioners - Hysteria is accompanied with vicious innovations, fitful activity, and often with lively interest in the welfare of others and with confidence in the usual Medical attendants - The former disorder is marked by sullen countenance, gloomy ideas and dejected spirits: The latter by a restless animated expression - Convulsive jerks, spasms and fickle temper - We must however remember that the two diseases are not incompatible and that hysterical hypochondriacisms does occasionally occur*

Prognosis

When the case is one of purely hypochondriasis we need entertain no fear as to any immediate danger to life - In advanced cases there is danger, however of it merging into fixed melancholy and of being complicated with serious organic disease -

The patients feelings too, reacting on the body produce general derangement of the bodily functions -

* J. Bennett and Hysteria - Library of Pract. Medicine

Treatment,

In the preceding pages, we have endeavoured to show how injuriously the circulation of unhealthy blood operates both on the body and mind and the necessity that exists for removing from the system matters which give rise to the disease we have been considering -

It now remains to consider the Treatment, this must rest on a basis which will be best suited to restore the system to its normal condition -

The plan of treatment will be considered under the following heads I. Moral, II. Medical, III. Hygienic,

I. Moral treatment must be made to act in every way on the mind of the hypochondriac - by the numberless indirect and external means which we may call into operation - so that by a kind of education, we may supplant and correct those aberrations and defects previously observed in the thoughts, feelings and affections of the patient.

It will be necessary to attend minutely to the catalogue of symptoms which they describe, and endeavour by tact and kindness to gain their esteem and confidence - whereby we may be enabled to make the most of our resources to overcome.

The repugnance and opposition frequently offered by them of our assistance - When this step is gained they will submit more readily and cheerfully to whatever we may require of them -

As many of the causes which induce this malady are of a moral nature, our first duty will be to ascertain their previous history, and endeavour as far as possible to know the exact origin of the disease - and removing them as far as may be practicable - by the patients laying aside their former habits and reversing the moral influences which induced the disease -

A suspension and removal from the ordinary duties for a time - by change of residence and travelling - The benefits to be derived from change of scene and travelling in such diseases, few will call in question - As the mind abstracted from the cares, anxieties and preoccupations of business &c - (more especially in a country such as ours where speculations of various kinds and reverses often arising from these are among the causes which induce this malady) The advantage then of travelling where a constant succession of new and interesting objects are constantly presenting themselves to the eye and thus diverting the attention - leave little time for reflection on the past: or gloomy

Anticipation²⁴ of the future - No such there is a pleasing influence, created on the minds of those so occupied, and a greater degree of serenity than was previously observed -

The functions of the body soon participate in salutary benefits derived from the exhilaration of the mind, and in proportion will the abnormal susceptibilities of the patients subside -

In many cases of recent origin, such a mode of treatment will alone prove sufficient, - but in those of long standing may require other means to restore the functions of the body and mind to their normal condition - We will consider next, what advantages may we expect from: -

II Medical Treatment Our attention should ^{be} chiefly directed to the state of the secretions, and excretions, and the remedies we may have recourse to such as will stimulate them to increased activity - Excesses secretions may be removed by the use of medicines but their reproductions is what we must try and prevent -

As Constipation is one of the most common symptoms it will be necessary to correct this condition of the alimentary canal by the use of such aperients as are best adapted for unloading the bowels of their contents, and at the same time least depressing

to the general system - The Saline aperients seem best adapted for this purpose - but it may be necessary to premise the use of these with some of the bitter purgatives, as Compound Colocynthis Pill or Compound Scammony of Aloes, with alternate doses of blue pill - as these cause a more copious secretion from the secreting surfaces as well as stimulating the liver to increased action -

But it must not be overlooked that the frequent use of aperients create a strong desire for their continuance - It will be necessary to use other means to be considered to avoid as far as possible their constant use -

As want of sleep is one of the most distressing symptoms it may be advisable to use for a few nights, along with the other remedies, small doses of Dover's powder to allay the susceptibility and to stimulate the skin to increased action - The use of tonics may in some cases also be of service -

III. Hygienic treatment: -

A. Diet,

B. Bathing,

C. Air and Exercise,

D. Clothing.

A. Diet In considering what the patients should use for

for food - Whether they should live exclusively on animal or vegetable diet - I consider that a mixed diet the one best adapted and such that he may receive a sufficient amount of nourishment, and not over-stimulating in its nature - To obtain by the formation of healthy blood that both the quality and quantity be such as may be adapted to the constitution of the patient -

But before we can expect to derive much benefit: or look for any permanent improvement, the digestive organs must be restored to their normal condition, as they are in most cases more or less deranged as a secondary cause -

This will be obtained in some measure by the means which excite secretion - by which expenditure is created and the blood at the same time purified: thus healthy action of the stomach will be restored and functions of assimilation promoted -

B. Bathing: The skin is an extensive sensitive and excreting surface and the importance of free action as well as the sympathy which exists between the external surface of the body and the internal organs -

The Tepid bath will prove a most valuable auxiliary in the commencement of our treatment, by restoring the functions of the cutaneous vessels, so as to stimulate them to get from the blood substances otherwise deleterious

And also prevent the undue accumulation of the blood in the internal organs - This will assist materially in reestablishing and maintaining the healthy secretions - After the use of this for a short period the substitution of the Shower bath and friction over the surface of the whole body with cold water will be beneficial -

C. Air and Exercise - While the diet is regulated in quantity and quality - and the skin daily purified by ~~Abundant~~^{by} active exercise will be absolutely necessary for at least two hours each day - The effects of this will be all the more salutary if a degree of perspiration be excited by it - By this increased action of the skin, much deleterious or matter is removed from the system - At the same time by the general increased action of the circulatory and respiratory system the blood is exposed more frequently to the purifying influence of air - The blood in its passage through the lungs is freed from much carbonaceous matter, and at the same time other effete matters are oxidized preparatory to their removal from the system by the other secreting glands -

D. Clothing - The frequent change of the inner clothing is a most essential part of our

Treatment, as it, not only imparts a feeling of Comfort
to the Patients - as well as prevents the injurious effects
which would arise from the reabsorption of Matters
secreted from the Surface of the body -

A. Good Thesis

W. G.

The author has omitted to show, in support of
his view of the nature of the disease, that the urine
always or generally contains oxalate of lime.

W. G.

Dudman

Ans. Compt. to Compt.

Sub. to Mr. Van
Kadant. 1852

1852