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TREATISE
ON THE
PRINCIPAL DISEASES
OF
DUBLIN.

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TREATISE

Book

ON THE

PRINCIPAL DISEASES

OF

DUBLIN.



BY

MARTIN TUOMY, M. D.

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PREFACE



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THE Materials of the following pages have been collected from observations made in a course of several years private practice, and in a very extensive range of dispensary practice during those eight years past. In the Dublin General Dispensary I had many opportunities of appreciating the value of different remedies in the diseases which occurred at that institution, of marking the variety of those diseases, of comparing their symptoms, and of classing them according to the resemblance discovered between them, and to the nature of the remedies, which after a fair but cautious trial, proved most effectual in accomplishing a cure. The inferences which I had been enabled to draw from those observations in dispensary practice, were analagous to those which followed under similar circumstances in private practice, with only such variety as arose from diversity of habits and of delicacy, and which principally related to the doses of medicines: I have taken pains to point out this variety in the course of the work.

I found that in many disorders, whatever might have been the original exciting cause, a morbid or diseased secretion



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secretion in the alimentary canal, and in the abdominal viscera, particularly the liver, occasioned the greatest part or the whole of the patient's suffering; though that injured secretion could only be considered as the effect of the primary causes; and that the remedies which restored the healthy secretions of these organs were the best for curing the disease. A great number of particular instances, irresistibly leading to this general induction, impelled me to adopt the classification of hepatic and bilious diseases, which will be found in the following pages.

Some diseases, of an acknowledged inflammatory nature, are classed together without much regard to systematic order; their inflammatory appearance, and ordinary danger, being the only particulars that led to this arrangement.

Some epidemics, which appeared in great numbers, returned at different periods, and afforded a very extensive range of observation and practice, are also taken notice of, and that mode of treatment recommended which experience and repeated trials proved to be most effectual.

A number of cutaneous disorders, unattended with fever, are described according to their leading symptoms, without any attempt whatever at system; because, as far as I have been able to ascertain, there has not yet been any classification of them which could tend to introduce
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sounder practice, though it might assist to facilitate the description of their symptoms: most of those disorders are found principally to affect the poor, but some of them are met with in all ranks of society.

A few spasmodic diseases which have frequently occurred in practice, especially in dispensary practice, are also treated of; the frequency of their occurrence being the only cause of the preference given to them more than to other complaints of the same class. And for a similar reason some sexual diseases are mentioned, which are often a source of deep affliction, especially amongst the poor.

I have dwelt on dropsy at some length, in consequence of its frequency and danger. Instances of it presented themselves almost daily at the Dublin General Dispensary. From the acknowledged fatality of this disease, I exerted myself to ascertain which of the many remedies recommended for its cure will prove successful in most cases; and I had the satisfaction at length of adopting a method which is effectual in several instances, indeed in a majority of instances, unless there had been some primary incurable disease as the foundation of the dropsy: thus dropsy arising from suppressed perspiration, from fatigue, or connected with slight and curable obstructions in the liver, will be removed in a majority of cases; but dropsy caused by ossified and aneurismal arteries, by ossification of the valves

valves at the mouths of the great blood-vessels, or by a diseased heart, cannot be cured, even though the collected fluid may pro tempore be carried away by means of medicines.

Typhus, or contagious, or spotted fever, is another disease which I have treated pretty largely, in consequence of its very serious nature, and of the ravages which it has been known to commit in Dublin, until the institution of the fever hospital in Cork-street has almost banished it from the higher ranks, and greatly reduced its frequency and malignity amongst the poor. The blessings of that great monument of philanthropy are incalculable; and this is less to be wondered at when we consider that it is in a great degree directed by the characteristic industry, the rigid honesty, and the unlimited benevolence of the Quakers.

It was impossible to strike out exact limits, which in all cases might distinguish typhus from bilious fever, as some of their symptoms are frequently intermixed to a certain extent; I think, however, there cannot be much doubt about their being different diseases, and in many essential circumstances very distinct from each other.

It was my original intention to treat separately of the principal diseases of children; but from considering that most of the diseases which afflict infancy and childhood are

are frequently met with amongst grown persons also, I preferred the plan of introducing them into the body of the work: I likewise abandoned my first intention of publishing one or more cases of clinical patients after each disease for the purpose of illustration, because such a plan would swell the book to a very large bulk, without adding materially to its value.

As to the remedies detailed in the appendix, it will perhaps be objected that they are often unchemically combined; thus, for instance, calomel is sometimes triturated with other substances which have the quality of taking up some of the acid of the calomel, and thereby bringing it nearer to a metallic state. I am perfectly aware of the truth of the remark in this and some other instances, which might be pointed out; but my answer is, that the medicine has, notwithstanding, the effect which I wish, and that the slight decomposition produced in those cases is an event which accords with the indication of giving the medicine. In the instance specified for example, the medicine is not intended to act solely as a purgative, but gradually to affect the biliary secretions, a quality which it possesses in a higher degree when its purgative powers are somewhat repressed, and when the medicine is in a less saline state.

In the minds of some persons there is a prejudice against the use of mercurial medicines altogether, because they conceive

conceive them injurious to certain delicate constitutions, especially where there is a scrophulous taint. Mercury, it may be observed, is given with three different views; first, with the intent of being largely conveyed into the system, and there producing the sensible effects of salivation, &c.; the 2nd intent is that of exhibiting it in such a cautious manner as that it shall act slightly upon the secretory organs, particularly the liver, and perhaps preserve a regular state of the bowels at the same time; and the 3d is, that of giving it in some of its saline preparations, so that it shall affect the alimentary canal as a purgative, and dislodge the morbid and not unfrequently putrid contents of the bowels without being absorbed into the system. The 2d and 3d indications of mercury are perfectly consistent even with scrophulous delicacy; and with those indications it is often exhibited not only without injury but with decided benefit. As to the 1st, in which the medicine is conveyed copiously into the system, it must frequently take place even in scrophula, namely, in venereal complaints: but with a view to scrophula only, there are good grounds for questioning the propriety of liberal exhibitions of mercury; it does not appear to exert any salutary influence upon the lacteal or lymphatic glands, the ordinary seat of scrophula, except when there is venereal infection. To quarrel then with this excellent remedy as being dangerous in rousing the latent morbidity of scrophula in all cases is neither just nor philosophical; the distinctions pointed out above are necessary

necessary to be observed in speaking with fair and correct accuracy on the subject.

I have studiously avoided a display of great variety in the medicines which I recommended, and confined myself to those alone which I have been decided by experience in preferring. It has been my earnest exertion to dwell principally upon points of practical utility, and to make the whole as simple, as intelligible, and as interesting as possible.

M. T.



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Bilious and Hepatic Diseases

OF

DUBLIN.



UNDER this general character, I have included a number of diseases, which in systematic works are far differently arranged; and however objectionable this classification might appear at first sight, I trust, that, upon examination, it will be found at least as consistent with practical observation, and as useful in regulating the mode of treatment, as any of the arrangements commonly adopted. In this class of diseases, it is true, there are some features in which they differ from one another; and consequently there is some variety in the quality of the medicines to be employed; but, throughout the whole class there appears a morbid secretion of the fluids of the abdominal viscera, particularly of the bile: there is a great resemblance between them in their leading symptoms; and the same method of cure in its most prominent outlines is adapted to them all.

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