

# THE SYMPTOMATOLOGY AND DIAGNOSIS OF SMALL-POX FROM A STUDY OF THIRTY- THREE CASES.\*

By G. E. GREENWAY, M.B., TORONTO.  
Resident Staff, Toronto General Hospital.

The subject is of particular interest to the medical profession, not only clinically, because of its terrible ravages when left untrammelled, but also because it is one of the oldest diseases known to medical writers. It is very ancient, dating back between three and four thousand years.

The earliest references to small-pox are to be found in Hindostanese many centuries before the beginning of the Christian era, and next to these come those of the Chinese, which date from the twelfth century, B.C. To an Arabian physician of Bagdad, about 600 A.D., we are indebted for the first accurate treatise upon the subject. It is also thought to have prevailed in early Greece and Rome and to have been the "pesta magna" described by Galen.

During the Middle Ages little is known of the progress of small-pox in Europe, but that it existed is evident from monastic writings recording miraculous cures that happened. Manuscripts in the British Museum, written in England during the tenth century, contain references to its ravages and prayers used in defence or deliverance from these.

In the Dark Ages little is to be found concerning it, but mention of its virulence and prevalence is to be found. So widespread was it that one writer remarks, "all persons are attacked by it in the course of their lives," while another held "that almost every person must have it once."

From the writings of these it is learned that small-pox was one of the most severe and dangerous diseases to which mankind was subject, and that up to the beginning of the nineteenth century it had descended from generation to generation with undiminished violence, and that every effort previously made to check it had failed. Amongst aboriginal races it has proved to be terribly fatal, especially in the New World. The Mexicans died by thousands, while of the American Indians fifty per cent. fell victims to small-pox. This immense loss of human lives was not the sole evil produced by this disease, for a large proportion of the survivors were pitted and disfigured; some lost one of their eyes, others became totally blind, and

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