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Selections: Medicine.

ON CHRONIC BRIGHT'S DISEASE, AND ITS ESSENTIAL SYMPTOMS.

BY F. A. MAHOMED, M.D.

My first and main contention, as I have already stated, is that high pressure exists as a constant condition in the circulation of some individuals, and that this condition is a symptom of a certain constitution or diathesis, and indicates certain well-defined tendencies to disease. For this diathesis no name at present exists; it might perhaps very properly be termed Bright's diathesis, inasmuch as it tends to produce the disease bearing his name. Exception may perhaps be taken to the use of the word diathesis; it is considered by some an inaccurate word, without definite meaning. Perhaps no more exact definition of the nature of a diathesis can be given at present than to say that it implies a certain habit or tendency towards wrong-doing of a particular kind, by either blood, tissues, or organs; and it would appear that if we include blood among the tissues we should be nearly correct in limiting these diseased tendencies to certain tissues. Such confusion appears to exist in the minds of many between *diatheses* and *temperaments*. These two terms have completely distinct meanings, and it is important to distinguish clearly between them. The former may be regarded as a pathological expression implying certain tendencies towards disease; the latter as a physiological one, describing certain habits of the body in health, or modes of nutrition. Unfortunately, some of the former conditions are synonymous with some

of the latter, and thus great confusion has arisen. True, *temperaments* are of very old date, and doubtless took origin in old and exploded medical superstitions; yet many think, and I believe rightly, that under the name of certain temperaments may be grouped certain classes among individuals, the individuals of each class having many similarities of development and nutrition, both physical and mental, as well perhaps as certain similar tendencies towards disease. On the other hand, *diatheses* apply wholly to tendencies towards disease in individuals in whom the disease may or may not have manifested itself. A diathesis may be either inherited or acquired; those best known are the gouty, rheumatic, nervous, lymphatic or tubercular, cancerous, and perhaps syphilitic. To these I would add the "high pressure," or Bright's diathesis. All these diseases are characterized by groups of minor disorders, produced by their local manifestations. They are not diseases with only one set of symptoms, or affecting only one organ, like pneumonia, gastric catarrh, or nephritis, but they imprint their own peculiar features on the local diseases which they produce. That there are such conditions as these I suppose few would deny. Their relations to temperaments it would be out of place to discuss here.

Overwhelming proof of the existence of this high pressure diathesis can be readily obtained by anyone who cares to investigate the matter with the sphygmograph; all that I ask is that it should not be denied without such an investigation. People who are subjects of this diathesis frequently belong to gouty families, or have themselves suffered from symptoms of