

forms of local inflammation are almost invariably attended by remarkable disease of this organ: among these may be mentioned asthenic anthrax, and erysipelas.*

I have already, in an early part of these remarks, given a sketch of the class of persons who appear most liable to sink under extensive internal inflammatory affections in consequence of slight accidental injuries—and operations, in themselves, of a safe and ordinary kind. It is merely necessary to repeat, that, although in a great many instances in the prime of life, and to all appearance of robust and vigorous constitutions, their vital powers have generally been undermined by various kinds of intemperance and neglect, and the principal abdominal viscera have long been subject to some of the derangements upon which I have already dwelt. In this way, their powers of reparation after injury have become almost entirely destroyed, and they are thereby rendered wholly unfit to endure the trying effects which any operation or violence necessarily produces in the system.

With regard to inflammatory affections which arise in various parts, as the sequelæ of comparatively trivial and superficial wounds, in these unhealthy subjects, it may be stated, that, in their mode of attack, in their symptoms, and in the peculiar characters of the morbid appearances which are discoverable after death, they appear, for the most part, to be perfectly identical with those fatal inflammations of various structures which so frequently attack patients who are known to be suffering from certain forms of *Morbus Brighti*; and I feel assured that a large proportion of the traumatic cases differ from the above class of idiopathic ones, solely in the difference of the immediately-exciting cause which brings them into play.

I must therefore repeat, that it is probable neither to the severity of the operation or injury, nor to the irritation which it creates in the nervous system; to the effects of bad ventilation, or of long confinement; nor, in fact, to the action of any other general cause, that we are principally to ascribe the predisposition of this class of patients to the fatal lesions under consideration; but rather to influences of a diseased state of their abdominal organs, to which their previous habits of life have long been subjecting them. It is highly probable that in most of the individuals who thus perish, even if they had never become the subject of any wound or injury, some other vicissitude would, by bringing the renal hepatic mischief into active operation, have equally determined the occurrence of fatal cerebral, thoracic, or abdominal inflammations.†

* It often, but by no means invariably, appears that fatal results are promoted by the patient's catching cold during the period of restless excitement which follows severe injuries: this, doubtless, also assists in calling renal diseases into activity, where the kidneys have been previously liable to disorder; and may then, in some measure, aid in determining the occurrence of pulmonary or other inflammations. But still, it is certain that many fatal cases of thoracic inflammations, consequent upon injuries, occur, in which there is no satisfactory evidence of the patient having suffered from cold.

† It is not intended to be argued that operations or injuries will be certainly destructive to life, in every individual suffering from renal or other visceral diseases:—it is merely necessary to shew how slight a violence will often give rise to fatal mischief in cases of this description. I could cite other cases, in which small punctures, the passing of a catheter, the wound made in bleeding, blows upon fleshy parts of the body, the extraction of a tooth, were shortly followed by fatal results, in persons suffering from disease of the kidneys, &c. The last-mentioned case is a very remarkable one, and occurred in the hospital about two years since:—the patient, a girl eighteen years of age, had sloughing of the gum and cheek, after the extraction of the molar tooth, which continued until the facial artery ulcerated, and this accident happening in the night, the hemorrhage proved fatal. Upon examination after death, the kidneys were found enlarged and indurated, their tunics being closely adherent to the cortical surface. The liver was highly congested.