

CHAPTER II.

ACUTE INFLAMMATIONS OF THE PHARYNX.

ACUTE PHARYNGITIS.

THIS is one of the conditions most commonly met with in the throat, and most of us have had personal experience of it. It is more liable to occur in autumn and winter than in summer, it is common in measles, scarlet fever, smallpox, and typhoid, and is a frequent manifestation in syphilis. It may also occur after the administration of certain drugs, such as iodide of potassium, mercury, and arsenic; while gouty or rheumatic persons are more liable to be attacked than other individuals.

SYMPTOMS.—An attack begins with a feeling of dryness (due to slight pyrexia), pains in the limbs and back, and a sensation of rawness in the throat, which sometimes amounts to actual pain. Cough may be present; there is a varying degree of pain in swallowing, and if the process extends to the larynx the voice becomes hoarse. On examining the throat there is seen a marked congestion of the mucosa, accompanied by some swelling which gives a succulent appearance to the parts. The tonsils, the anterior and posterior pillars of the fauces, the soft palate, and the posterior wall of the pharynx may all share in the congestion, and the uvula may become œdematous.

TREATMENT.—A good many people do not undergo any treatment, but if advice is sought at the beginning of the attack, the patient should be recommended to retire to bed early after a very hot bath, and to take aspirin, gr. x. A Turkish bath will sometimes abort an impending attack. To relieve the rawness of the throat, equal parts of boroglyceride in glycerine may be applied, and a woollen scarf or stocking should be worn round the throat at night. A favourite German remedy, known as a Priessnitz compress, may be substituted; it is applied in the following way: A cloth wrung out of cold water is wound round the neck; this is covered by a layer of oiled silk, while the whole is bound round with a woollen comforter.