

mistaken for other complaints, and treated on erroneous principles. The pains are felt at different parts of the body, and general lassitude, or want of power in a particular limb, is complained of, but no cognizance is taken of the spine, the seat of the disease. And it is often only after the complaint has existed for some time, that the patient becomes sensible of weakness in that part of the body, and the attention of the physician is directed to it. Hence it is of the utmost importance, in those cases where positive disease cannot be detected in the viscera, which appear to be the seat of severe and protracted pain, to examine the spine, and see if tenderness be not recognized on the slight pressure of a particular part. We have thus seen symptoms which had resisted much treatment, speedily disappear, and patients restored to the enjoyment of excellent health, after great debility and suffering.

2nd.—The disease depends on inflammatory action of a low specific character, affecting a particular portion of the spine, as the symptoms evidently indicate. The painful feeling is increased by external pressure, which is most distinctly manifested at the intervertebral spaces; a very slight pressure with the point of the finger on this spot often causes the patient to shriek from the severity of the pain. It is also aggravated by walking, stooping, and every kind of exercise that increases the motion of the spine, and relieved by rest and the horizontal posture,—which cannot be accounted for by congestion of the cord; and if we move the fingers across the part a sort of fulness or puffiness often may be felt, as if a slight effusion were present,—a symptom which is not recognized in a healthy portion of the spine. In short, the acute sensibility to pressure manifested at a particular part of the spine, in accordance with the other phenomena, clearly indicate that the disease must be considered of an inflammatory character, and not dependent on congestion.

TREATMENT.—This affection not being dependent on what is termed acute inflammatory action, but on inflammation of a sub-acute or specific character, occurring in patients where there is a want of tone and vigour in the constitution, does not admit of active antiphlogistic treatment, and general bleeding is not well sustained. We have seen cases where it had been repeatedly employed, with no benefit to the patient, but an aggravation of the symptoms—being followed by greater weakness, and an increase of pain and irritability. Even local bleeding, as cupping and the application of leeches, which may be employed with greater freedom, does not seem so productive of benefit as counter-irritation to the spine.—The treatment which we consider the most beneficial, is the frequent employment of purgatives, and the croton oil pills will be found of essential service, exhibiting at the same time, preparations of iron as a tonic, accompanied with rest in the horizontal posture, and counter-irritation to the spine. And, in reference to the last