

ASTHMA AND ITS ANALOGUES.

To the Editor of the CANADA LANCET.

DEAR SIR,—Permit me to submit a new view of asthma to your readers. There is narrowing of the caliber of the bronchial tubes, and also a dilated condition of the air cells, as evidenced by the hyper-resonant percussion note. The explanation generally given for the narrowed caliber is that there is spasmodic contraction of the muscular tissue of the tubes, and that this is due to some, as yet, obscure operation of the nervous system. My view is that, from the symptoms presented, and from analogy, the condition is one of venous congestion of the bronchial tract, with consequent excessive accumulation of the gases of the blood in the air cells, and tumefaction of the bronchial mucous membrane by the distention of the venous radicles—sometimes even to the effusion of non-coagulable, because non-inflammatory, plasma. The effect of these pathological states is interference with, and partial suspension of, the necessary diffusion between the expired blood gases—chiefly CO_2 —and the inspired air; and fully explains the distention of the chest walls, the short and ineffectual inspiratory and prolonged expiratory efforts, and the loud wheezing heard during the respiratory process.

The analogy thus borne by asthma to flatulent colic, angina pectoris, epilepsy and migraine, to the painful limb-pains of persons suffering from threatened syncope, is complete. These disorders form a hitherto undescribed group—the anginal group—due to venous congestion. In all, there are the same objective and subjective symptoms, modified, of course, according to the particular seat of the disorder, yet clearly indicating the operation of a common exciting cause in a predisposed area. Thus, there is collapse with low temperature; a feeble and frequently a fluttering pulse, and pain of a heavy, leaden, stunning character, and the extremities and body surface are cold. The group of venous diseases thus become as well defined as that connected with the arterial set of capillaries and known as acute inflammatory, with the terminal *itis*; and the treatment is as radically different. In arterial congestions cardiac depressants are indicated, to reduce the pulsations and lower the temperature. In venous congestive disorders, the remedies which answer best are

belladonna, alcohol, ether, and the nitrites, to throw off the blood from the heart, and stimulate that organ to greater circulatory activity.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

C. R. ILLINGWORTH, M.D.

Oct. 2nd, 1893.

MEDICAL FEES.

While the cost of living has enormously increased since our grandfathers' days, there has not been a corresponding increase in the money-earning power of the medical man. Ours is perhaps the only profession in which the increase in pay for services rendered has not kept pace with the increased necessary cost of living, and decreased purchasing power of money. In what other walk of life can there be found men working for the same amount they did 40 or 50 years ago? We venture to say, in none. Our remembrance cannot go back even for 30 years, but we can distinctly call to mind ministers living on \$300 per year, rather, we should say, existing on that and charity in the way of "socials," "tea-meetings," etc., where now they likewise exist on \$700 or \$800, plus the same machinery in the way of charity. Their stipends have been more than doubled in the past 25 years, and so through the various walks of life—except the physicians'.

As illustrative of this fact, we give the scale of fees adopted by twenty of the leading practitioners of Toronto, and signed by them, in July, 1855, nearly 40 years ago:—

For every ordinary visit, if the usual medical attendant of the patient, from 9 a.m., to sunset, \$2 maximum, \$1 minimum.

If not the usual medical attendant of the patient, for each visit during the above-named hours, \$4 max., \$2 min.

Night visits, or from sunset to 9 a.m., \$8 max., \$2 min.

Consultation visits, \$5 max., \$2 min.

Letter of advice or certificate, \$10 max., \$4 min.

Detention, in addition to the regular fee, per hour, \$5 max., \$1 min.

FOR SURGICAL OPERATIONS

For capital operations, \$200 max., \$40 min.

For minor operations, \$40 max., \$2 min.