

Original Lecture.

ON TAKING COLD.*

THEORY, PREVENTION, TREATMENT, SOME RESULTS.

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As a matter of personal experience and universal observation, I do not suppose there is a more common or familiar phenomenon than what we term "taking cold." And yet there is considerable difficulty in explaining the relationship between cause and effect.

Many theories have been advanced to explain this exceedingly common experience. The most satisfactory one is that diseases resulting from taking or catching cold—familiar expressions—are due to functional disturbance caused by the removal of heat to an abnormal degree from one portion of the body to another, this giving rise to morbid processes in some part probably far removed from the site of exposure. This is known as the theory of SEITZ.

ROSENTHAL'S theory is that the effect of cold contracts the peripheral vessels, driving the blood in on the internal organs, where it acts as an irritant, thus exciting inflammation. This theory is probably incorrect. At least it does not explain the most common of all inflammations, namely, acute coryza—the ordinary cold in the head so-called.

BOSWORTH, in commenting upon these theories, agrees with SEITZ but believes his theory incomplete, and I cannot explain this matter to you better than to quote BOSWORTH'S criticisms :

"The theory of SEITZ is not complete but leaves the matter still somewhat in the dark. The true action of cold upon the body in producing morbid conditions is probably on those nutritive changes which are constantly going on, and by which the animal heat is developed. This heat production is going on in all the tissues of the body. In order that this function will not be impaired it is necessary that the normal temperature shall be maintained. This we know is 98 $\frac{3}{4}$ °. Any marked deviation from this normal standard as the result of extraneous influences results in morbid changes. If heat production is arrested in a portion of the body under the action of intense cold, molecular death of the part ensues, as is the case when gangrene of a limb results from freezing. If the

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