

Later on, in discussing the question of treatment, I shall hope to show that there is a way by which the septic invasion may be delayed and many a life saved that otherwise must be lost. Then that wonderful organ, the omentum, reaches out to the point of threatened invasion and by inflammatory adhesions rapidly surrounds it and the worst that may occur may be a localized abscess, to be opened almost at our leisure.

Should the disease, however, get beyond the point of invasion either owing to defective or delayed phagocytosis, or to excessive virulence of the invading bacilli, nature quickly covers the endothelium with a layer of lymph which appears to fulfil three functions. It acts as a protection to the endothelium, thus preventing the entrance of further germs from the underlying viscus; it causes agglutination between adjacent coils of intestines, thus limiting peristalsis and to that extent retarding the progress of the infection; and lastly, it acts as a carrier of innumerable leucocytes upon which we must now depend for the protection of the patient's life. And yet, gentlemen, it is not so long ago that were taught and eminent surgeons carried into practice the lesson that the proper thing to do in such cases was to eviscerate the patient and then go over the coils of intestines inch by inch and carefully remove this deposit and incidentally the adherent endothelium beneath it. In such a procedure of course the lymph spaces and blood channels were at once opened for entrance of toxins and fatal toxæmia was the result.

If the phagocytes win in the struggle the dead bodies of the invaders and defenders accumulate upon the battle-fields which are rapidly surrounded by walls of inflammatory adhesions; in other words, circumscribed pools of pus are found which may be opened and drained by the surgeon. On the other hand, if the invading bacilli win the fight, toxins gradually enter the lymphatics and blood vessels, the central nervous system is poisoned, intestinal dilatation with haemostasis and finally paresis occurs and as a result there is a great increase