

nosis of a dangerous and highly contagious malady has, as it were, to steer his course between Scylla and Charybdis.

On the one hand the disease, commencing as it does with symptoms which are more or less common to half a dozen other diseases, is not one which definitely suggests a correct diagnosis at first. Then in many cases the symptoms all subside and the rash which appears is so slightly marked as to be unnoticed by the patient or his friends. And this, it may be noted, does not alone occur in those who have been vaccinated. I recall two very marked cases—both with definite and fairly severe onset—occurring in a house where the disease existed in the semi-confluent form; one a girl of ten, the other a boy of twelve; neither had been vaccinated, yet the girl exhibited but two pustules situated on the side of her nose, and the boy not more than four scattered over his face. These cases were in every way similar to the ordinary cases of mild varioloid. As bearing on the question of the possibility of the occurrence of "variola sine exanthemata," another case which occurred with these may be mentioned. It was that of a young woman about twenty-five years of age, who was taken sick at the same time as the others in the family, and with similar symptoms: headache, backache, loss of appetite, fever, etc. These symptoms disappeared in about four days as in the others, but they were not followed by any rash whatever. This woman had, however, been successfully vaccinated two years previously.

On the other hand, the natural backwardness of the physician in making a diagnosis of variola, until absolutely forced to do so by the appearance of the patient, is not in any way lessened by the fear of popular disapproval in the event of a mistake being made, nor also by the ignorant prejudices of the vast majority of even the educated of our population, who practically refuse to believe the statements of the medical man, when such a diagnosis is made, and who apparently consider themselves as quite equal to the task of diagnosing the cases under consideration as anything but smallpox—most commonly chicken-pox is the conclusion arrived at, simply on hearsay evidence, that, for instance, the patient is not very sick, or, after the termination of the disease, that he is not frightfully scarred. On such ideas the doctor's diagnosis is laughed at, and he is promptly put down as being mistaken, if not something worse. And it seems unfortunate that cases occasionally occur about which there may be honest difference of opinion even among medical men, for these differences are taken up by the public and are made the evidences by which those in authority are convicted of being lamentably ignorant.