

And this circumstance of the pain being often confined to one particular part of the vertebral column, and greatly increased by pressure, would indicate that the disease is of a local character, and seated in that portion of the spine. If we examine the spine in these cases, there is not much pain complained of on pressure being employed along each side of the vertebral column, which we expected if the disease had depended on congestion of the cord. But if we press the intervertebral spaces, in the centre of the spine at the part affected, acute pain is felt, the patient winces, or syncope may even be produced. And if we move the fingers laterally across the part, a sort of crepitation often seems to be felt, as if a slight effusion were present,—a fact which we believe has not previously been mentioned.

From these considerations we conclude that the disease depends on inflammatory action of a low specific character, affecting a part of the spine and its ligaments, and gradually involving the membranes of the cord. The disease often appears to commence at a very small spot of the spine, and may remain confined to this spot for a considerable time without giving rise to much uneasiness to the patient; and the symptoms may even disappear if the constitution regain strength and vigour. But if the disease proceeds, more serious effects ensue. The part of the spine affected becomes acutely painful on pressure; and then the functions of the corresponding portion of the cord become impaired, producing, according to the particular seat of the disease, diminished power of respiration or locomotion, &c. In short, as we shall afterwards see, the complaint may terminate in decided and permanent affection of the spine.

Another circumstance to which we must advert in connection with the pathology of this disease is, that these affections have been most frequently observed in females, and generally considered as peculiar to that sex, and connected with irregular menstruation. But we are of opinion that this is not the case; for many patients have come under our observation and treatment, labouring under this affection, who were perfectly regular in the uterine secretion during the whole period of treatment, and had continued so before any symptoms of the complaint had appeared. And the constitution may suffer from this disease at an early period of life, even before the age of menstruation, so that its non-appearance cannot in these instances be considered the cause. We have seen these spinal affections in young females before the age of twelve, who had been seized with the complaint, and suffered much from it for a considerable period, and who perfectly recovered before the appearance of the menses. And after the cessation of the catamenia, females who are free from every uterine disease may labour under these affections. We have witnessed cases of this nature distinctly manifested after the age of fifty, and the symptoms often prove