

that they would all adhere to the classical standard, and it is to be expected that some would overflow into the class of neuritis or cerebro-spinal meningitis.

3. The evidence in favor of the outbreak being due to peripheral neuritis rests upon the disturbance in the vagus. But if one regards, with Gowers, "Symmetrical weakness of the anterior muscles situated in the forearm and in the corresponding muscles in the lower limb," as the leading motor symptom, then it will not explain the present malady since it was absent in 55 per cent. of the cases. Indeed, the paralysis was "characteristically random in distribution," that is characteristic of poliomyelitis, and Gowers further affirms that the nerve trunks are sometimes probably inflamed in the latter affection.

Finally, one is driven to the conclusion that the cases constituting the epidemic mainly followed the type of poliomyelitis, but that in some there were elements strongly suggestive of multiple neuritis, either as an independent affection or the common results of a common cause.

Dr. JAMES STEWART, on being asked by the President to give his opinion on the nature of the disease described in Dr. Macphail's paper, said it was very difficult to express an opinion as to the pathology of such a very curious epidemic, without giving the subject more thought than could be expended in the course of listening to the paper being read. He, however, considering that the chief symptoms appeared to be mainly of a paralytic nature, suggested the possibility of the disease being really a peripheral neuritis. This disease sometimes occurred epidemically, and was especially likely to do so in malarial districts. In the East Indies, for instance, many cases of peripheral neuritis are attributed to the direct effect of the plasmodium. In Dublin at present they are suffering from an epidemic of a paralytic nature, which is nothing more than a marked peripheral neuritis. In this connection, he would like to ask Dr. Macphail, whether or not any examination of the blood had been made, as in cases of neuritis, such as he had referred to, micro-organisms were invariably found, and were capable of reproducing the disease when injected into other animals.

Dr. MACPHAIL, in reply to Dr. Stewart, said the blood had been examined in many instances, but always with negative results. He had attended four cases, which ended fatally, but he could not secure a post-mortem. Several New York physicians were also on the ground, and had carried on some investigations of the disease, which he had no doubt would subsequently be given to the profession; but, so far as he could learn, no definite data as to the pathological nature of the trouble had been obtained.

Dr. McCONNELL inquired from Dr. Macphail whether atrophy of the muscles followed the paralysis, and was answered: "Yes, in every case." He then commented on the nature of the disease, and remarked that it seemed to be an epidemic of a local variety, and was probably caused by some micro-organism. He did not agree with Dr. Stewart in regarding it as a peripheral neuritis, but was more inclined to look upon it as a toxic affection of the spinal cord, confined to the anterior horns, probably an anterior poliomyelitis with involvement, in some cases, of the cranial motor nuclei. The symptoms here seemed to be confined to the motor functions altogether, and were mostly sudden in their onset, whereas, were it a neuritis, one would expect some sensory troubles, such as pain, tingling, hyperæsthesia or anæsthesia and the paresis or paralysis coming on gradually.

Dr. MILLS thought Dr. Macphail had here compiled a great deal of valuable material, and presented it in a form to be grasped by all. He hoped this line of work would be encouraged, and the custom of collecting a large number of cases of some disease be continued.

Progress of Science.

WILLIAM THOMAS GREEN MORTON,
M.D.

William Thomas Green Morton, M.D., medical student, dentist and physician, and the recent recipient of Massachusetts' honor, was born in Carlton, Mass., August 9, 1819, and died, aged forty-eight, in New York city, July 15, 1868.*

In 1840, at the age of twenty-one, he was a student in the "Baltimore College of Dental Surgery," a chartered organization connected with the Washington University of Medicine of Baltimore.

Subsequently he engaged in the practice of dentistry in Boston, in the meantime assiduously pursuing his studies to receive a medical degree.

March 20, 1844, he entered his name as a student of medicine with Dr. Charles T. Jackson of Boston.

In November, 1844, he entered the Harvard Medical School in Boston in regular course as a matriculate, and attended all the lectures.

In 1852 he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Medicine from his original *alma*

* See the American Cyclopædia: New York, D. Appleton & Co., 1875. Article, "Morton, W. T. G.," p. 855. See Encyclopædia Britannica, Ninth Edition, Article "Anæsthesia." See the Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine, New York City, August, 1894.