

be equal to the inflammatory conditions, one will poise the other, and as one predominates so will be the result.

In some cases there will be evil resulting from the slightest disease, while at other times it will take almost death itself in the parts to produce any change whatever. This is often manifested in other things; sometimes men die from slight scratches, and at other times they may be torn almost to pieces and yet live. I remember, during the late rebellion, having seen a man who had received thirteen wounds, either of which seemed sufficient to have killed him; yet he wholly recovered. I allude to this only to show how much the system is capable of resisting at some times as compared with other times. We are all aware that the system cannot endure as much at one time as it can at another. This depends somewhat upon the condition of the mind. An abscess is often produced by the simple operation of filling a tooth at an improper time; for instance when the system is in a reduced condition, or when there is inflammation in the parts or any other unhealthy condition, that contributes to the formation of alveolar abscess. To attempt a clear and concise description of all the circumstances that tend to produce or contribute to the formation of abscess would be a tedious as well as unprofitable undertaking: the above refers mainly to roots of teeth and teeth in which there is no nerve membrane. The next class of causes that claim our attention are those in which the nerve membrane is yet remaining. A tooth may be slightly decayed, enough so to expose the pulp, and the irritation thereof from contact with the air, from chemical action or otherwise, may be sufficient to produce inflammation in the membrane, and this, if not relieved by topical applications, usually results in the death of the pulp. The power of recuperation in the pulp of a tooth is very low at best, and when inflamed from contact with the air and fluids of the mouth, death is almost sure to follow. The engorgement may be relieved by stimulants or by drawing the blood from this point to some other, thus permitting the part to recover. This may be done by the use of leeches, counter-irritants, activity of body or mind, or both or any other act that will change the current of blood to some other point. It takes very little irritation in some persons and especially at certain times to produce inflammation at the apex of the roots of teeth sufficient to cause an abscess, and the conditions mentioned above seem peculiarly to favour this result. There are other cases where the nerve of a tooth is not exposed, but the decay approaches very closely, the cavity is cleansed and filled, and the thermal changes in the filling, together with the close proximity of the same to the pulp, will cause irritation and inflammation; and as the tissue is encased in a firm and unyielding chamber the only egress is