

and feebleness in the movement of the limbs. These are some of the symptoms of cases of spinal irritation which are frequently to be met with in practice, and are liable to be confounded with other diseases, or considered of a local character. But the symptoms do not readily yield to the remedies employed till attention is directed to the spine, when, by counter irritation and other appropriate treatment, the complaint, if taken in its early stage, will generally be subdued.

With regard to the pathology of this disease, in considering it to consist in congestion of the spinal cord, we confess we cannot acquiesce in this view of the subject. We do not see how congestion of the cord should give rise to the acute pain and tenderness on pressure of the spinal column that is manifested in these cases; more especially, since it is a well-known fact, that in inflammation of the spinal cord, pain often cannot be produced by pressure of the spine.* And the course of the veins of the cord renders them protected from all external influence, and equally from pressure applied to the vertebral column. Besides, from the intimate communication which exists between the spinal veins throughout the whole course of the spinal canal, and the free communication which they have with the *vena azuyos* and thoracic veins, &c., of the trunk through the intervertebral foramina, it is difficult to perceive how congestion should take place at one particular part, to such an extent as to interfere materially with the functions of the spinal cord. And if congestion did affect one portion more than another, it should be the lowest and most dependent portions, where the circulation is most under the influence of gravitation, and where the greatest force requires to be exerted to propel the contents of the vessels forwards. But in these affections we do not find the lumbar portion of the spine more affected than the other portions.

Besides, one principal reason why these veins are destitute of valves, is evidently to prevent congestion from taking place at particular parts of their course, and any injurious effects resulting to the functions of the cord. It is a well known fact, that during the act of inspiration the progress of the blood is accelerated towards the heart, and slightly retarded during expiration. And were these veins possessed of valves, a slight congestion would be produced at particular parts of their course during the act of expiration, which might influence the functions of the cord, and prove very injurious in cases of difficult respiration. But being destitute of valves, the retardation produced by the act of expiration is diffused over the whole, and not limited to particular parts of their course. Hence, the congestion in these vessels must be general before its effects can be greatly manifested, and not confined to one particular part of the spine, as the symptoms of the disease often indicate.

* Abercrombie on Disease of the Brain and Spinal Cord, page 381.