

procedure, time is gained, and life maintained until the virulence of the poison is overcome or exhausted. Mercury, in any form, excepting as a cathartic at the onset of the disease, seems to be especially contra-indicated. Blistering and external stimulants to the neck are worse than useless, by adding to the irritability of the sufferer, without exercising any beneficial or derivative effect upon the fauces.

Tracheotomy, if entertained, should be adopted immediately after the croupy symptoms have become established, and not deferred as a *dernier resort*. The presence of vomiting I should consider sufficient proof that the disease had already advanced too far to warrant any hopes of success from an operation.

It will be observed that the plan of treatment above advocated is based upon that of two analogous affections—viz., ulcerative stomatitis, and acute asthenic erysipelas of the head and neck,—viewing the mild form of the disease as allied to stomatitis, and therefore prescribing the chlorate of potassa with the mineral acid: but regarding diphtheria as a complication of diphtheritic sore-throat with erysipelas, and hence ordering, in addition to the salt, large and frequently-repeated doses of the sesquichloride of iron.

The question of infection is very difficult of solution, yet the rapid spread of the malady in schools, and the recorded deaths of several members of a family from this disease, render it imperative that every precaution be used to prevent its dissemination. In some cases, I have most conclusively traced the origin of the disease to emanations from putrid, stagnant ponds and sewers.

When the affection of the throat assumes the malignant or putrid type, which is recognised by a livid, gangrenous appearance of the tonsils and by an intolerable foetor of the breath, the treatment recommended for general diphtheria, with the addition of a gargle consisting of one drachm of liquor of chloride of lime and eight ounces of water, will be found most serviceable.

A very serious complication occasionally arises as a sequela to the severe form of diphtheria—viz., paralysis of the muscles of the neck, of the pharynx, and of the larynx. Dr. Gull, who has already drawn attention to this subject, informs me that he has met with a case in which the upper extremity was involved; and this morning I was consulted by Mrs. C., who was recovering, not only from loss of speech and of deglutition, but also from partial blindness, and paralysis of both arms, the result of this formidable complaint. These cases are to be treated upon tonic principles, by change of air, and those remedies which are calculated to improve the general health. The nervine tonics are especially indicated. When the head falls forward upon the chest, from paralysis of the spinal accessory nerve and cervical plexus, great relief and comfort will be afforded by a collar of soap plaster spread upon leather. Also when, from paralysis of the glossopharyngeal nerve, the efforts to swallow are attended by violent fits of choking, all medicines and a large proportion of nourishment must be administered per rectum. Even under the most favourable circumstances, recovery will be slow and gradual; but when the phrenic nerve is implicated, the greatest danger to life is threatened.

In fatal cases the *post-mortem* examination reveals the ash-coloured membrane spread over the pharynx, extending to the posterior nares and down the œsophagus; but when death is preceded by symptoms of croup, it is found also in the larynx and trachea. Upon detaching this membranous exudation, the sub-mucous surface presents an ecchymosed appearance, but no distinct signs of ulceration.

In conclusion, I would most strongly urge the importance of injection in the treatment of the severe forms of diphtheria; nor ought they to be delayed until the patient is unable to swallow, but administered as soon as he ceases to take a sufficient quantity of nourishment. I would likewise beg to add my conviction, that if a sthenic plan of treatment were adopted from the very commencement of an attack, the mortality from this now much dreaded affection would be greatly reduced.—*Lancet*.