
BILHARZIA HÆMATOBIUM.

BLOOD FLUKE.

BY

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Bilharz, in the year 1851, while engaged in the study of the diseases of Egypt, discovered that the endemic hæmaturia of that country was due to the presence in certain veins of a trematode worm to which he gave the name of "Distoma Hæmatobium," afterwards better known as "Bilharzia Hæmatobium," after the discoverer.

This disease, while very prevalent in Egypt, Arabia, Mauritius, and certain parts of South Africa, is practically unknown in America—being only met with in imported cases. These have evidently been very rarely found up to the present time, as in my search through the literature of the subject I have succeeded in finding reports of only four or five, all of which were seen in the United States.

As I have at present two cases of Bilharzia under observation, the patients having been infected while on military service in South Africa, it has occurred to me that in view of the many Canadians and immigrants who, having served with the British forces during the late Boer War are now settled in Canada, the disease may be more often met with than formerly.

That a large number of the men were infected with this parasite during the campaign is beyond doubt, as pointed out by Hardy and Douglass in a very interesting article on the subject in the *Lancet*, of October, 1903. What information I have been able to glean seems fully to bear this out.

Hæmaturia,—the primary and practically the only symptom of the disease in the first few years of its course,—being one common to so many pathological conditions of the genito-urinary tract, there is at once suggested a wide range of possibilities. But if the fact can be elicited that the patient had resided in a country where the parasite is indigenous the possibility of Bilharzia would at once be suggested, and if confirmed by a microscopic examination of the urine a great deal of unnecessary and painful instrumentation might be avoided.