

MEDICAL SCIENCE

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ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

NATURE AND TREATMENT OF DIPHTHERIA.

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE TORONTO MEDICAL SOCIETY
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Gentlemen,—The subject of my paper is one so important in its nature and so extended in the many points necessary to its proper consideration, that it would be quite impossible in a single paper to deal with it in anything like a comprehensive manner. I shall, therefore, endeavor to do little more than point out some of the principal phases of the disease as regards its nature and treatment.

1st. The nature of the disease.—In the work on *Pathologie Interne* of Prof. Jaccoud, of Paris, the most illustrious of Trousseau's successors, a number of maladies are placed under the generic term *Angine*. To these he applies the specific terms,

Angine Catarrhale—muqueuse,
" Parenchymateuse,
" Fibrinense Diphtheritique;

And defines "Angine" in its most restricted sense to be "Inflammation of the back of the mouth and larynx." Besides having these as distinct maladies he remarks that we have them often forming a part of more general maladies, as scarlatina, etc., and then goes on, taking as the basis of this classification, the "*processus anatomiques*," dividing them as we have already seen.

In the first, we have *catarrh* where there is an undue development of epithelial cells and a copious discharge of serum containing *albumenoid* matter.

In the second, we have a much deeper seated inflammation, either acute, subacute, or chronic, with its exudation of serum, containing fibrin and leucocytes, into the submucous and follicular tissues as well as on the mucous surfaces, resulting, it

may be, in abscesses, or, in chronic cases, in permanent increase of the connective tissue, an hypertrophy, seen especially in enlarged tonsils, uvula, epiglottis, etc.

In the third, *angine pseudo-membraneuse*, there is a condition in which the characteristics of membranous laryngitis (croup), are applicable to the malady, except that in *angine pseudo-membraneuse* the mucous membrane is usually more altered than it is in croup.

By following out such distinctions it would seem that we are most likely to get a broad and practical knowledge of the various forms of *sore throat* which are met with in every-day practice, and which, before pathological conditions were made the basis of classification, gave rise to long years of bitter discussion concerning the identity of the French "*Diphtherite*," English "croup," acute laryngitis, spurious croup, etc.

2nd. Definition.—Dr. J. Rose Cormack's definition, in Quain's Dictionary, is comprehensive, and, though short is definite, especially as regards the local characteristics of the disease:

"A specific, contagious, asthenic, general disease, which sometimes prevails as an epidemic and is endemic in certain places. It is characterized by the exudation in various situations—particularly on mucous surfaces of the soft palate, uvula, tonsils, pharynx, larynx, trachea—of a peculiar cacoplastic lymph, which, together with the epithelial cells, generally forms a thick, tough, and stratified pellicle or false membrane—a stroma made up of mucous and epithelial cells, arranged in layers of cacoplastic exudation."

Referring briefly to some of the characteristics, as given in the above definition, we have:

The specific character of the disease.—Undoubt-