

CHANCRES.

A synopsis of the results of all recent investigations on the subject. From Bunsen and other authors, by W. E. Bowman, M.D.

(Chancres are contagious ulcers, which being most frequently transmitted in sexual intercourse, chiefly affect the genital organs.

Out of over 800 cases of chancres of all kinds at the Hôpital du Midi in 1856, 600 were on the glans and prepuce, 75 on the skin of the penis, 40 involved the meatus, 20 were inside the urethra, 11 on the scrotum, 8 on the anus, 12 on the lips, 3 on the tongue, 1 on and 1 in the nose, 2 on the fingers, and 1 on the leg.

There are but two varieties of these ulcers, the chancreoid, and the infecting or true syphilitic chancre.

Among persons free from syphilitic taint, each of the two species is transmitted in its kind, the simple chancre always causing a simple chancre, and the infecting chancre producing an infecting chancre, the latter being invariably followed by constitutional symptoms.

On contagion, the whole of an abraded surface becomes a chancre; these sores therefore differ in shape, and like other ulcers that are exposed to irritation from friction, stagnation and concretion of matter, &c.; they likewise differ in aspect.

CHANCROID, known also as "simple chancre," "soft chancre," "non-infecting chancre," and "contagious ulcer," is strictly a local disease; it never affects the system, gets well in time even without treatment, and leaves no bad after effects. To produce it, requires, the contact of matter from a like ulcer or from a suppurating bubo poisoned by this matter, with an abraded surface.

The chancreoid is not preceded by a period of incubation like syphilitic chancre, but the ulcerative process commences immediately on the implantation of the virus, and is sufficiently advanced to attract the notice of the patient in from 2 to 8 days after coition, 36 to 48 hours being the average time.

The late period at which a few soft chancres are observed, is rather to be ascribed to the contagious matter having remained for some time upon the surface before it occasioned sufficient irritation and rubbing to cause its absorption, than that it has lain dormant.

The virus of simple chancre lies alone in the pus globules, if they be removed from the secretion, it becomes innocuous.

A person making application a day or two after coition, with one or two raw surfaces on the penis, it is frequently impossible to diagnose if it be chancre or no, and may often be necessary to wait a few days, directing him to keep the parts protected with wet lint and oiled silk, when, if abrasions, they will heal rapidly.

A pustule is always observed after successful inoculation of the chancreoid, when the infected point is protected from abrasion; if left unbroken, it is soon covered by a dark scab, under which the pus burrows and extends, if ruptured, the following sore is found beneath it.

Soft chancre is an excavated ulcer, perforating the whole thickness of the skin or mucous membrane. Its edges are abrupt and well defined, as if cut with a punch, and do not adhere closely to the subjacent tissues. Its surface is uneven, and covered with a grayish matter. It is surrounded by an areola, which varies in width and depth of colour with the degree of attendant inflammation.

Its secretion is copious and purulent, and is inoculable at any time of its duration up to its point of cicatrization, and never fails to produce a chancreoid like itself, on any part or person, a previous attack affording no immunity from it. It is generally multiple from the first, or soon becomes so from contact of the matter with surrounding parts.

It is much more contagious and frequent than syphilitic chancre. M. Puche speaking of the Hôpital du Midi in Paris, states that out of ten thousand cases that had been under treatment in that institution during ten years, 8015 were chancreoid.

There is no induration at its base, whence its name, the parts beneath being always as soft as the surrounding textures, unless when irritated by caustic applications, or simple inflammation: in which case the engorgement is not circumscribed, but shades off into the surrounding tissues, and of temporary duration. Sometimes, however, this induration so closely resembles that of syphilitic chancre, as to compel us to await its subsidence, or seek elsewhere for our diagnosis.

The non-infecting chancre is very persistent, and unless destroyed by caustic, will generally last for weeks or months, however skilfully it may be treated otherwise.

Its favourite seat is on the prepuce and glans, it also frequently involves the meatus.

Chancreous virus retains its power of contagion for a great length of time, and may be inoculated from almost any agent, as the fingers, towels, household utensils, pipes, tumblers, pencils, bank-notes, &c., &c. Sperino relates a case, where, after seven months laying on the point of a lancet, the dried matter was inoculated with success.

One person may be the medium of conveying the poison to another, during coition, without being themselves affected by it.

The matter of simple chancre is not modified or changed by passing through a person affected with syphilis.

In persons subject to attacks of herpetic eruptions, these may, from the excitement of coition and a deranged state of the digestive organs, become developed on the head of the penis; in which case they arrange themselves as usual, in a circular group, and may be known from chancres by their regularity, by the vesicles unbroken, the impossibility of inoculating their secretion, and by their disappearance in a few days.

Important Fallacy.—In some very rare cases, persons having once had syphilitic chancre, may become a second time affected with the same virus, when, contrary to the general rule, it produces a sore with a soft base, unattended by inflammation of any of the lymphatic glands; but which will propagate the unchanged infecting ulcer with indurated base, in a person free from syphilitic taint. The only test in these cases is the inoculation of the matter on the body of the person bearing it, if chancreoid it will produce a soft chancre.

Again, soft chancre virus may be inoculated at the spot of induration left after an infecting ulcer, and thus seem to be syphilitic, when really be a chancreoid; this also must be proved by inoculation.

CHANCROIDAL BUBO is an inflammation of the glands of the groin. It may be either sympathetic or virulent. Any irritation of the genital organs may produce the former, and suppuration does not necessarily ensue on this simple form, nor would its matter be contagious. The virulent or chancreoid bubo, however, arises from the absorption of virus from a soft chancre in its vicinity, which being conveyed