ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS

FOCAL INFECTION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.*

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A FULL recognition of the principles concerned in focal infection as a cause of constitutional diseases constitutes an epoch-making advance in the etiological diagnosis, prevention and cure of certain diseases, many of which affect vital organs. It has long been recognized that focal infection may cause systemic diseases, but hitherto it has been considered of rare occurrence. The association of an abscess about an ingrowing toe-nail with endocarditis has been occasionally recorded, and arthritis secondary to gonorrhea or profound septicemia following an infected wound received during operation has long been known. Dr. W. D. Miller more than a generation ago pointed out the constitutional effects of oral sepsis. The present concepts of focal infection, however, follow an entirely new line of thought and concern themselves with serious and sometimes irreparable damage to vital organs secondary to a small and apparently insignificant focus of infection or suppuration, usually causing no local symptoms. This focus may be so small that many believe it incapable of producing systemic diseases. *It is always important to remember that the virulency of the organism is more important than the size of the lesion.*

Focal infection may cause disease of joints, tendons, periosteum, medulla. bones, muscles. pericarditis. myocarditis. simple. ulcerative or recurring endocarditis, endarteritis, myositis, psychasthenia, neurasthenia, cerebritis, meningitis, insular sclerosis, chorea, herpes Zoster, peripheral neuritis, affecting the maxillary, sciatic, anterior crural, lumbar or intercostal nerves; acute, chronic or recurrent duodenal, intestinal or rectal ulceration; appendicitis, cholecystitis, pancreatitis; acute, subacute or chronic nephritis; pyelitis, cystitis, metritis, salpingitis, prostatitis, seminal vesiculitis, bronchitis, broncho-pneumonia, pneumonia, pleuritis, and may complicate pulmonary tuberculosis and other diseases; anemia, which may become pernicious; intermittent fever with chills, fever and sweats; parotitis, thyroiditis, and may affect other ductless glands.

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