

EPIDEMIC CEREBRO-SPINAL MENINGITIS.

EPIDEMIC cerebro-spinal meningitis is an acute, infectious disease, characterized by inflammation of the cerebral and spinal meninges, and runs a course of great irregularity.

The disease occurs in epidemics, one of which visited the Ottawa Valley in 1873; the second visitation was in the summer of 1905.

It is of the latter I wish to write. I have not been able to ascertain the exact number of cases that developed during this recent epidemic, but it was in the neighborhood of 125, of which I had an opportunity of studying 24.

I shall not in this short paper attempt to give the history or geographical distribution of the many epidemics of this disease which have appeared at intervals for the last century or more, but will refer the reader to such writers as Netter, Boudin or Hirsch, who have given this subject much attention, and who have been foremost in placing this most fatal malady on a proper basis.

In the description of this disease which follows I will ask the reader not to compare the symptoms with those of a classical meningitis, for as the disease occurs in many forms, and as epidemics of this disease are usually a law unto themselves, it necessarily follows that my description will be at variance in many respects with those of other writers on this subject.

During the course of this epidemic, which lasted from June until October, I observed four well-marked varieties: (a) The foudroyant; (b) The mild or ordinary; (c) The intermittent or chronic; (d) The abortive.

I am aware that many writers have given many more varieties of this disease, but these four were all that came under my notice during this epidemic. I regret not having had an opportunity of performing a post-mortem on any of the victims of this disease, and must therefore leave the pathological changes completely out of this paper.

Of the 24 cases seen by me the following tabular summary will present the main features, while details of some of the cases follow: