

There can be no doubt that an inflammatory condition of the cerebro-spinal meninges exists in these cases, and this condition is so constant as to distinguish epidemic meningitis from all other diseases, there being a tendency in all cases of the *materies morbi* to act upon the nervous centres, leading to purulent and plastic exudation. Stillé who has written a very able monograph upon the subject and has collected a vast amount of information from many sources, says, "that according to its type and its duration, there never fails to be found some of those changes in the membranes or in the substance of the great nervous centres which denote the existence of inflammation, congestion of the vessels, and exudation of serum, fibrin or pus beneath the meninges; and different degrees of alteration in the nervous pulp, attest the nature of the process, and since all or any of these may be found, it follows that however essential the lesions may be to the disease they do not constitute its exclusive manifestation, as death is compatible with the early and forming stage of the inflammatory process, as well as with its complete evolution and as the former is not always sufficient to account for the fatal issue, it is clear on this ground alone, that as in other affections there is a constitutional element, a morbid condition of the blood which underlies all of the phenomena of the disease, and modifies more or less its "physiognomy." There can be no reasonable doubt therefore, that we are entitled to regard it as a compound disease derived on the one hand from its specific cause, and on the other from its local lesions, and showing it to be at once a blood disease, and a meningial inflammation. This may fairly be assumed as the result of accumulated evidence, and in opposition to the few who still look upon it as a local meningial inflammation merely, or those others who look upon it as a fever, analogous to typhus or typhoid, ignoring its local lesions altogether. This arises from the fact of either element, being the more prominent in any epidemic, or in any individual case, the septic element overshadowing the local lesions and *vice versa*.

Tourdes strikes the key-note, when he says, "although pathological anatomy demonstrates an inflammatory element in the disease, it is certain there is something besides; it is a specific inflammation, a poisoning, a cerebral typhus, produced by a specific miasm, which has an elective affinity for the membranes of the nervous centres." It is, says Stokes, a disease *sui generis*, and is not to be regarded