

at two different parts of the lumbar vertebrae—pressure on which with the point of the finger would almost produce syncope. Issues were applied along the spine at the affected part, and he was recommended to observe the horizontal posture, &c. The pain in the abdomen still continued to recur, and often in severe paroxysms: he grew weaker, and had less controul over the movement of his limbs; and after the lapse of some months, lost the power both of sensation and motion in them, accompanied with incontinence of urine.

A very remarkable phenomenon of reflex action was now manifested. On irritating the integuments of either foot, the limbs were immediately retracted towards the abdomen, and continued to vibrate for some time, without the patient having the slightest controul over the movement. The right limb was more easily excited, and the reflex movements were always stronger in it than in the left. Even irritation of the integuments of the left foot, caused the right limb to be retracted, and to vibrate more powerfully than the left. During all this period, the patient had not the slightest sensation in the limbs, either from touch, the application of heat, or of cold water to the integuments.

Anchylosis took place between the affected vertebrae, and from the extent of the disease, a great portion of the lumbar and the dorsal vertebrae became firmly united, but with little curvature of the spine. On raising him up, he could not bend his body forwards; his spine appeared one consolidated piece. Sloughing commenced in the integuments of his back, from the constant pressure, and after a short period he expired. A post mortem examination was not permitted, but it is very probable that in this case the disease was chiefly seated in the intervertebral cartilages.

These cases, we conceive, warrant the conclusion that complaints, which have every characteristic of spinal irritation at their commencement and during a considerable period of their progress, terminate in a decided affection of the spine, and must consequently depend on inflammatory action. The symptoms, it will be observed, are identically the same as those which we have described in the previous section, simulating many of the diseases to which the human body is liable, and for which they are often mistaken, and treated on false principles. The pains are felt at the extremities of the nerves, but the disease is seated at their origin, or centre of the nervous axis; and after the affection has arrived at an advanced stage, its real nature and pathology is developed. One thing then seems to be established by these cases, viz., that a class of complaints which bear every characteristic of spinal irritation, and have generally been considered as of a functional nature, depend essentially on inflammatory action, on specific inflammation of the spine, and ought to be treated on that principle.