

ART. XII.—*On the Proximate Cause of Inflammation.* BY CHARLES ROLLS, M. D., Wardsville, C. W.

Previously to leaving England, I published an article on the foregoing subject in the London Medical and Surgical Journal, edited at that time by Dr. McLeod. The peculiar doctrine I hold on this pathological point, was therein generally explained, nor has the experience of many subsequent years, altered in any respect my opinions thereon. The London journals have not hitherto been very extensively circulated amongst the medical practitioners of this country, and I dare say the theory will be as new to them as if it had never been printed. Trusting that it may prove as acceptable, and anxious as far as I am able to elucidate every disease connected with the human frame, I will again enter on the discussion with the advantages that years of experience have added since I wrote the former paper.

Before entering on the immediate subject of this article, it will perhaps be advisable to make some passing remarks upon the disease of Inflammation itself, likewise on its remote causes; so that the subject being made continuous, might be better understood by the generality of readers, at the same time that it will afford me a better opportunity of offering some passing remarks upon the generally received doctrines of the day.

Inflammation is defined and generally understood to be that state of a part in which it is painful, hotter, redder, and somewhat more turgid than is natural; which typical symptoms, when present in any considerable degree, or when they affect very sensible parts, are attended with fever, or a general diseased action of the system.

This definition is correct, with the exception of the second symptom, which is not accurately so, and may lead an inexperienced person to false impressions. It is well known by the profession that Mr John Hunter tried various experiments to ascertain whether the *sensible* caloric was augmented in Inflammation, and the result of them all was, that it was not so. With this conclusion before us, it would be more accurate to say, or rather to define this second symptom of Inflammation, "*a sensation of increased heat.*"

Inflammation is generally divided into *healthy* and *unhealthy*. These terms I cannot approve of, because they are apt to mislead, and more especially as, according to Mr Hunter's theory, Inflammation is supposed to be a process set up by nature in many cases for the regeneration of diseased or damaged parts. This doctrine I cannot reconcile to my mind; nor can I conceive that one of the most fatal of diseases can, in any case, be called a healthy process. I think the term misapplied, apt to lead the mind to wrong conclusions, and, connecting the phrase with Mr Hunter's peculiar doctrines, very frequently to wrong practice. I do not wish by any means to carp at a word; but I do wish, that as ideas are received into our minds frequently by words, that these words should in all cases convey a true and correct meaning.