



From the Albany Cultivator.

HYDROPHOBIA.

Of all the diseases to which the animal creation is liable, there is none, perhaps, so horrible in its manifestation as that called rabies—commonly known as hydrophobia. The latter term, however, seems to be in some degree inappropriate, inasmuch as a dread of water is by no means a universal accompaniment of the disease.

Youatt, in his treatise on "*The Dog*," has given the pathology of rabies in a more detailed form than any other author; and as the disease is one of which there is always more or less danger, both to our domestic animals and the human race, it may serve a good purpose to present a brief synopsis of his observations.

In answer to the question, what is the cause of rabies? Mr. Y. says—"It is the saliva of a rabid animal received into a wound or on an abraded surface." Of the nature of the virus he thinks we know but little. "It is not," he says, "been analyzed and it would be difficult to analyze it." It can only be propagated by inoculation—it must be brought in actual contact with the nervous fibre. He is of opinion that it never arises spontaneously, and he thinks if a quarantine of eight months could be established, and every dog confined separately for that length of time, the disease would be completely annihilated.

After the poison of a rabid animal has been communicated to another, it lies dormant for a while—the length of time varying with different animals. In the human subject the disease usually manifests itself in from three weeks to six or seven months; in the dog not less than fourteen days, and generally from five to six weeks—in three months from the time of being bitten, the dog would be considered safe. In man it usually runs its course in twenty-four hours—rarely exceeding seventy-two hours; in the horse it runs three or four days; in the sheep and ox five to seven days; in the dog four to six.

The disease has been communicated, either by the bite of a rabid animal, or by inoculation with the virus, to almost all kinds of animals; and in all it was accompanied by the same or similar characteristics. The strange and uncontrollable disposition to bite is generally manifested, even in rabbits, sheep, and in the human race. By way of experiment, two physicians inoculated fowls with the foam taken from the mouth of a rabid cow, and after about ten weeks, the birds died with evident symptoms of rabies.

MEANS OF PREVENTION.—Excision of the bitten or exposed part has been frequently resorted to, and with various success—the operation is thought to demand great skill, owing to the difficulty of taking out the affected part without bringing the virus in contact with the fresh-cut tissue. Cauterization, (burning the bitten part with a hot iron,) has been practiced with little advantage. The application of caustic—*lunar caustic*—has on the whole proved best. "It is," says Mr. Youatt, "perfectly manageable, and being sharpened to a point, may be applied with certainty to every recess and sinuosity of the wound. If the whole of the wound has been exposed to its action, an insoluble compound of animal fibre and the metallic salt is produced, in which the virus is wrapped up, and from which it cannot be separated. In a short time the dead matter sloughs away, and the virus is thrown off with it." He recommends applying the caustic a second time, but more lightly after the eschar has sloughed off, in order to destroy any part that may not have been properly acted on by the first operation.

Mr. Youatt states that he was several times bitten by rabid dogs; but that by a timely application of lunar caustic, he escaped; "and yet often," says he, "when I have been over fatigued, or a little out of temper, some of the old sores have itched and throbbled, and actually become red and swollen." He was once bitten in a very dangerous manner by a rabid cat. This animal is generally very ferocious when laboring under rabies, though, fortunately, it is but seldom that it is thus affected. During its paroxysms, its rage knows no bounds. In the case alluded to, the cat had been the playmate of the children of the family, but had, all at once, become sudden and ill-tempered. It got into an upper room where it was allowed to remain, and Mr. Youatt was sent for. He gives the following thrilling account of the scene which ensued:

"It was nearly dark when I went. I saw the horrible glare of her eyes, but I could not see so much of her as I wished, and I said I would call again in the morning. I found the patient, on the following day, precisely in the same situation and the same attitude, crouched up in a corner and ready to spring. I was very much interested in the case, and as I wanted to study the countenance of this demon, for she looked like one, I was foolishly, inexcusably imprudent. I went on my hands and knees, and brought my face nearly on a level with hers, and gazed on those glaring eyes and that horrible countenance until I seemed to feel the deathly influence of a spell stealing over me. I was not afraid, but every mental and bodily power seemed in a manner suspended. My countenance, perhaps alarmed her, for she sprang on me, fastened herself on my face, and bit through both my lips. She then darted down stairs, and I believe was never seen again. I always have nitrate of silver in my pocket, even now I can never without it. I washed myself, and applied the caustic with some severity to the wound; and my medical adviser and valued friend furnished still more after I got home. My object was attained, although at somewhat too much cost, for the expression of that brute's countenance will never be forgotten."

Mr. Youatt very severely censures the practice indulged in by many persons, of allowing dogs to lick their hands and face. He says the habit is a very dangerous one, and relates a case of a lady having lost her life by suffering her dog to lick a pimple on her chin. Horses have also taken the disease from dogs licking their muzzles, which were scratched or chafed.

The following extracts from Mr. Youatt's description of the symptoms of rabies, may prove useful in preventing the consequences of this dreadful malady.

"The early symptoms of rabies in the dog, are occasionally very obscure. In the greater number of cases these are sullenness, sidgetiness, and continual shifting of posture. Where I have had opportunity, I have generally found these circumstances in regular succession. For several consecutive hours, perhaps, he retreats to his basket or his bed. He shows no disposition to bite, and he answers the call upon him laggardly. He is curled up, and his face is buried between his paws and his breast. At length he begins to be sidgety. He searches out new resting-places; but he very soon changes them for others. He takes again to his own bed, but he is continually shifting his posture. He begins to gaze strangely about him as he lies on his bed. His countenance is cloudy and suspicious. He comes to one and another of the family, and he fixes on them a steadfast gaze, as if he would read their very thoughts. 'I feel strangely ill,' he seems to say: 'have you anything to do with it? or you? or you?' Has not a dog mind enough for this? If we have observed a rabid dog at