

The disease thus named is of frequent occurrence, and seems incidental to advanced civilisation. It manifests itself by various anomalous and distressing symptoms; pursues a tedious course; is, in its graver forms, but little amenable to treatment; and though not in itself fatal, occasionally terminates in death by the superinduction of other organic disease.

Mucous disease of the colon may be naturally divided into three stages; in the first stage, the characteristic discharge from the bowel consists in flakes or masses of more or less inspissated mucus; in the second, of tubular casts of the gut; in the third of membranous shreds of lymph, mixed with the blood and pus.

The first stage is generally curable; the second, occasionally curable; the third resists all treatment.

In his early treatment of mucous disease of the colon, Dr. Clark having formed no hypothesis of its nature, proceeded quite empirically. He classified his cases into sets. In one set he tried astringents, in another, purgatives; in a third, tonics; in a fourth, mercury. Sometimes a low diet was enjoined; sometimes a full one. At one time stimulants were prohibited; at another allowed. A fluid diet was contrasted with a dry one; and rest with exercise.

After a considerable number of cases had been laid under contribution, the results of those opposing clinical experiments were carefully collated and compared. It then appeared that there were several circumstances almost uniformly influential in maintaining or aggravating the disease. Of these may be enumerated too much food, vegetables, preserved fruits, all irreducible articles of diet, most condiments, beer, undiluted spirits. excess of liquids, (particularly when hot,) sexual or other emotional excitement, a sedentary life, a damp or hot atmosphere, and the abuse of purgatives, but above all of aloe.

Dr. Clark next proceeded to classify the symptoms, and endeavoured to trace them back to the general pathological states in which they inhered. He found that although in one sense each case was regulated by laws peculiar to itself, there were, nevertheless, certain pathological states common to the whole series of cases. Of these are a feeble circulation, giving rise to frequent local capillary congestions; a highly excitable condition of the nervous centres; a thin blood, deficient in fibrine and red discs; a dry, furfy, and imperfectly acting skin; and an excessive secretion of vitiated mucus by all the mucous surfaces.

Then, by a process of analysis and seclusion, Dr. Clark became satisfied that the *immediate* cause of the symptoms referable to mucous disease of the colon is the excessive secretion and accumulation of mucus on the free surface of that viscus; that this mucus diminishes absorption on the one hand, and excretion on the other; and that, by fermenting itself and inducing fermentation in the contents of the bowel, it develops gases which poison the blood and disturb the order of nutrition and secretion throughout the body.

Reviewing now the question of treatment in the light of these pathological states, and with an experimental knowledge of the agents which aggravate them, and seeing that the direct indications of treatment are (1st) the removal of the accumulated mucus, and (2ndly) the prevention of its subsequent excessive secretion, Dr. Clark has at last, after many suggestive failures, (and what honestly recorded failures are not eminently suggestive and useful?) arrived at the conviction that the following scheme of treatment is the most generally successful in the class of cases under review:—

Dr. Clarke, in the first place removes the mucus by means of the internal use of alkalies, with gentle laxatives, in infusion of buchu or uva ursi and rhubarb, and by the exhibition of alkaline enemata. When the removal of the mucus has been achieved, endeavours are made to prevent its reproduction in excessive quantities by the following means:—

1st.—The enforcement of a solid diet (excluding vegetables, fruits, and all hard sub-