

Since our last meeting I have had a case which has given me a genuine shock. In a few words, I fully believe that I have had a real case of enteric fever absolutely annihilated and cured in a week by carbolic acid. I say this because it is the first time I can call to mind a case where there was anything like a declination of symptoms and rapid convalescence such as was here observed; (2) because carbolic acid, the great germicide, was used in the treatment; (3) because I saw the case early; and, lastly, because I know of nothing whatever in the circumstances of the case or treatment that was calculated to abort the symptoms, if it was not the use of the drug mentioned. I cannot use stronger words. Do I hear an audible smile from among you? I dare say. I don't blame you, but I feel my position to be critical, inasmuch as no autopsy will ever prove me right or wrong. But I can say this, my diagnosis was founded on a set of facts, not suppositions, on which for thirteen years I have been relying as positive for a diagnosis of enteric fever in its early stage, and which up to this time have not failed me. In no single instance that I can call to mind have I ever observed this set of symptoms without their continuing and developing, and resulting in what we are accustomed to term "a case of typhoid." The opposite has happened to me, viz., typhoid beginning so mildly and so well marked that no diagnosis was possible, and perhaps a favorable prognosis given.

Gentlemen, if this case about to be related was not an enteric fever, then, in all humiliation, I am forced to say, and to admit, painful though it be to announce it, my diagnostic acumen is insufficient to enable me to recognize enteric fever with any degree of positiveness, the grounds on which I have relied for my diagnosis are wrong, or insufficient; and, in fact, were I to allow myself to entertain a reasonable doubt, my whole faith would be shaken.

I will take the liberty of quoting a few words from Austin Flint, bearing on the cutting short of this and other continued fevers. He says:

"We are as yet unable to destroy directly the morbid organisms which give rise to continued fevers, and we must be content for the present to moderate their action, and to sustain the powers of resistance of patients."

And, again, from Sir Wm. Jenner, and this quotation also touches materially on the vexed question of abortive typhoid. He says:

"I have never known a case of typhoid cut short by any remedial agent, *i.e.*, cured. The poison which produces any one of the acute specific diseases (to which order typhoid as well as small pox belongs) having entered the system, all the stages of the disease must, so far as we know, be passed through, before the recipient of the poison can be well."

As to cutting typhoid short, I may quote from J. R. Barnett, of Neruah, Wis., who, in speaking of salicylate of ammonia in this connection, calls it a great antipyretic, and useful in conditions of adynamia, has wide germicidal powers, and as a remedy in typhoid and remittent fever is unsurpassed, aborting them under favorable conditions, and mitigating their severity under circumstances less favorable.

As to carbolic acid, Kish reports a case of a boy, 14 years of age, to whom he gave 4 gr. very four hours, the result being some reduction of temperature and marked carboluria.

Another writer, speaking on this point, ridicules it on the ground that we would have to get into the system enough carbolic acid to render all parts of the blood sufficiently charged to destroy germs, say 1 to 40, before we could expect it to destroy the germs of a disease, *i.e.*, if I understand his argument correctly. Well, in surgery we don't use it as strong as that in very many conditions, and when we consider that some germs live through boiling carbolic acid, there must be degrees of vitality; and then again, in antiseptic surgery a solution of carbolic acid was once thought indispensable. Now as good results are obtained by the free use of soap and water, cleaning the finger nails well, and using boiled water for instruments, hands, etc., and no carbolic acid at all, so that we must admit that some germs are capable of being rendered innocuous by very simple means. Now, for my case:

I was called late in the evening of November 30, 1888, to see Miss T., a well-developed girl, at 16, a domestic. She had been home from service three weeks, and at her last place, in Centretown, the children in the family had been ill, but I could not get the histories of the case.