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THE UNIFORMITY OF INFLAMMATORY DISEASE.

BY

JOHN McCRAE, B.A., M.B.,

Resident Assistant Pathologist, Montreal General Hospital.

The variation of one case of a disease from another is the factor contributing most to the interest of the practice of medicine, and to the difficulty of its study. Since these variations are so great, one often fails to recognize the common ground that underlies all inflammatory reactions, and thereby greatly increases the difficulty of understanding each case. The object of these remarks, is to insist upon the accurate knowledge of the process of inflammation as a basis upon which can be built the superstructure of all various inflammatory conditions, and to insist, further, upon the impossibility of understanding or classifying these numerous and apparently different problems, without such knowledge.

Every case of Inflammation is a problem into which enter two factors—the causative agent, and the animal body; the former, an ever-varying force acts upon the latter, an ever-varying quantity, in a way which is, luckily, comparatively invariable. Therefore, of three entities in the problem, two are constantly varying, the third fixed; there are thus some important points to be noted:—

- (1) The result of such a problem cannot be guessed.
- (2) It is scarcely possible that any two such problems can ever have the same answer; hence is the variation of cases.
- (3) Where so much is variable, it is necessary to thoroughly understand the non-variable part,—that is *the process*.

The process of inflammation consists of a series of stages, which are always present, which we may designate a b c d etc.; the tissues are educated to respond in only one way, but the relations a to b, to c, to d, with respect to degree and time may vary greatly, and any one, or any combination of two or more, may over-shadow the others so that its formula will read somewhat as follows:—a b c C C C C C d e f g H H H i j k, etc., and evidently this inflammation would be named, C H Another individual with the same toxin and the same process, by virtue