

I diagnosed ossification of the aortic semilunar valves and arch of the aorta, believing that during the production of the second sound (systole) the current of blood was passing in this direction. The patient died shortly afterwards, and a post-mortem examination of the body disclosed the correctness of my opinion.

ON A PECULIAR APPEARANCE OBSERVED IN THE GUMS OF CONSUMPTIVE PATIENTS.

By Dr. Thophilus Thompson, F.R.S. Physician to the Hospital for Consumption and Diseases of the Chest.

[Dr. Thompson was encouraged to examine the state of the gums in a poisoned or morbid condition of the blood, from the value of their indicating the presence of lead in the system, by the blue line upon their edge.]

He presents the result of his observations in reference to this inquiry in cases of consumption, and avows his conviction of the frequent existence in phthisical subjects of a mark at the reflected edge of the gums, deeper in colour than the adjoining surface; in some patients a mere streak on a raised border, in others, a margin more than a line in breadth, of a vermilion tint, inclining to blue; the mark being most distinct around the lower incisors, but usually observable in both jaws, and often around the molar, but modified in its situation by the form of the mouth. The author has examined some hundred cases in the course of the investigation, and gives the analysis of 102, of whom he has full records. In forty of forty-eight women the gingival margin is present; and in fifty-four phthisical men, although in a few the line is so faint as to be open to question, there is only one in whom it can be considered decidedly absent. He has reasons for suspecting that the same condition of the system which produces this state of the gums tends also to produce clubbing of the fingers; but he considers that the change in the extremity of the fingers rarely occurs till some time after the streak is manifest in the gums. Of seventy-six patients, forty-five were found to have clubbed fingers; of these forty-five only one had gums free from the characteristic margin; yet twenty of the seventy-six had margined gums, but no expansion of the extremities of the fingers. The author discusses the effect of various modifying influences, such as hereditary tendency, catamenial disturbances, and habits as respects cleanliness, but cannot connect the presence of the symptoms in question with any of these circumstances; but he is of opinion that causes which irritate the mucous membrane tend to accelerate and increase the manifestation of the margin. He suggests this as an explanation of the more frequent absence of the line in women than in men, and dwells on its practical importance, as indicating, in such cases, the use of refrigerants as preliminary to the introduction of tonic remedies. The author canvasses the question whether a similar line exists in any other disease; he allows that Mr. Fredericq may be correct in the opinion that certain changes in the gums occur towards the close of the various chronic diseases, but he has never yet observed the peculiar margin described in this communication, without detecting other indications of consumption, although frequently, only incipient. As respects prognosis in phthisis, he proposes the general rule, that cases in which the streak is observed early, or is broad or deep-coloured, tend to proceed more rapidly than those in which it is absent or slight; whilst freedom from the streak, even in the third stage, affords encouragement in treatment. In reference to diagnosis, the author believes,—1st, That the absence of the streak