

A Peculiar Case of Diphtheria.*

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MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN,—The case which I am about to detail cost me so much trouble in diagnosis, and gave me so vivid a knowledge of the difficulty that besets the recognition of the malignancy of a certain typical septic throat cases, that I venture to lay it before you in the hope of eliciting a helpful discussion. I was called in on Tuesday evening, December 11th, 1894, to see two children who had been for five days ill with what a homœopath of the town had pronounced diphtheria. The laxity of his isolation and the mildness of the illness made the parents suspect his diagnosis. They called in another homœopath, who gave them the following letter to send to the Medical Health Officer, with a view to lifting the embargo upon the house :

"SIR,—Yesterday, 11th, I was called to see the children of H. T. R., reported as suffering from diphtheria. I certify that after a careful examination I was unable to find any trace or symptoms of that disease—that this very slight sickness is due to follicular tonsillitis, to which they are subject. In the throat of the elder child there was considerable exudation, the child himself being without fever and increased pulse or temperature. In the case of the second child a few prominent follicles were the only indication of any trouble whatever. Both sleep all night without disturbance, have good appetites, and enjoy and indulge in energetic, or, better, boisterous play."

After satisfying myself that there was no one else in attendance, the first attendant having told the parents that the children did not need any further treatment, I went to see them. I found both in bed, 9 p.m., temperature normal, pulse slightly rapid nervous and irregular, pupils slightly dilated. They had been pronounced by the two homœopaths to have had each the same kind of throat, of much the same grade of severity, and the description of the *status quo* given in the above letter by the consultant homœopath is a very accurate one on the whole, except that in the case of the elder one there were some irregular, discrete patches on each tonsil which could be rubbed off. Wednesday they were up, as indeed they had been at intervals during the whole five days. On Thursday the younger one was still running about, convalescing rapidly, which he continued to do until he completely recovered in two or three days. The elder had a temperature of 99.2-5, and pulse 100. There was extreme constipation, and the

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