

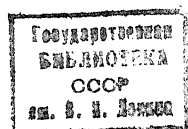
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AN ACCOUNT
OF A
SUCCESSFUL METHOD OF TREATING
Diseases
OF
THE SPINE;
WITH
OBSERVATIONS,
AND
CASES IN ILLUSTRATION.

BY THOMAS BAYNTON,
OF BRISTOL,
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TO
DR. EDWARD JENNER, F. R. S.

&c. &c. &c.

DEAR SIR,

THE FRIENDSHIP YOU HAVE
LONG SHEWN ME, ENCOURAGES ME TO
TAKE THE LIBERTY OF OFFERING YOU THE
FOLLOWING SHEETS. THEY WERE WRITTEN
FOR THE PURPOSE OF PUBLISHING THE
ADVANTAGES OF THE MODE OF TREATMENT
THEREIN RECOMMENDED—THE MOTIVE I
TRUST WILL BE AN EXCUSE FOR THEIR
IMPERFECTIONS. THAT YOU MAY LONG
CONTINUE TO ENJOY, IN HEALTH AND
HAPPINESS, THE GRATITUDE OF THE WORLD
FOR YOUR INESTIMABLE DISCOVERY, IS
THE SINCERE WISH OF,

DEAR SIR,

YOUR MUCH OBLIGED SERVANT,

THOMAS BAYNTON.

BRUNSWICK-SQUARE,

Dec. 24, 1813.

PRACTICAL REMARKS

ON

DISEASES OF THE SPINE.

THERE are very few Diseases that occasion greater individual distress than the one which is about to be considered ; it deprives the afflicted of the advantages of exercise, and the enjoyment of the locomotive faculty ; it is painful in its progress, and fatal in its results.

Mr. POTT says that “ when it befalls an Adult it makes him completely miserable, by depriving him of all power of being

useful to himself or others ; and that when an Infant becomes its victim, it renders all the care and tears, all the tenderness and anxiety of the fondest parent absolutely unavailing.”

That the general methods of treating it too frequently fail to occasion either cures, or alleviation, the writings of the latest authors, as well as the experience of the most eminent practitioners, fully prove.

In many instances of terminations that have been deemed favourable, a deformed appearance, with diminution of stature, and the destruction of health, have occasioned the misfortune to become so distressingly apparent as to have outweighed the advantages of talents, connexions, and wealth.

Under the impression of these opinions, I feel myself justified in again appearing before the Public, for the purpose of communicating the information afforded by a considerable number of such cases, that were successfully treated.

My success has been obtained by the application of simple principles, which are generally admitted in the treatment of some other diseases, and may have been acted upon in this, though neither myself nor the public have received the information.

It is said by the Author above quoted, that, the majority of those who labour under this disease, are weak and delicate infants, or young children, that adults are by no means exempt from it, but that he has never seen it at an age above forty.

The annexed Cases will evince the correctness of those observations ; a considerable proportion of them being properly classed under the appellation of young persons. It has only happened that three applications have been made by people nearly at the age of forty ; two of whom are at present under the treatment that will be described. No recollection is had of any person with whom the disease commenced so late as the fortieth year.

“When it attacks a child who is old enough to have walked properly, its awkward and improper manner of using its legs, is the first circumstance which excites attention ; and the incapacity of using them at all, which very soon follows, fixes that attention and alarms the friends. The account most frequently

given is, that for some time previous to the incapacity, the child had been observed to be languid, listless, and very soon tired : that he was unwilling to move much, or briskly, that he had been frequently observed to trip and stumble, although no impediment lay in his way : that when he moved hastily, or unguardedly, his legs would cross each other ; by which, he was often, and suddenly, thrown down ; that if he endeavoured to stand still, and upright, unsupported by another person, his knees would totter and bend under him, so that he could not with any precision or certainty, steadily direct either of his feet to any particular point ; but that in attempting so to do, they would be suddenly and involuntarily brought across each other : that soon after this he com-

plained of frequent pains and twitchings in his thighs ; particularly when in bed, and of an uneasy sensation at the pit of his stomach ; that when he sat on a chair or a stool his legs were almost always found across each other, and drawn up under the seat ; and that in a little time after these particulars had been observed he totally lost the power of walking. An Adult, in a case where no violence has been committed or received, will tell you that his first intimation was a sense of weakness in his backbone, accompanied with what he will call a heavy dull kind of pain, attended with such a lassitude as rendered a small degree of exercise fatiguing ; that this was soon followed by an unusual sense of coldness in his thighs, not accountable from the weather,

and a palpable diminution of their sensibility ; that in a little time more his limbs were frequently convulsed by involuntary twitchings, particularly troublesome in the night ; that soon after this he not only became incapable of walking, but that his power of retaining or discharging his urine and fœces were considerably impaired.*”

These interesting quotations recite so fully, and accurately, the symptoms generally observed in this disease, as to render any additional description unnecessary ; and justify their insertion in preference to any less perfect enumeration of them by my own pen. The sensible or more obvious signs of the disease, are a projection, or

* Mr. POTT's Treatise.

standing out behind, of one or more of the spinal processes beyond the straight line of the spinal column, and a considerable degree of tenderness discoverable on the application of pressure.

That effects so distressing should be occasioned by a disease that softens the bodies of the vertebræ, and renders them unable to sustain the weight of the parts above, will become apparent, when it is recollected that in a healthy state the body of each vertebra is firm, for supporting that weight, and hollow for the purpose of containing the most sensible and important part of the nervous system—the spinal marrow—a portion of the brain.*

The learned Author, Mr. POTT, whose

* Mr. JOHN BELL.

opinions have already been so fully quoted, and whose opportunities of investigating the nature and symptoms of this disease, were more extensive than those of most other surgeons, was convinced by his attendance on the living, and his examinations of the bodies of those whom it had destroyed, that it was connected with, and generally occasioned by a scrophulous habit.

The enlarged state of the submaxillary and other glands; the tumid state of the abdomen; and the general appearance of the greater number of such persons, would induce an assent to the probable truth of such a conclusion. And when it is shewn, by examinations after death, that almost all the glands are found in an enlarged, diseased, and suppurated state; and that

cysts are also found, connected with the diseased vertebræ, that contain curdly, purulent, and other matter, of unequal consistence, it must be universally admitted that the phenomena of scrophula are frequently connected with diseases of the spinal column.

In the observations which have been made by Mr. POTT on the means of curing this disease, he objects in the strongest terms to the use of any kind of machinery, and says “that when curvatures are noticed, recourse is immediately had to back boards, collars, steel boddice, swings, screw chairs, and other pieces of machinery, but all to no purpose ; the patient becomes daily more and more helpless, and unhealthy ; languishes for more or less time, and at last dies in

an emaciated state, from an hectic ; or by a drain from an abscess formed within the body. That all machinery, from the most simple to the most complex, are calculated to remove and obviate what does not exist ; and that they who have had patience and fortitude to bear the use of them to such a degree as to affect the parts concerned, have always found increase of pain, and fever, and an exasperation of all their bad symptoms ; and that he has known more than one instance in which the attempt has proved fatal :” but, he says, “ that the discharge occasioned by issues produces in due time a cessation of the erosions of the bones ; and that this is followed by an incarnation, by means of which the bodies of the vertebræ which had been the seat of

the disease, coalesce, and unite with each other, forming a kind of ankylosis."

His investigations had shewn him that the curvatures which occasion projections or protrusions of the spinous processes, and that are from within outwards, were always occasioned by a destruction of one or more of the bodies of the vertebræ, and that without such destruction no curvatures of this kind could possibly occur.

He has said that, "when two or more vertebræ are affected, forming a large curve, however perfect the success may be with regard to the restoration of health, and limbs, yet the curvature will and must remain, in consequence of the union of the bones with each other : and that when from extent or degree, or inveteracy of the caries,