

AN  
INAUGURAL DISSERTATION

ON

*Inflammation*

SUBMITTED TO THE  
PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES,  
AND MEDICAL FACULTY  
OF THE  
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FOR THE DEGREE OF  
Doctor of Medicine.

BY

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OF

*Texas*

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Dedicated To  
Paul F. Coe. As a tribute of  
respect. to the

Distinguished rank which he  
so justly holds among the  
Surgeons of the United States  
of America, and Europe.

And in grateful acknowledgement  
of much personal kindness, as  
well as professional instruction  
conferred on. Respectfully

A Student

Inflammation, like other morbid phenomena, has its predisposing and exciting causes, general and local debility is by far the most prolific of the predisposing causes. Plethora and local Congestion, play an active part in the establishment of this most important surgical disease. The predisposing causes may act Constitutionally or through the medium of the circulation, or they may act locally. The former including Temperament excitability intemperance, previous disease miasmatic influence, general debility &c. These different predisposing causes have their various modes of bringing about or inducing this same morbid

condition called inflammation,

The exciting causes may be mechanical, Chemical Specific or depending upon atmospheric vicissitudes.

The phenomena of inflammation are redness swelling heat and pain, but there are exceptions in which, one or more of these symptoms are not manifested. therefore, this most important disease and in fact I may say foundation of diseases demands careful study, and investigation at our hands, that we may be enabled to recognise the disease when the ordinary phenomena or some one or more of them fail to present themselves.

There are a number of causes of this disease in which the

ordinary verbal phenomena, or symptoms are very obscure. Such cases require strict observation, in order to recognize them, as for instance, in low forms of inflammatory action pain may never be felt by the patient and in the examination of such cases, it is the duty of the Physician to so conduct his examination as to elicit this important symptom pain, and by pressing upon the part affected, there will be tenderness at least. Such variations, however in the symptoms of inflammatory action depend generally upon the kind of structure involved. Pain is less to be relied upon

than any one of the four phenomena of this disease, being very variable in its manifestations, occurring in every degree of intensity, it may be a mere soreness scarcely noticed by the patient or it may far exceed what we would suppose to exist, from the amount of lesion. We should recollect however that the intensity or severity of this symptom depends generally upon the tissue involved, we should also recollect, that some structures that possess a very small amount of sensation in health become violently painful when inflamed, as the serous membranes, Tendons ligaments & bones.

In some inflammatory diseases or in inflammation of some structures the pain may be felt far distant from the seat of inflammation, as for instance in inflammation of the spinal marrow. The pain may be located in some organ far removed from the seat of disease, as for instance in inflammation of the bladder the pain is felt in the glans penis or of the hip joint the pain is felt in the knee. This symptom, however is of considerable importance to us for it is generally the first to be discovered by the patient, and when the inflammation is deep seated the

Character of the pain assists us in determining what kind of tissue is most extensively involved. Pain may be intermittent or remittent especially if the patient is saturated a little with the most troublesome of all gases, called malaria, such cases being more abundant in our South western States, from the fact that the emigrants settle in the thick forest, build houses of green timber and deaden the trees around them for the purpose of making farms, the result of which is a large amount of the malaria or bad air. If one of those new settlers receive an injury or wound



and inflammation should become pretty active very probably it would be of the intermittent or remittent type or variety.

Redness. This symptom is more uniformly observable than any other, of the four great signs, boards of this peculiar reparative process called inflammation. It is discoverable in every shade, from the most gentle touch of rose pink, to the deepest crimson.

The intensity of Colour depending upon the degree of inflammation, its stage, the part involved, the condition of the system, and perhaps upon the nature of the cause

for it is sometimes entirely want-  
-ing as in white swelling.

The increase of temperature or  
heat is very variable in inten-  
-sity. It is said however never  
to exceed the temperature of  
the blood of the patient.

This symptom probably depends  
upon an increased quantity of  
blood in the Capillaries and  
upon increased vital action, but  
Inflammation may exist without  
any increase degree of heat.

Tumefaction is also very vari-  
-able, for in some of the tissues,  
there is a little thickening only,  
as for instance in the mucus,  
and serous membranes, while  
other structures, the glands for

instance present the most enormous distention. Thus we see that the phenomena of inflammation are by no means constant in their development, on the contrary, they may exist all together, in similar or extremely disproportionate intensity, or any of them may be absent or at least not observable in cases where those present indicate a high degree of inflammatory action. These facts are of the greatest importance for without a knowledge of them we would be constantly liable to commit great blunders in the treatment of disease.

Symptomatic Fever, is a phenomena of much importance, in consequence of its Constitutional affects, but it never occurs, until inflammation has attained, a certain degree of intensity or extent. It is attributable to the interruption of associated or dependent functions, the irregular distribution of the Circulating fluid, and nervous energies, also the peculiar condition of the blood may attribute to the febrile excitement. Symptomatic Fever presents an almost innumerable number of morbid phenomena, which I have not space to illustrate, but which are of vital importance, to Physicians.

Treatment of Inflammation;  
The first, and a very great object

is the removal of the exciting cause; and the next, is to reduce the inflammatory action, which is best accomplished by antiphlogistic means.

General Blood-letting, is the most efficient antiphlogistic remedy, superceeding all others, when a vital organ is the subject of inflammation, or when the inflammatory action is very high, or active. No other remedy will produce as good effects upon the sanguine or plethoric temperament, in a state of acute inflammation. General blood-letting reduces the quantity of blood in the system, which

of course would be a reduction of blood in the part inflamed, it also renders the blood less stimulating, by reducing the quantity of the red corpuscles, and acts as a powerful sedative upon the heart and brain.

But it frequently happens that inflammation occurs in persons who are so anemic that they cannot bear general blood-letting. it also occurs, to such a small extent that general blood-letting is not required.

The quantity of blood taken should be regulated by the nature of the case, and the effects desired. If the reacting fever should be high, and

The pulse hard and full, the blood might continue to flow even through a tolerable small orifice, in a plethoric patient, until the pulse became soft. But if the orifice should be large, such a patient might bleed to syncope, or its near approach. But if the patient should be anemic, the orifice should be large, and the effect carefully observed.

Local, Blood-letting, may be resorted to as an antiphlogistic measure when general Blood-letting is inadmissible, or of doubtful propriety, but it does not enjoy the sedative influence upon the system, and would not

be so applicable in a state of high excitement, But it is of great importance. Cupping instruments can usually be applied near the organ, or part, inflamed, abstracting the blood, and at the same time acting as a revulsive almost immediately to the part. Leeching, has <sup>the</sup> a peculiar advantage of depleting directly from the part inflamed, when the revulsive action of Cupping is not desired. They are of much advantage, applied to the fauces or os uteri when no other kind of bloodletting can be used, they are best used when but a small quantity of blood is to be taken.

Purgatives, or Cathartics,



are of much value as depleting agents, deriving greatly from the bowels, and at the same time, producing good revulsive effects, especially upon the brain, if it should be the subject of the inflammatory action. But they would probably be objectional if the alimentary canal was the subject of disease.

Nauseants, are of great value, producing their good effects by revulsion, reducing the hearts action, and at the same time producing a determination to the skin, they are useful in a vast number of instances.

Mercury, is an article the modes - operandi of which, we know

but little, it acts perhaps, through  
the medium of the circulation, and  
possesses a peculiar alterative  
power over the vital functions which  
enables it in many inflammatory  
cases to subvert diseased action  
by substituting its own, It is  
best given after more active means  
have been used, and the general  
excitement reduced, unless as  
a cathartic.

Narcotics or Anodines, act  
beneficially by relieving pain,  
one of the most distressing sym-  
ptoms, and by promoting sleep,  
They are valuable also on account  
of relieving nervous irritability,  
but Opium should be given  
with great caution, if at all,

in cases of Cerebral inflammation,  
as it causes an inordinate flow  
of blood to that part.

Perfect repose, should of  
course be enjoined upon one  
who has an inflammation of  
any vital part.

Nitrate of Silver, is an excellent  
antiphlogistic remedy, applied  
locally, in many conditions of  
inflamed structure, affording  
speedy relief; other escaotics  
or cantharics, are beneficial under  
some circumstances.

The application of Cold  
water, or Ice, to an inflamed  
part, often produces the most  
happy effects, while in other  
apparently similar cases warm

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applications seem to act best.

Position may have much advantage, in the treatment of inflammation, especially if an extremity is the subject of the disease, they should be kept on a horizontal plane, if the disease is serious, or they may even be elevated, (viz) the distal extremity above.

On some instances, bandages are beneficial in supporting the much debilitated structure.

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