

AN
INAUGURAL DISSERTATION
ON
Contagion
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BY

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Contayion

The communi-

cation: or regeneration of a disease from one to another: This is a subject that should elicit the attention: of each and every man, that makes the healing art either his study, or practice, for there is no Subject connected with the profession, that you meet with more frequently than this, And there is none which you are more ignorant of than this It has been set aside by all the philosophers of the present, and past ages as an all-absorbing Subject

For the further consideration of this subject we divide it into several classes. First those diseases which are attributable to no specific cause. Such as influenza fevers etc. etc. Such diseases are attributable most generally to some local cause which can be readily seen by any one who may perchance to witness an exhibition of any one of these many diseases. This class of disease may be distinguished from the second by its frequent return or by the cause or property which generates the disease. The most common of these causes is exposure

Class 2d

Are those

diseases which have a specific source. Which is to bring the body in direct contact with the virus; and so often as the body is brought in contact with this class of disease just so often will it take effect; this is the feature by which this class of disease may be distinguished from the third. For when this the second class of disease has been removed from the system, it leaves no impression by which, it is excluded in case it should ever make the second application.

In this the second class we find situated Itch. and Syphilitic diseases.

The communicating properties of which we will not tax your mind with at this point knowing its very common existence and its simplicity.

Thinking it sufficient to say that like all other foreign bodies when introduced into the system it produces inflammation; It is supposed by some that Syphilitic diseases can be produced only by the most common way which I suppose every body is familiar with (that is the act of copulation with one affected)

But he who reasones in this way is blind, for the want of reflection; for not unfrequently is the disease produced by persons dressing those ulcers; I once knew a man to get this disease by lying on the bed where one afflicted with this curse had been lying; I hope that there is no one who may read this essay, that will go forth and assail one's character with ridicule; by accusing him of immoral conduct. Before departing from this subject, we will state, that pus being collected from any syphilite ^{ulcer}, will undoubtedly generate the disease.

Class Third contains also those diseases which may be traced to have risen from some specific cause. Thus far corresponding with the second class.

In this division you will locate some diseases which is very common; viz. Measles, Hooping-Cough, Small Pox, etc. etc. This division of our subject, is the one which we feel the deepest interest in; for there is in this class points yet to be settled: which may be made the instrument by the assistance of which some philosopher will immortalize his name

For the further consideration
of this topic; I propose for
your consideration more minutely
the well known disease Variola
or Small Pox. This has been
for years; and by some; at
the present day; considered as
one of the most active diffusible
infections that ever prevailed
It is also supposed by some
to be communicable through
the atmosphere But this I
give but ~~little credit~~
Believing it as far from
being communicated through
the atmosphere; as Syphilis disease;
Which has been settled for years
by the greatest philosophers of the
present or past ages; as not being

communicable through that medium
The only point that is dwelt
upon, by those who contend
that it is conveyed by the
atmosphere, is the frequent occurrence
on persons who have never been
near a case of this disease.

This we acknowledge as being
a fact. But in this acknowledgement
we deny but what the virus
was brought more directly in
contact with the body of its
victim; than by the atmosphere
and say that this cannot be
so. The question very naturally
presents itself here; how or
by what means; was the virus,
conveyed to the object of its
affection;

Before answering this question
we will ascertain how
much virous is requisite to
produce its effect. It has
been decided by a great
many experiments that the
smallest amount is sufficient
to generate the disease;

This experiment may be very
readily tryed by any of you
by taking a piece of finely
polished steel a needle
if you choose; introduce it
in one of the Pock. pustules.
withdraw the instrument
and there remains not enough
of the virous to be perceived
by any of your senses; but
still by trying this instrument

in contact with any of the
absorbents, and it will
be sufficient to generate the
disease; as you see we have
acknowledged that the smallest
particle of the virus, is
sufficient to produce the disease.
But still I deny that it was,
or can be, a sufficient amount
conveyed by the atmosphere;
And the first argument
that we produce I deem
sufficient to prove the
absurdity of such a notion,
as the atmosphere, being a
true medium for the transportation
of this disease. The reason why
I do not suffer myself to
credit any such probabilities,

is simply because it has been long since decided; that by exposing this virus to the atmosphere; its infecting properties, are destroyed; this point has also been sustained by many experiments, and it has been proven to have no more effect through this medium than so much smoke from a common fire; The question is yet to be answered; how does this infectious property make its way ~~thru~~^{thru} from one to another, at such distances, from each other. The first vehicle that we call your attention to is some one that is passing from one to

the other the man who bears this virus about with him has it collected in such great masses in his clothes that it ~~as~~ cannot be decomposed before brought in contact with some predisposing system

The means by which this disease can be diffused are numerous. I am of the opinion that not unfrequent is this virus conveyed to different persons by the well known animal & the common housefly} which is frequently a very great pest with persons who have this disease. They can bear this virus either within or

On their bill or extremity,
It is a well known fact
that the fly can carry a
sufficient amount to infect
any predisposing system;
Yes it is able to bear
more than the aforesaid lance
with which we have just
just been generating this
disease; Concluding that
I have clearly proven to
you, that the atmosphere, is
not a true medium for the
transportation of this and at
the same time shown you how
it was diffused. We proceed
to its effect surfixing to
say that its anatomical effects
are the larger portion of the

entire system; after which affection the disease is gradually eliminated from the person of its affection; But has made an indelible stamp similar to a great many other classes of diseases it rarely affects the same body more than once: Though it is on record where where cases have been affected the second time. These being exceptions. The peculiarity of this class of disease is the effect that it produces which proves a preventive to the second attack. To account for this we say that the poison substance has become an

essential property in the system, and rarely if ever eradicated. To account for those rare cases, I think is quite simple. For it is admitted that the system is continually suffering some change such as re-formations, etc. etc. And this substance deposited in the system by the disease for the want of a regenerative property is in the course of time entirely eliminated, by the many changes that are continually going on in the system; And just as soon as there is an entire elimination of this virus, the system will receive the effect again, etc. etc.