

FEVERS.

A fever is a disease in which there is a general disturbance of most or all of the vital functions, attended with cold, hot, and sweating stages. There is first a preliminary stage, of languor and weakness, with defective appetite, nausea, headache, pains in the small of the back, and limbs, with slight chilliness, or shivering. This is succeeded by the confirmed stage, in which there is preternatural heat of the body, caused by increased activity and waste of the tissues, increased circulation, as manifested by the increased pulse, and extreme weakness.

CLASSIFICATION OF FEVERS.

It is hardly possible to find any two writers who are agreed as to the classification of fevers. We find fevers spoken of as typhus fever, brain fever, congestive, yellow, ship, spotted, jail, camp, hospital, puerperal, bilious, putrid, low, nervous, mucous, mesenteric, milk, catarrhal, Panama and mountain fevers, ataxic fever, adynamic fever, gastric, enteric, typhoid, etc. This complexity of nomenclature is

puzzling, not only to the nonprofessional reader, but to the medical practitioner, for many a physician finds it difficult to answer anxious friends when they ask what kind of fever the patient has. To avoid confusing the mind of the reader, fevers will be classified in this work in the simplest manner possible.

As previously stated, it is evident that it does not matter whether we know the name of a disease, provided we know the conditions of the patient; for if we know these, we shall know what the patient requires, even though the disease has no name. It is evident that the knowledge of the name of a disease will do us no good unless we know the conditions implied by that name. Therefore, out of the many names that have been applied to each form of fever, that one will be selected which most fully expresses the condition of the patient.

A person sick with fever will always be in one of three conditions, and the treatment depends wholly on these conditions.

1. He may be of vigorous constitution, with strong vital organs, and possessed of a great amount of vitality, without much gross or waste material in his system. In this case, there is great activity, with a strong determination of blood to the surface, so much so that the surface appears inflamed, and there is great heat,

and the effort continues until the system is purified. Hence, we call this inflammatory fever, or, simply, continued fever.

There is still another form of fever, the nature of which is precisely like the above form in all respects except in the periodicity of the paroxysms. In this form, there is a complete cessation or intermission of the paroxysms, during which the patient feels well. In this form of fever, the paroxysms may recur daily, or every other day, or they may skip two days. This form of fever is called intermittent fever, or ague.

2. He may be weak and very gross, his system being filled with the retained excretions which his organs of depuration have failed to eliminate from his system. In this case, there is not much vitality. He may have had a large amount of vitality, however; but by unhygienic habits, such as overwork, either physical or mental, eating highly-seasoned or greasy food, or drinking alcoholic beverages, smoking or chewing tobacco, breathing impure air, etc., the vital organs have gradually weakened and failed to depurate the system properly, and, as a consequence, it is filled with retained excretions. Crossness and strength cannot go together, for when there is much vitality, the system is kept pure by the proper

organs. A fever with the patient in this gross condition is properly called putrid fever.

3. He may have a weak nervous system, and but little vitality, and at the same time not be very gross. It matters not how much original vitality he may have had, if it has been reduced by any cause that has not occasioned much grossness, he will have a fever characterized by extreme weakness and nervous irritability. In this case, it will be proper to call the disease nervous fever.

When either of the last two— that is, the putrid and the nervous— forms of fever are continued day after day, without intermission or remission of the paroxysm, the fever is said to be of the continued type, and thus we have putrid continued fever, and nervous continued fever. Typhus and typhoid fevers may be either nervous or putrid; but they always belong to one or the other of these classes. If there is a daily subsidence or remission of the paroxysm, and yet not a full intermission, the fever is said to be of the remittent type; hence, we may have putrid remittent fever and nervous remittent fever.

In addition to the foregoing, there are certain forms of fever which depend upon some specific cause, and which are characterized by certain skin eruptions. These are properly called eruptive fever. Of these, there are several varieties, each of

which is only induced by its own special cause, and is characterized by its own peculiar eruption, hence it is proper that each variety have a special name, as small-pox, cow-pox, chicken-pox, measles, scarlatina, etc.

Thus far, fever has been considered as a primary disease, not dependent on any other disease. It is often the case, however, that fever is only a symptom of some other disease, and had it not been for that other disease, the fever would not have occurred. All such fevers are to be classed as symptomatic.

It will be seen by the foregoing remarks that all fevers must assume one of three types. They must be either continued, remittent, or intermittent. The type which a fever assumes depends wholly upon the condition of the patient at the time the fever makes its appearance. If he has strong vital organs, the disease is continuous until his system is purified, regardless of the amount of grossness his system may contain; but if he has not sufficient vitality to continue the remedial effort until purification is accomplished, then the fever intermits or remits, as the case may be, for the purpose of affording rest to the vital organs. Therefore, it is evident that the only importance we should attach to the type a fever may assume is in view of the assistance; it may render us in determining the actual condition of the patient. Hence, type is only symptomatic of certain conditions,

and as there are many symptoms which indicate the condition of the patient, there is no more propriety in basing a plan of treatment for fever on the type it assumes than on any other single symptom it may manifest.

As has been shown, all fever patients must be in one of three conditions, viz., strong, with, but little grossness, or weak, with but little grossness, or weak, with great grossness. It therefore follows that in classifying fevers with reference to the treatment, they should be classified in accordance with these conditions, and this is the plan adopted in this work. This gives us, so far as treatment is concerned, but three forms of fever when considered as a primary disease, viz.,

Simple Fever,

Putrid Fever,

Nervous Fever.

Let it be understood that in this classification, we have special reference to the condition of the patient and to the treatment of the fever, and not to its cause, nor to the symptoms it manifests, nor to the liability, in certain cases, of the disease being communicated from one person to another.

The Hygienic Family Physician: A Complete Guide for the Preservation of Health, and the Treatment of the Sick without Medicine, pg. 254-259 by M. G. Kellogg