

is commonly known as "pneumonia." Nevertheless, the term is not seldom used to express this condition.

It is not unusual to hear of a case being one of "unresolved" pneumonia. Now almost invariably in my experience "unresolved" pneumonia has proved to be neither more nor less than tubercular lung disease, often decidedly acute. There can be little doubt that, at all events as regards the majority of these cases, the acute febrile commencement of the disease is none other than the beginning of an acute form of phthisis—that is to say, it is the result of the rapid development of tubercle throughout the lungs. This is mistaken for an acute pneumonia, and when, in the progress of events, softening and cavity formation result, we are told that the whole illness has been the consequence of a pulmonary inflammation—a pneumonia—in which the effusion into the air cells has not "cleared up," but instead of "resolving" is causing breaking down of the lung itself.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the mistake is a very serious one, and really amounts to a total and complete error of diagnosis.

I have never yet seen a case in which breaking down of the lung was the result of pure and unquestioned croupous pneumonia, and I have already remarked that those cases which, commencing as pneumonia, prove finally to be pulmonary gangrene and abscess, are certainly not in any way connected with lobar pneumonia, using the term as indicating a general disease.

Pneumonia is not seldom described as complicating ordinary phthisis, and as sometimes leading to the death of the consumptive patient. It may be, of course, that a patient, the subject of pulmonary tubercular disease, becomes the victim of acute croupous pneumonia, which may even prove fatal, but I gather that this is not the sense in which the expression is used in connection with the occurrence of the malady in phthisical patients.

It would be far more correct to say that in these cases inflammation of the lungs may complicate phthisis, and if by pneumonia the inflammation which arises from the irritation of tubercle be implied, then but little exception can be taken to the use of the term. But this is certainly not the sense in which the word "pneumonia" is ordinarily used in relation to phthisis.

The same remarks apply to the inflammation of the organ, which results from the irritation due to the presence of malignant growth in the lung.

It is only necessary to mention the further confusion, indeed chaos, which results from the employment of such an expression as "pneumonic phthisis."

I have passed in review a variety of conditions, one and all of which would probably be ascribed to a certain definite disease—pneumonia. And yet it appears that no two of these affections are in reality alike; they resemble one another neither in origin, nor in course, nor in their natural history, if the term may be allowed, nor in their morbid appearances.

The form of pneumonia which is often held up as the type of the disease, and as a typical example of "inflammation" of the lung is in all probability not an inflammatory condition at all, but a local manifestation of a general disease. I refer, of course, to the ordinary form of the malady, which there can be little or no doubt is a specific fever, local symptoms being not always present, but which, like the rash in scarlet fever, may sometimes fail. And the fact that some of these cases may be explained on the assumption that the hepatised patch of lung is deeply seated, and only slowly allows the physical signs to come to the surface does not invalidate this mode of regarding the question.

In my judgment the term pneumonia should be confined to this malady, and should not be extended to other and quite different lung affections, which are at the present time included under this term. "Inflammation of the lungs" may well describe the disease known as lobular pneumonia, and the term "oedema of the lung" will serve to distinguish a large heterogenous collection of pulmonary affections which at the present time are jumbled together in wholesale fashion.

The popular term, "congestion of the lungs" is better altogether banished, for it is impossible to ascertain what it means in any given case. Of course, very often indeed it is a pleasant way of expressing an attack of croupous pneumonia—the general disease—but as expressing an active and distinct process the term has no separate or definite application.

The confusion of terms is so great, and the word "pneumonia" is used in such an indefinite and unsatisfactory manner, that the time has arrived when reform is urgently needed, and in this article I have done no more than to call attention to the chaos which at present exists, and to make a few suggestions on practical lines.

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