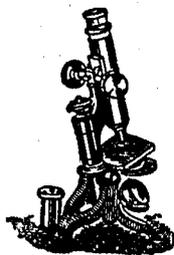


Medical Matters.

GLANDULAR FEVER.



Since the middle of November, writes Dr. John W. Byers in the *British Medical Journal*, an epidemic has been prevailing, chiefly among children, in Belfast and in parts of the North of Ireland of a kind which I have not seen before, either in private practice or during the years that I was physician to the Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, and which seems to me to correspond to the condition described in 1889 by Pfeiffer, and termed often by German writers, Pfeiffer's *Drüsenfieber*. O. Heubner, Dawson Williams, Comby, Donkin, and J. P. West have also contributed largely to the literature of glandular fever. My knowledge is based on thirty-three cases, some of which occurred in two public institutions, while the others were seen in consultation.

Age.—The youngest child was thirteen months, the oldest case was a female servant, aged twenty-five, in a family where the children were attacked; but, with the exception of two cases (the one mentioned and another aged twenty-one), all were in children or young people under sixteen years.

Onset.—As a rule this was sudden.

Period of Incubation.—This was from five to seven days.

Symptoms.—In some of the cases the children went to bed in the evening complaining of slight sore throat. The next morning there was sharp fever (102° to 104° Fahr.), pain on one side of the neck, which was tender on pressure and held stiffly; this was succeeded in another twelve hours by a distinct swelling of the glands under and in front of the sterno-mastoid. In the majority of the cases a similar enlargement appeared involving the deep glands of the corresponding and opposite sides of the neck. In the cases seen by me the right side was as a rule first affected. In another group of those attacked the children complained of nothing until the glands of the neck seemed suddenly to enlarge, and such cases when seen at first looked somewhat like aberrant forms of "mumps." In the severer cases headache was an initial symptom, and in a few sickness and vomiting were present and some abdominal pain, but I failed to detect any objective signs of involvement of the mesenteric glands. In none of the cases was the

throat in any way affected beyond some slight congestion, and in the majority it was normal and showed no alteration to explain the slight dysphagia. The glands affected were as a rule the deep set under and in front of the sterno-mastoid, but in others those in the posterior triangles of the neck were involved; no suppuration occurred in any of the cases, and the swelling of the glands subsided in most of the cases within a week from the onset of the attack, but in one case the enlargement remained for a fortnight, the fever going up and down in an erratic manner most of that time. The majority of the children were convalescent in a week, but in some of the severe cases those attacked remained poorly and looked anæmic for three to four weeks, the glands continuing enlarged. When the disease entered a house nearly all the children were attacked, and in one place two of the female servants, both adults. No rash appeared in any of the cases, nor was there any kidney or other complication, and none suffered from depression except the very severe cases. There were no deaths.

Diagnosis.—When the first case appeared in a house, the adenitis naturally suggested some primary throat mischief, but nothing sufficient to cause the glandular swellings could be discovered on an examination of the throat, either on the tonsils or pharynx, and the presence of other cases in the same house showed that one had to deal with an epidemic fever.

Etiology.—In the *British Medical Journal* of December 5th, 1903, page 1,492, there is described an "epidemic sore throat and suppurative mammitis in cows," but in none of the cows seen by me were there any such conditions observed in the throat, and the cases were in groups, widely separated, and with no common milk supply. The mild type of cases, when seen for the first time with a well-marked unilateral swelling of the neck, looked like a form of aberrant mumps, but careful examination showed that the parotid gland was not affected, and the children had no pain in closing the jaws or in eating; besides, some of the cases had previously suffered from mumps. It has been suggested that the disease might be a peculiar form of influenza; but, as a rule in recent years, when abnormal types of that protean disorder occurred, we were able to diagnose them as due to the influenza poison from the fact that in the same house or locality other ordinary forms of that disease were detected. None of these usual forms of influenza occurred

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